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UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

The effects of family-friendly human resource practices on work-family conflict and organisational commitment amongst working parents

By

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Commerce in Organisational Psychology

Faculty of Commerce

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION:

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

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23/03/07

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of family-friendly human resource practices (FFHRP) on work-family conflict and organisational commitment, amongst working parents. A total of 146 participants employed in a multinational company in South Africa responded to an online survey (response rate = 65%). A process of factor analysis determined the underlying dimensions of constructs, from which summary scales were devised. The results were analysed using correlation analysis and hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The findings suggest that the use of specific FFHRP reduced work-family conflict amongst working parents and that supportive work environments can translate into benefits such as reduced work-family conflict and increased affective commitment. In this study, control over the work environment had a moderating effect on the relationship between work interference in family and organisational commitment.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

There have been dramatic changes in the workforce with more women, single parents, dual-earner families and working mothers with young children entering the labour market (O' Driscoll, Poelmans, Spector, Kalliath, Allen, Cooper, & Sanchez, 2003). Employees today are working longer hours, travelling more and increasingly, work and family roles are encroaching the boundaries between family and work domains. This, together with the ongoing changes in the psychological contract between employers and employees, has resulted in varying levels of commitment and higher turnover intentions (Guest, 2004). Employers have responded by implementing a wide range of family-friendly practices to help businesses to meet the need for flexibility and to provide support to employees towards managing their work and family responsibilities (Batt & Valcour, 2003). Given the increasing interdependence of work and family domains, family support is being recognised as an important factor contributing to the wellbeing of employees (Kirrane & Buckley, 2004).

The aim of this study is to determine the effects of family-friendly human resource practices on work-family conflict and organisational commitment, amongst working parents. These will be referred to as family-friendly human resources practices (FFHRP) in this study.

Core terms

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined *work-family conflict* as, "a form of inter-role conflict in which role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (p.77). More recent definitions include the direction of the interference, i.e. work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW) (Byron, 2005).

Social support is described as, "an interpersonal transaction that involves emotional concern, instrumental aid, information or appraisal and is generally

conceived as a coping mechanism” (Gore as cited in Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2005, p. 135).

Thompson, Beauvais and Lyness (1999) defined *organisational culture* as, “the shared assumptions, beliefs and values regarding the extent to which an organisation supports and values the integration of employees’ work and family lives” (p. 394).

Control over work and family environments is defined as, “the belief that one can exert some influence over the environment, either directly or indirectly, so that the environment becomes more rewarding and less threatening” (Ganster & Fusilier as cited in Thomas & Ganster, 1995, p. 7).

Human resource family-friendly practices have been categorised into three areas, i.e. policies, benefits and services. *Policies* relate to how and where work is done, e.g. part-time work, job sharing, virtual working, telecommuting, flexitime and parental/family leave or leave of absence. *Benefits* include forms of compensation that protect employees against loss of earnings, e.g. medical aid expenses, paid vacation, paid maternity leave and personal time off. *Services* include onsite or nearby childcare facilities, counselling, employee assistant programmes (Veiga, Baldrige, & Eddleston, 2004).

Organisational commitment is defined as, “the degree to which an employee identifies with the goals and values of the firm” (Haar & Spell, 2004, p. 12).

Working parents are the focus of this study as they are more likely to experience work-family conflict than non-parents and this conflict tends to increase with the number and age of children (Fu & Shaffer, 2000). Working parents are those individuals with at least one child.

Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is structured into six chapters with a number of subsections. Chapter one provides a brief **introduction** of the topic in terms of relevance, defines some of the core terms and outlines the structure of the dissertation.

The **literature review** in chapter two is divided into three main sections: work-family conflict, family-friendly human resource practices and organisational commitment. Each of these sections has a number of sub-sections. The research propositions are provided at the end of this chapter. The **method** chapter provides the organisational context and describes in detail how the study was conducted. This is to enable future replication of the study or aspects of it. The data collection method, measures and participant information are included in this section. The **results** are summarised in chapter four and the statistical analysis, processes and findings are reported in sufficient detail to justify the conclusion. A summary of the results is provided at end of this chapter. The **discussion** chapter is structured per proposition and the results are discussed in the context of existing literature and implications for the organisations. Limitations and implications for future studies are included in this chapter. The purpose of the study, main contributions, findings and organisational recommendations are summarised in the **conclusion**, chapter six. The **reference list** at the end of the dissertation refers to the literature referenced in this dissertation. A list of final survey questions used in this study is reflected in **appendix A**.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH PROPOSITIONS

Over the past number of years, organisations have implemented a number of family-supportive Human Resource (HR) practices in an effort to improve business performance, gain commitment and help employees to cope with competing work and family demands. They recognised that the number of dual career and single earner households were growing and that traditional gender roles were changing to reflect that the responsibilities for households, elders and children were no longer confined to women (Scandura & Landau, 1997). Poelmans and Sahibzada (2004) referred to the change from traditional to dual earner families as a revolution because of the impact on work schedules, gender roles, relationships and the distribution of work. A number of statutory changes, i.e. equal treatment rights for part-time workers, parental leave provisions and enhanced maternity rights, gave legal backing to the “family-friendly” agenda (Wise & Bond, 2003).

This literature review is organised in three main sections. The first section is that of **work-family conflict** and will cover the main considerations in the work-family conflict domain. The second section will focus primarily on the **FFHRP** implemented by organisations in an effort to help employees manage work-family demands and ensure business continuity. The third section is that of **organisational commitment**. The literature reviewed in this area will cover the relationships between organisational commitment, work-family conflict and FFHRP.

1. Work - family conflict

The broadening definitions of work-family conflict over the past few decades, the bi-directional and multi-dimensional aspects of work-family conflict and the impacts of work-family conflict on both employers and employees are discussed in this section. The effect of social support on work-family conflict and the perceptions about control over work and family environments are also mentioned in this section.

Understanding work-family conflict

Definitions of work-family conflict have shifted over the years from examining inter-role conflict to include the direction of the interference, i.e. work interference with family (WIF) and family interference with work (FIW) (Byron, 2005). Fu and Shaffer (2000) postulated that four specific FIW stressors resulted in conflict, namely, marital status, working partners, parental demands and hours spent at work. They claimed that autonomy, ambiguity, conflict, overload and hours spent at work were the five stressors of WIF, when individuals had relatively less control over their work lives.

In more current research, the term work-family conflict has been broadened to work-life conflict to include the other life roles (Siegel, Post, Brockner, Fishman, & Garden, 2005). For the purpose of this review the terms work-family and work-life are used interchangeably, given that there is little segregation in the literature except that "life" encompasses other interest outside the family and that "family" implies children. Greenhaus and Powell (2006) suggest that work and family roles should be seen as "allies" instead of being in conflict and the authors refer to work-family enrichment as, "the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role" (p. 72).

Classifying work-family conflict

Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) identified three distinct types of work-family conflict: *time-based*, *strain-based* and *behaviour-based*. *Time-based conflict* occurred when the time spent in one domain impacted negatively on the other domain to the extent that it was difficult to fulfil obligations and requirements required by either domain, e.g. when working extra hours at work or travel for work made it difficult for employees to fulfil family obligations. According to Quick, Henley and Quick (2004), time-based strain also occurred when the individual was physically present in one domain but preoccupied mentally with the other domain. This type of conflict occurred when the boundaries between work and family were blurred to the extent that work invaded private life and visa versa (Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). *Strain-based conflict* occurred

when the pressure from one domain interfered with the other, i.e. fatigue, anxiety and fear that led to poor performance or irritability at home. Aryee et al. (2005) claimed that when individuals had fixed and limited resources to meet the challenges associated with multiple roles, they made trade-offs to reduce role strain. *Behaviour-based conflict* occurred when behaviours that were acceptable and even rewarded in one domain were incompatible in the other domain resulting in problems when the individual was unable to make the adjustments needed for either domain. For example, a domineering partner might find that attempts to domineer colleagues or staff at work were unwelcome (Greenhaus & Beutell).

According to Quick et al. (2004) one of the keys to conflict management was being able to understand the source of work-family conflict. Byron (2005) provided a classification for the work-family interference into three broad sources. **Work domain** interference was a result of the number of hours worked, frequency of overtime, shift schedules, physically or psychologically demanding work and the extent of travel. **Non-work domain** interference resulted from family and other non-work areas i.e. marital, parental and household problems. **Individual demographic domain** interference resulted from the employee's personality, behaviour, gender, job/income level, parental status, career stage and coping style.

Carlson, Kacmar and Stepina (1995) added another dimension to work-family conflict, that of role identity. They found that the time an individual invested in a domain depended on the extent to which the individual identified with that domain and this identity was a significant predictor of work-family conflict. For example, when an individual is forced to spend more time at work and this individual identified more strongly with the family domain, then the perceived conflict would be greater. Byron (2005) concurred, when he suggested that the more time an employee spent in one role, the greater the likelihood of interference from the second role resulting in conflict, stress and strain.

Impact of work-family spillover

Substantial research in the area of work-family conflict highlighted both the negative and positive aspects of work-family spillover. This, and the impact of individual demographic factors are examined next.

Negative impacts of work-family spillover

There is much more literature available on the negative impacts of work-family spillover than positive spillover. Negative spillover is associated with increased strain and dissatisfaction, greater health risks for working parents, lower productivity and performance levels amongst working parents, higher levels of anxiety and reduced marital satisfaction amongst partners and spouses (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; O' Driscoll et al., 2003). Hill, Hawkins, Ferris and Weitzman (2001) also cited a number of negative outcomes which result from negative family/home spillover, such as, withdrawal from family interaction, increased marital conflict, less knowledge of children's experiences, shorter periods of breastfeeding, misuse of alcohol and a decreased quality of life. Perry-Jenkins, Repetti and Crouter (2000) found that spouses and parents withdrew from family interaction following a stressful day at work. However, the authors claimed that this solitary time could have a positive effect as it buffered the transmission of negative emotions from parents to their children.

Aside from the employee psychological and physical strains mentioned above, the literature covered many business impacts associated with negative work-family spillover. Quick et al. (2004) claimed, "organisations that are pressure cookers simply drive their employees, not allowing time for energy recovery or strategic disengagement from production" (p. 432). The resulting conflict, according to Casper, Martin, Buffardi and Erdwins (2002), manifested itself in absenteeism, job stress and dissatisfaction in both work and life areas, increased turnover intention (Haar, 2004) and lower productivity (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Positive impacts of work-family relationships

While most publications to date have focused on the conflict aspect of work-family relationships, more recent literature described the advantages to the multiple roles. Greenhaus and Powell (2006) suggested that multiple roles improved the mental and physical state of employees and protected them from distress in one of the roles. They claimed that employees who developed conflict resolution and communication skills at work applied these beyond work, thereby benefiting other life domains. The authors also found that, "individuals who participate in and are satisfied with work and family roles experience greater wellbeing than those who are dissatisfied with one or more of their roles" (Greenhaus & Powell, p. 73).

A South African study of single working mothers found that although participants saw work as secondary to family, they still valued the opportunities such as intellectual stimulation and independence that work provided (Wallis & Price, 2003). Ayree et al. (2005) referred to an "expansion-enhancement perspective" in contrast to the "scarcity" perspective. The authors cited research that focused on the net positive gains obtained from being involved in more than one role. This perspective posited that the net gains outweighed the cost and resulted in gratification instead of strain. Perry-Jenkins et al. (2000) maintained that multiple roles brought positive gains in the form of additional monetary income, better self-esteem, the power to delegate onerous role obligations and opportunities for social interactions, relationships and challenges.

Individual demographic impacts related to work-family conflict

A number of individual demographics such as parental status, personality, seniority, gender and marital status relate to work-family conflict.

Parental status: Married and single parents had more stress than non-parents and working parents with small and adolescent children often felt the strain of competing role demands from work and family (Fu & Shaffer, 2000; Quick et al., 2004; Byron, 2005). The authors claimed that parental demands increased with the number of children.

Personality: Individuals also added to their own stress through self-imposed demands, which could be associated with an overachievement drive and workaholism (Quick et al., 2004). However, Aryee et al. (2005) posited that individuals with proactive personalities elicited the support they needed and used the appropriate problem solving and coping strategies to promote work-family harmony. Byron (2005) found that those employees with better time management skills and coping styles tended to better manage work-family interference.

Senior management: Employee job level seemed to play a role in work-family conflict. For example, Drew and Murtagh (2005) claimed that employees who availed themselves to flexible work schedules such as working from home, reduced hours, and flexitime found that it was incompatible with holding senior management posts. They claimed that many senior male managers followed the "breadwinner" model and delegated family and caring activities to their partners. Bond (2004) found that managers experienced greater levels of work-life conflict and suggested that those employees who wanted to advance their careers would be required to carry greater job demands.

Gender: There was more research on the impact of work-family conflict on women than on men. Byron (2005) claimed that both males and females experienced different forms of work-family conflict. Drew and Murtagh (2005) maintained that for men it was about trying to resolve commuting or working time issues. For women, however, it was about having flexible arrangements for family and quality of life reasons. Shaffer and Fu (2000) found that women experienced greater levels of FIW conflict and that men experienced more WIF conflict. Fu and Shaffer claimed that while women were given increasingly more equal employment opportunities, the primary responsibility of family care still lay with them. Aryee et al. (2005) concurred that women experienced higher levels of parental overload because they gave more priority to family matters.

Marital status: Fu and Shaffer (2000) found that the employment status of spouses and the number of hours that spouses worked was positively associated with work-family conflict. The authors claimed that work-family conflict increased when both partners worked.

Other non-work factors such as family social support and perceptions of control also contribute to supporting employees in managing with their work family demands and these are discussed in the next section.

The moderating effects of social support on work-family conflict

There seemed to be mixed results in the area of social support in the context of work-family conflict. Social support was described as, "an interpersonal transaction that involves emotional concern, instrumental aid, information or appraisal and is generally conceived as a coping mechanism" (Gore as cited in Aryee et al. 2005, p. 135). At work, social support is obtained from supervisors and colleagues. In the family, it is obtained from a spouse or partner, extended family members and domestic workers (Ayree et al.). Fu and Shaffer (2000) considered two specific types of social support: domestic and spousal. They classified spousal support as *emotional* (including caring and listening empathetically) and *instrumental* (helping with household chores, seeing to the needs of the children, etc.). The authors maintained that the majority of families in Hong Kong relied on parents and domestic help for assistance with childcare and household responsibilities, which they posited, reduced stress. However, they found domestic support had a reverse-buffering effect, when parental demands were low and domestic support was high. They attributed this to the perception that domestic helpers were seen as a burden rather than an asset for those employees who had no children or older children. The authors maintained that having domestic help sometimes became more of a source of conflict instead of support as it meant additional responsibilities, i.e. making contractual agreements, preparing lists for daily or weekly tasks and seeing to medical and holiday needs. There were no studies in South Africa that focussed on the effects of family and domestic support on work-family conflict and commitment.

Kirrane and Buckley (2004) suggested that social support was most effective when it emanated from the domain providing the strain, and could enhance the wellbeing of the other domain. The authors cited various findings that showed that social support negatively related to work-family conflict and suggested that it was an important factor in preventing stress and enhancing the integration of both family and work roles. They posited that social support

from work buffered stress for men while family social support buffered stress for women.

O' Driscoll et al. (2003) cited mixed findings on the buffering effects of social support on work-family conflict. The authors maintained that there were compelling reasons to believe that the more supportive supervisors and colleagues, the lesser the work-family conflict and psychological strain. They maintain that high levels of support from supervisors might moderate the relationship between the use of FFHRP and the levels of work and family conflict. They suggested that this support could take a more instrumental form, such as offering employees flexibility in their working arrangements to help them meet their family commitments.

The moderating effects of perceived control on work-family conflict

Control was defined as, "the belief that one can exert some influence over the environment, either directly or indirectly, so that the environment becomes more rewarding and less threatening" (Ganster & Fusilier as cited in Thomas & Ganster, 1995, p. 7). Examples of control include the flexibility to choose workday times, the freedom to make personal calls to check on children after school and options around childcare resources (Thomas & Ganster). Control helped employees to manage both work and family demands, reduced strain (Batt & Valcour, 2003), related negatively to work-family conflict (Batt & Valcour) and offered workers the opportunity to cope with occupational stressors such as work overload, health and travel demands (Perry-Jenkins et al., 2000). Thomas and Ganster concluded that employee control could be the key mechanism by which FFHRP affected work-family conflict and strain, implying that those FFHRP perceived as increasing employee perceptions of control played a mediating role in coping with the competing demands of work and family.

Interestingly, the study by Batt and Valcour (2003) found that travel demands associated with greater control. They offered three possible explanations. First, that overnight travel allowed employees a break from family demands. Second, long distance travel offered uninterrupted work time and therefore more control and finally, senior employees, who were more likely to travel,

had more control over their work domain by virtue of their position in the organisation. They also found that working parents with children at home experienced lower levels of control over managing work and family demands and that women reported lower levels of control over managing work and family than men.

This section covered the sources of work-family interference, the negative and positive impacts of the spillover and the moderating effects of both social support and perceived control, on work-family conflict. The next section focuses on the nature, benefits and main challenges associated with implementing family-friendly practices.

2. Family-friendly human resource practices

FFHRP are implemented by organisations for various reasons and with varying levels of success. The literature on FFHRP will be summarised in five subsections: a brief description of FFHRP, parental needs for FFHRP, the reasons that organisations implement FFHRP, the impact of FFHRP on individuals and organisations and finally, implementation challenges.

What are family-friendly human resource practices?

Veiga et al. (2004) categorised FFHRP into policies, benefits and services. They maintained that *policies* generally addressed work hours and offered flexibility around where and how work was done. Examples of policies included part-time work, job sharing, virtual working, telecommuting, flexitime and parental/family leave or leave of absence. *Benefits* included forms of compensation that protected employees against loss of earnings, e.g. medical aid expenses, paid vacation, paid maternity leave and personal time off. *Services* included onsite or nearby childcare facilities, counselling, employee assistant programmes, and the like.

Parental needs for FFHRP

Glass and Estes (1997) suggested that parents had differing needs depending on the ages of their children. For example, parents of children under five years need access to parental leave, high quality, affordable childcare information and facilities, and flexibility in working hours to emotionally and practically support and care for young children. As children progress to school, working parents need after school care, vacation leave, flexibility and time off for emergencies. They need this flexibility and access to relevant practices without fear for career consequences. The perceived flexibility in timing and location of work is particularly beneficial to working parents as this enables them to synchronise their work schedules to cater for unforeseen demands (Hill et al., 2001). Shinn, Wong, Simko and Ortiz-Torres (1989) claimed that working parents, who took advantage of flexitime options, increased the time they spent with their families each day. Wise and Bond (2003) suggested that female parents would continue to be the main users of FFHRP as long as the family care responsibilities remained primarily with them.

The National Study of the Changing Workforce, which surveyed 2958 employees, found that 47% of employees said that they would sacrifice pay and benefits to take care of sick family members. Parker and Allen (2001) maintained that women were more likely to leave their employers for improved benefits. Both male and female respondents wanted the flexibility to manage their career advancement in line with family needs, without compromising their chances of eventual success (Veiga et al., 2004).

Reasons organisations implement FFHRP

There were a number of reasons that organisations implemented family-friendly practices. First, they implemented them to provide employees with family support (Wise & Bond, 2003). Second, it was seen as the ethical thing to do (Veiga et al., 2004). Third, practices were implemented to avoid the negative consequences of non-compliance with legislative measures and statutory requirements. The practices created public awareness of the

“family-friendly” agenda and pressured organisations into compliance (Wise & Bond; Hayman & Summers, 2004; Veiga et al.). Fourth, there was anecdotal evidence to suggest that businesses benefited directly and indirectly from the implementation of family-friendly practices, i.e. through improved performance levels, containing costs, managing resources, remaining competitive (Bond; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004) and by cultivating a good public image with government and unions (Glass & Estes, 1997). Fifth, larger organisations had the economic and manpower resources to offer FFHRP such as flexitime, vacation days and sick leave because they had freedom, control and more resources than smaller organisations with reduced economic means (Parker & Allen, 2001).

Not much seemed to be said in the literature about how smaller organisations dealt their work-family conflict issues. Rotando, Carlson and Kincaid (2003) suggested that smaller organisations did not necessarily implement FFHRP, as the associated costs would impact on their viability. However, Hill et al. (2001) argued that some smaller organisations could be more flexible by nature, e.g. “dot.com” or start-up companies. In the local context, it was noted that while paid maternity leave was legislated, South Africa (SA) did not have legislation advising or instructing local organisations to practice flexible work options or any of the other commonly offered practices. Sanichar (2004) suggested that this was because SA was giving priority to other more important labour issues, i.e. minimum salaries, employment equity and unemployment.

The impacts of FFHRP

Several studies reflected both anecdotal and empirical evidence to support the favourable impacts of FFHRP. These ranged from organisational citizenship behaviour (Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004), improved levels of organisational performance (Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000), improved productivity (Konrad & Mangle, 2000; Poelmans & Sahibzada), lower levels of absenteeism (Hayman & Summers, 2004), improved talent attraction and retention strategies (Wise & Bond, 2003), and becoming an employer of choice (Wise and Bond). The research also pointed to other favourable

impacts such as increased affective commitment (Grover & Crooker, 1995; Haar & Spell, 2004), decreased continuous commitment (Casper et al., 2002) and reduced turnover intention (Grover & Crooker; Casper, et al.).

For **employees**, the favourable outcomes of FFHRP were associated with satisfaction with work-family balance, reduced work-family conflict, affective commitment, reduced related stress (Poelmans et al., 2003), job satisfaction (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000), reduced work-family conflict and lower levels of psychological stress (Mauno, Kinnunen, & Pyykkö, 2005).

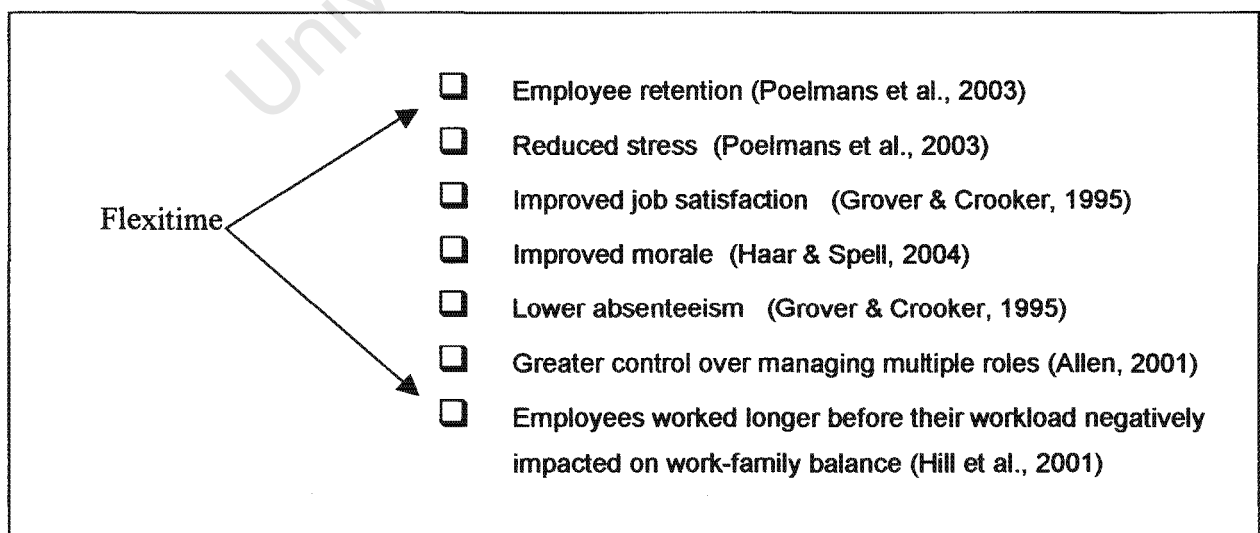
While there is a great deal of anecdotal evidence about the impacts of FFHRP, the empirical evidence seemed to be limited to a few practices, namely, flexitime, parental leave options and childcare facilities.

Impacts of flexitime

There were a number of impacts associated with flexitime and these are outlined in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1.

Impacts of flexitime



Impacts of parental leave

Haar and Spell (2004) found that the employee perceptions of the value of paid parental leave options positively related to employee commitment, i.e. employees found this benefit significant enough to stay with the company. In addition, they found that employees of childbearing age (i.e. younger than 44 years) valued parental leave and childcare subsidies more highly and felt an obligation towards the organisation.

Impacts of childcare information and facilities

There were mixed results on the impact of childcare information and facilities. Glass and Estes (1997) and Poelmans et al. (2003) found that the provision of onsite childcare facilities positively affected employees' decisions to remain at a company. Poelmans et al. found that enrolment in day care centres also associated with lower absenteeism. However, Grover and Crooker (1995) cautioned that, "assertions that employer-sponsored child care reduces workers' absenteeism or tardiness, or that it increases workers' productivity or job satisfaction are not supported by credible research" (p. 272). Haar and Spell (2004) found that perceived value of childcare subsidies had a negative relationship with both affective and normative commitment, which they attributed to the low monetary value of the practice, i.e. \$10 per week.

Aside from the mixed results mentioned above, other negative impacts associated with the implementation of family-friendly practices in general include the increased costs of providing the practices, difficulties with supervising and coordinating flexible work schedules, and the necessary changes needed in the organisational culture to support the adoption of the practices by both supervisors and employees (Scandura & Lankau, 1997). Siegel et al. (2005) claimed that to date, researchers and HR practitioners had largely focused on the impacts of content-based programmes such as flexible work schedules and onsite day-care centres because they were associated with reduced work-life conflict. He cautioned that this could be problematic because of mixed results that did not yield the return on investment anticipated by organisations. Instead, Grover and Crooker (1995) posited that,

“the elements of family responsiveness, that is, the specific policies, need to be analysed individually in order to help organisations design more effective human resource systems” (p. 273).

Challenges associated with implementing FFHRP

There are a number of challenges associated with the implementation of FFHRP. These range from unsupportive organisational cultures (i.e. supervisors, policies, colleagues, issues of fairness) to employee reluctance to use FFHRP due to, amongst other things, career consequences.

Organisational culture

There is general empirical evidence to support the proposition that unsupportive work environments impact on the actual employee use of family-friendly practices (Thomas & Ganster, 1995; Thompson et al., 1999; Perry-Jenkins et al., 2000; Allen, 2001; Bond, 2004; Mauno et al., 2005). For example, Thompson et al. referred to a study of 80 major United States corporations where only 2% of employees participated in family-friendly programmes as a result of an unsupportive work environment.

According to Tombari and Spinks (1999, p. 186), “organisational cultural norms do not change as quickly as market forces and workforce demographics, deeply entrenched work ethics, unwritten rules and unspoken behavioural expectations are hard to document, measure and modify.” For example, an organisation that rewards employees for working long hours would be inconsistent in offering flexitime or job sharing, as this might not be part of the organisational culture. This sends mixed messages to employees and makes performance management and compensation systems difficult to manage (Allen, 2001).

Supportive work environments are associated with lower levels of work-family conflict, enhanced job satisfaction and increased organisational commitment (Thompson et al., 1999; Allen, 2001; O’ Driscoll et al., 2003; Bond, 2004; Muano et al., 2005). In contrast, unsupportive organisations have been

associated with increased work-family conflict, less job satisfaction, reduced commitment and greater turnover intent (Allen).

Supervisor support

Thompson et al. (1999), Allen (2001) and O' Driscoll et al. (2003) maintained that family-friendly practices in themselves did not reduce work-family conflict but when combined with supportive supervisors and organisations, work-family conflict was reduced. Thomas and Ganster (1995, p.7) described a supportive supervisor as, "one who empathises with the employee's desire to seek balance between work and family responsibilities". According to Thompson et al. and Allen, this support takes the form of emotional, practical and social support, i.e. by accommodating an employee's need for flexibility, allowing access to personal telephone calls, allowing flexibility for child or eldercare arrangements and permitting a child to be brought into work when the baby sitter did not come to work.

O' Driscoll et al. (2003) found that supervisor support moderated work-family conflict amongst individuals who experienced high levels of conflict. According to Thompson et al. (1999) as much as supervisors had the opportunity to advance FFHRP, they could also thwart its use if they were unsupportive. Unsupportive behaviours were manifested when supervisors refused employees access to the family-friendly practices, applied them unevenly, and reinforced cultural norms that undermined employees' efforts to integrate their work and family lives.

Starrels (1992) mentioned five supervisor biases that may have contributed to the levels of implementation success. First, some supervisors measured dedication by length of hours employees worked and the willingness to attend informal, after work get-togethers. Second, supervisors may see men as "wimps" for taking care of children as this role is relegated to women. Third, supervisors may believe that working parents should be able to manage the multiple demands of work and family adequately if they wanted to work and have children. Fourth, they may view parental leave as disruptive to career progression. Finally, they may have viewed working parents who worked

reduced hours for childcare as not being serious about their work contributions and careers. Poelmans and Sahibzada (2004) offered further insight into this behaviour and claimed that some of these supervisors belonged to a generation who worked long hours and were required to make many personal sacrifices to progress. These sacrifices included working long hours, travelling, living away from home and sacrificing parenthood. As a result, they expected and demanded the same commitment from their employees and implicitly perpetuated cultural values that proved stronger than formal policies.

Employee reluctance to use FFHRP

Despite the numerous acclaimed benefits of FFHRP mentioned earlier, employees appeared to be reluctant to use these practices because they believed that their careers and advancement opportunities would be jeopardised through participation (Thompson et al., 1999; Behson, 2002; Drew & Murtagh, 2005). This sometimes forced employees into choosing between the “fast track” career advancement and the “mommy/ daddy track” (Behson; Veiga et al., 2004). Veiga et al. cautioned that employers needed to ensure that they were not sending mixed messages to employees regarding the personal costs associated with using FFHRP.

Another reason for the reluctant use was the extent to which the FFHRP met the needs of employees. For example, Thompson et al. (1999) found that employees who were married, female or had children were more likely to use work-family benefits when the practices were *relevant to them* and *helped them* to manage their work-family demands. Reluctant use was also attributed to the lack of knowledge about the FFHRP, the manner in which the practices were operationalised (Thompson et al; Haar & Spell, 2004) and the value attached to FFHRP (Haar & Spell).

Fairness associated with family-friendly practices

Parker and Allen (2001) defined the perceived fairness of work-family benefits as, “a belief about the exchange relationship between employees and employers that deals with the offering and usage of work/family benefits. Individual employees may view this exchange as either fair or unfair” (p. 454). Siegel et al. (2005) found that procedural fairness moderated the relationship between work-life conflict and organisational commitment. They claimed that when employees’ perceived high levels of procedural fairness, they were less likely to respond negatively to high levels of work-life conflict. Grover and Crooker (1995) found that employees’ perceptions of fairness were related to how the resources were distributed to people who needed them. For example, employees observing a co-worker receiving maternity benefits when needed, saw this as fair and this improved their attitude towards the organisation. Perceptions of fairness were also influenced by whether individuals stood to gain from the practices, i.e. perspective parents viewed parental leave more favourably (Parker & Allen).

Parker and Allen (2001) found that *race* was related to perceptions of fairness. They cited research that found that minorities in the United States of America (USA) were more likely to perceive practices related to diversity as more fair than Whites did. They offered two explanations; first, minorities were more receptive to policies designed to meet the professional needs of employees and second, the collectivistic culture of minority members meant greater reliance on extended family systems causing minorities to view work and family benefits more favourably.

Anecdotal reports indicated that some employees viewed family-friendly benefits as inequitable and discriminatory and this was referred to in the literature as “family-friendly backlash” (Parker & Allen, 2001; Wise & Bond, 2003; Poelmans & Sahibzada, 2004). This backlash manifested itself in employees feeling that they were unfairly excluded from some benefits and that they were unfairly subsidising other employees. For example, childless workers felt that they were subsidising working¹ parents and were expected to work longer hours, travel more and received fewer opportunities to take advantage of flexible work arrangements because of their parental status

(Parker & Allen). They found that parents of older children benefited less from the practices as their children were more independent and these parents may resent the fact that these practices were not available to them when they had young families.

Evidence of this backlash was apparent through the establishment of organisations such as The Childfree Network, an advocacy group that served as a voice for childless workers (Rothausen, Gonzalez, Clarke, & O'Dell, 1998). In their study, the authors proposed that parental benefits violated equity based rewards allocation and this resulted in co-worker resentment and a negative attitude towards the organisation. However, their proposition was not fully supported. Instead, they found that the backlash only applied to the attitudes about the on-site childcare centre and did not extend to the general and behavioural reactions of their sample.

This section covered the extent to which FFHRP impacted both organisations and employees and the challenges associated with implementing FFHRP. The relationships between organisational commitment, family-friendly practices and work-family conflict are discussed in the final section of this literature review.

3. Organisational commitment

This section is divided into three subsections. The first subsection provides the definitions on commitment and a conceptual framework for the discussion. The second subsection outlines the consequences of commitment (both positive and negative). The third subsection is devoted to an exploration of the relationships between commitment and family-friendly practices and work-family conflict.

Understanding the commitment constructs

Haar and Spell (2004) defined organisational commitment as, “the degree to which an employee identifies with the goals and values of the firm” (p. 12). Meyer and Allen (1997) developed a three-component conceptual model of commitment, which was widely used in the literature involving commitment constructs. The 3-component, multidimensional constructs were labelled as affective, continuance and normative commitment and commitment was treated as a psychological state. Meyer and Allen described the components as, “*Affective commitment* refers to the employees’ emotional attachment to, identification with and involvement in the organisation. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment with the organisation because they *want* to. *Continuous commitment* refers to an awareness of the costs associated with leaving the organisation. Employees whose primary link to the organisation is based on continuous commitment remain because they *need* to do so. *Normative commitment* reflects a feeling of obligation to continue employment. Employees with high levels of normative commitment feel that they *ought* to remain with the organisation” (p.67).

Consequences of organisational commitment

The literature on commitment referred to both the positive and negative consequences of commitment for both the individual employees and the organisation.

Positive consequences

Grover and Crooker (1995), Meyer and Allen (1997), and Haar and Spell (2004) highlighted a number of benefits associated with organisational commitment. These included reduced absenteeism, increased motivation, reduced turnover intention, improved job performance and organisational citizenship behaviour. They maintained that both affective and normative commitment were also linked to self-reported indices of psychological, physical and work-related stress.

Negative consequences of commitment

There is some debate amongst researchers about the type of commitment that organisations should welcome. Meyer, Allen and Smith (1993) cautioned that, "not all forms of commitment are alike and that organisations concerned with keeping employees by strengthening their commitment should carefully consider the nature of commitment they instil" (p. 539). They suggested that organisations, through their family-friendly practices, should be striving to attain affective commitment instead of continuance commitment as this seemed to be the wrong motivator for retention, i.e. employees stayed with an organisation because the opportunities outside the organisation were limited or because they felt bound to the organisation. However, Grover and Crooker (1995) suggested that, "organisations should perhaps be more concerned with turnover than affective commitment to the organisation because turnover intention is a more direct, measurable consequence for the organisation" (p. 286).

Meyer and Allen (1997) outlined a few specific negative consequences of organisational commitment. First, blind commitment could lead to employees accepting the status quo and not challenging aspects of the business that needed to be challenged. This impacts on the organisation's ability to innovate and adapt to change and would have serious long-term business implications. Second, being committed might mean going beyond the call of duty for the employee and this may have spillover implications in other life roles for the individual seeking to balance work-family demands. Third, the authors claimed that committed individuals may have less inclination to leave the organisation and therefore may not invest sufficient time and effort in maintaining and growing their competencies to remain current and marketable. This hindered the performance of both the employee and organisation. For example, an organisation seeking to change its employee demographics for reasons such as employment equity might welcome a healthy turnover rate. Complacent employees become less marketable and less valuable to the organisation when their competencies did not remain current. Fourth, employees might feel "trapped" by the benefits they receive from the organisation, believing that these benefits may not be suitably matched outside the organisation. This

forces them to stay; yet they may not have job satisfaction. Fifth, employees with continuance commitment might be poor performers, and engage in limited organisational citizenship behaviours. Again, this has negative consequences for businesses; especially those engaged in the service industry where customer satisfaction is a competitive advantage.

The relationship between organisational commitment and FFHRP

Haar and Spell (2004) suggest that FFHRP facilitated employee commitment for three main reasons. First, employees remained committed when they benefited from the family responsive practices and liked the comfort of having them available. Second, when employees recognised and appreciated the organisation's commitment to helping employees cope with their work-family issues, regardless of whether they used the policies. Third, employees remained committed when they perceived high procedural fairness in the way family-friendly practices were implemented.

Use of FFHRP

Grover and Crooker (1995) found that individuals were relatively more attached to organisations that offered family-friendly policies, regardless of the extent to which the individuals personally benefited from the policies. For example, employees not of childbearing age viewed the policy of paid parental leave as equally valuable as someone who used the benefit. They offered three possible explanations for this. First, they maintained that employees saw the policy as supportive and therefore worthy of an employee response or obligation. Second, employees may be prospective users. Third, employees viewed organisations that provided practices as attractive to work for and fair in providing them.

Haar and Spell (2004) proposed that employees might use FFHRP because they felt obliged to and in return, they expected the organisation to provide additional benefits. Consequently, organisations might experience reduced turnover and greater commitment in exchange for the provision of the practices. However, they conceded that the perceived value of FFHRP differed amongst individuals depending on their personal circumstances and

this resulted in different levels of obligation and commitment amongst individuals.

Access to FFHRP

Employees who had access to FFHRP reported greater levels of affective commitment, less work-family conflict and were less likely to leave the organisations (Grover & Crooker, 1995; Thompson et al. 1999). Their research corroborated the findings by Thompson et al. that employee need for *flexible work scheduling* was positively related to turnover intentions. The authors found that, "*child care information referral* had a greater impact on affective commitment among employees eligible for that benefit" (Grover & Crooker, p. 271).

Knowledge of FFHRP

Haar and Spell (2004) found that knowledge of FFHRP led to a stronger emotional bond with the organisation. They also found that *working parents* were more knowledgeable about FFHRP indicating that this group showed more interest in work-family practices.

Demographic relationships with commitment

Haar and Spell (2004) found that the higher perceived value of work-family practices did not typically increase organisational commitment. They found that working parents with dependant children (i.e. under 18 years) moderated the relationship between flexible work hours and organisational commitment. This supported the theory that FFHRP was more salient when children were present (Grover & Crooker, 1995; Scandura & Lankau, 1997). Meyer and Allen (1997) reported a positive correlation between satisfaction with family-responsive benefits and commitment of employed parents of preschool-age children.

Perceived organisational support was positively related to affective commitment for married women and the support from supervisors and co-workers was related to a lower willingness to leave the organisation (Thompson et al., 1999). The influence that supervisors was important in the

development of affective commitment, as affective commitment was stronger when leaders were inclusive in decision-making, seen as considerate and fair in their treatment of employees (Meyer & Allen, 1997).

Female managers reported higher levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction when they worked for organisations that offered flexible work hours in the psychological contract (Scandura & Lankau, 1997).

Research Propositions

The objective of this study is to examine the effects of family-friendly human resource practices (FFHRP) on work-family conflict and organisational commitment, amongst working parents. Based on the research reviewed in the domain of family-friendly practices and their moderating effects on work-family conflict and organisational commitment, the following propositions are examined in this study.

Proposition 1a: The perceived value of FFHRP explains a significant proportion of the variance in affective organisational commitment (ACO), amongst working parents.

Proposition 1b: The perceived value of FFHRP explains a significant proportion of the variance in continuance organisational commitment (CCO), amongst working parents.

Proposition 1c: The perceived value of FFHRP explains a significant proportion of the variance in normative organisational commitment (NCO), amongst working parents.

Proposition 2: Working parents who use FFHRP experience significantly less work-family conflict than those who do not.

Proposition 3a: Utilisation of FFHRP will significantly positively correlate with the perceived supervisory support for their use amongst working parents.

Proposition 3b: Utilisation of FFHRP will significantly negatively correlate with the perceived lack of organisational support for their use amongst working parents.

Proposition 4: The availability of ICAS (Independent Counselling and Advisory Service) will moderate the relationship between work interference in family (WIF) and affective organisational commitment (ACO) amongst working parents.

Proposition 5a: The ability to control the work environment will moderate the relationship between work interference in family and affective commitment amongst working parents.

Proposition 5b: The ability to control the work environment will moderate the relationship between work interference in family and normative commitment amongst working parents.

Summary

The extent to which employees receive both work and family support seems to influence a number of factors. These range from business benefits such as improved retention, reduced absenteeism, increased motivation, improved job performance and organisational citizenship behaviour to employee related benefits such as lower levels of work-related stress, improved job satisfaction and higher levels of motivation. However, implementing work-related support mechanisms such as family-friendly programmes in themselves appear to be insufficient in ensuring ongoing usage and commitment. Organisations are required to pay close attention to how these programmes are being implemented and the extent to which organisational cultures are seen as supportive. To enable them to take informed decisions regarding the provision and use of FFHRP, organisations need to carefully analyse and isolation those FFHRP which make the most impact on work-family conflict. The research in this review indicates an association between access to policies and commitment. If organisations want to capitalise on their return on investment in FFHRP, they need to be careful about not sending mixed messages surrounding the personal costs associated with using family-friendly practices.

CHAPTER 3: METHOD

This method chapter is divided into four sections: research context, participants, procedure and measures.

Research context

The organisational context at the time of the study is an important consideration, as it will have impacted on the results. The study was conducted during a period of substantial transformation within the organisation. The transformation involved changing processes, roles, relocation of employees and the company head office, redundancies and retrenchments. There were a few positive spin-offs for some employees, such as promotions, exposure to new roles, fewer manual functions as a result of automation and inclusiveness with respect to process redesign and implementation. The organisation recognised that this was a difficult time for its employees and a number of support mechanisms were put in place to support employees through the transition. The existing employee assistance programme, ICAS (Independent Counselling and Advisory Service) was particularly active during this period; offering emotional and practical support, relocation advice and career counselling services to employees and their immediate family members.

In the context of this study, it is important to consider the impact of job losses and the shift to new roles as this may potentially impact on the level of organisational commitment at the time of the study. The downsizing in some departments involved the loss of management and colleagues. Aside from the emotional effects related to the "survivor syndrome" mentioned by Meyer and Allen (1997), the downsizing created the potential for increased responsibility amongst employees. At the same time, the uncertainty created by the change took up much emotional energy, leading to speculations, insecurities, physical illness (stress related) and guilt by those employees who were spared from job loss or having to relocate and uproot their families. According to Meyer and Allen, downsizing violates the implicit employment contract between employees and the organisation and this could lead to the loss of loyalty,

commitment and a lack of willingness by employees to display organisational citizenship behaviour, i.e. going the extra mile by helping co-workers and customers or volunteering for extra projects.

The transformation and resulting changes might have had a positive impact on commitment if the “survivors” felt a strong sense of affective and normative commitment towards the organisation as a result of being spared from the uncertainty, or if they perceived that the organisation valued their contribution enough to render them unaffected and if they thought that the organisation had acted fairly by following a proper consultation, retrenchment, communication and compensation process.

Participants

This study was conducted at a multinational petro-chemical organisation in South Africa. 146 employees responded to the survey resulting in a 65% response rate. 54% of the participants were female, 58% black and 76% were either married or living together. The average age of the respondents was 41.31 years ($SD= 8.86$). The majority of the respondents (71%), worked between 40-50 hours a week. The average tenure was 13.50 years ($SD= 9.27$). The occupational type of 41% of the respondents was managerial/ supervisory, with 38% holding sale/administration/ support functions and 21% in specialist/ technical/ professional categories. Of the respondents, 72% were working parents with at least 1 child. The majority of the parents ($N=103$), had school going children between ages of 6-18 years. The entire sample consisted of white-collar workers.

Procedures

The sample was chosen at random, based on company employee records and supplied by the Human Resources department. An online, self-report, web-based survey was distributed via the company’s internal email system to 252 staff. They were given one week in which to complete the survey. Twenty-six “out of office” emails were received for the duration of the survey, which reduced the population to 226.

The survey instrument was in English because it is the official business language in the participating company. The instrument was pilot tested with a 10-member sample from the population to ensure that the instructions were clear and to test the online mechanism. Based on the feedback from the pilot, the longer scales were split over two screens so that all the questions on a screen were visible without scrolling. The colour and font were adjusted to make the presentation more appealing.

A number of strategies were employed to increase the response rate. First, the email invitation carried the company's endorsement and explained the objectives of the survey. It appealed for the help of employees in completing the survey. Second, it gave an indication of the time commitment, i.e. twenty minutes. Third, the covering email assured respondents of the confidentiality of their responses and informed them of the voluntary nature of participation in the survey. The survey design prompted participants to allocate a unique code to their response; this provided for anonymity. The pin code and survey design also allowed them to regain access to the survey if they were unable to complete it in one sitting. Fourth, a reminder was sent four days after the survey was distributed, thanking those who had already responded and appealing to the remainder to respond by the deadline. Fifth, respondents were encouraged via telephone calls and personal visits by the researcher.

Measures

Excluding the demographic section, the survey measured nine broad constructs using established scales and reliable alpha coefficients. Appendix A contains the list of the survey questions used in the final analysis.

Lack of organisational support was measured using a 16-item scale. Eight items were selected from the scale developed by Allen (2001) and eight from Thompson et al. (1999). The basis for selecting these items was the factor analysis loadings reported in these studies, which ranged from 0.6 to 0.8. Response options ranged from 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, on a 5-point Likert scale. Respondents indicated the extent to which they

perceived the organisation to be supportive of work-family issues, e.g.

"Employees are regularly expected to put their jobs before their families" and "To get ahead in this organisation, employees are expected to work more than 50 hours a week, whether at work or at home".

Work-family conflict was measured using an 18-item scale developed by Carlson et al. (1995) which integrated the bi-directional and multi-dimensional aspects of work-family conflict, namely, i.e. *work interference with family (WIF)* and *family interference in work (FIW)*: time-based, strain-based and behaviour-based. This scale was selected for its Cronbach's alpha reliability (α) of 0.85. Response options ranged from 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Control over work-family environment was measured using the scale developed by Thomas and Ganster (1995) to measure the perceptions of control over work and family environments. A 5-point Likert scale was used, 1= very little, 5= very much. A sixth column was added to cater for non-parents for whom some of the questions were not applicable. The α reliability was 0.86.

The survey measured 14 *family-friendly human resource practices (FFHRP)* of which the participating company offered 13. The company's HR Policies Manager confirmed that these FFHRP were offered by the organisation and made reference to the company's website for the details of the policies that governed their application. The 14th practice, *Childcare/eldercare facilities and information* was include in the study for two reasons; first, the literature frequently referred to this practice and there was specific empirical evidence about this practice, and second, the HR Policies Manager confirmed that the organisation had received several requests from the staff council (a representative staff body) to make this benefit available to staff.

All 14 *FFHRP* were measured using a three column-multiple checklist and respondents were asked to select all relevant items. Column 1= FFHRP offered by the organisation; Column 2 = FFHRP currently used or used in the past and Column 3 = FFHRP that they would use in future. Based on the

scoring method used by Allen (2001), Poelmans et al. (2003) and Haar and Spell (2004), scores were calculated by adding up the number of benefits selected by participants. Higher scores indicated better knowledge of availability, current use and future use. *FFHRP* that were offered, used and would be used in future were coded as "1" and those that were not selected were coded as "0".

Value attached to FFHRP was measured using 5-point Likert scale (1= no value, 2= little value, 3= reasonable value, 4= valuable and 5 = extremely valuable). Respondents were asked to answer the questions based on the value they attached to each of practices offered by the participating organisation. The scale was used by Haar and Spell (2004), with the $\alpha = 0.83$.

Supervisor support was measured using 5-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, 5 = strongly agree) and assessed the extent to which supervisors were supportive of employees' desire to find balance between work and family responsibilities. The 9-item scale developed by Shinn et al. (1989), was reported and used by Thomas and Ganster (1995) with the $\alpha = 0.83$.

Perceived fairness of FFHRP was measured using 5 of the 12 scale items taken from Parker and Allen (2001) based on a factor loading ranging from 0.49 to 0.55, $\alpha = 0.80$. This scale measured the extent to which it was perceived as fair for organisations to allow parents to take care of family commitments.

Organisational commitment was measured with the scale developed by Meyer and Allen (1984) and adapted by Bagraim (2001). The 12-item scale measured affective ($\alpha = 0.85$), continuance ($\alpha = 0.79$) and normative commitment ($\alpha = 0.83$), in the context of having the *FFHRP* available in the organisation. Items were rated on a 5-point response scale ranging from 1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Family and external social support was measured using the scale developed by Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison and Pinneau (1975). A 5-point response

scale was used (1= rarely, 2= seldom, 3= not sure, 4= occasionally and 5= often). A sixth column reflected "not applicable" to cater for those respondents for whom some questions were not applicable. The internal reliability of the scale was acceptable ($\alpha = 0.68$). The items measured the emotional and social support from external and family sources and were adapted to construct separate scales to reflect support received from the following: (a) partners (husband, wife, life partner), (b) parents (including in-laws and other extended family members), (c) ICAS (the independent counselling and advisory service offered by the participating organisation) and (d) domestic workers (any helper, nanny, and housekeeper employed by the employee).

Control variables such as *Gender, Age, Marital status, Tenure, Number of hours worked, Job grade, Occupational type, Number and Age of children* were included because of their relationship with dependant variables. *Gender* was coded as a dummy variable (female = 0 and male =1). *Age* and *Tenure* were reported in actual years. *Race* was measured in six categories and later recoded as 1=White and 2= black. *Marital status* was dummy coded as 1= married/living together and 2= single/divorced. *Job grade* and *Occupational type* were categorised as per company practices. *Parental status* was dummy coded 0= non-parents and 1= parents. The age of children was grouped into three categories, i.e. Preschool (under 5 years), School (between 6-18 years) and Adults at home (over 18 years) to assess the level of family responsibility (Butt & Valcour, 2003).

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

This chapter is divided into 6 sections: Exploratory factor analysis, Reliability analysis, Descriptive statistics, Correlation analysis, ANOVA analysis and Regression analysis. The chapter concludes with a summary of the propositions and their outcomes (see Table 10).

Exploratory factor analysis

Exploratory factor analysis using Principle-axis factor analysis with varimax rotation, was done to examine the underlying dimensionality of the scales (Hair, Babin, Money, & Samouel, 2003). An iterative process of factor analysis was conducted on each set of items until a clear factor structure emerged for each scale. Items that cross-loaded significantly were removed one by one and those items with a factor loading of less than 0.3 were removed (Hair et al.)

As expected, items from four scales loaded onto more than one factor reflecting the dimensions presented in the theoretical models. (1) *Work-family conflict* items loaded on three factors with eigenvalues greater than 1 (see Table 1). These were *Work interference in family*, *Family interference in work* and *Behaviour-based conflict*. (2) Organisational commitment items loaded onto three factors, namely, *Affective*, *Continuance* and *Normative commitment*. The first *Normative commitment* item, NCO1 ("Even if it were to my advantage, I do not feel it would be right to leave my organisation right now") was removed (see Table 2). (3) Items relating to perceived control over the work-family environment loaded onto two distinct factors; *Control over home* and *Control over work environment* (see Table 3). (4) *Social support* loaded onto two clear factors; support offered by Partners and support offered by Parents (see Table 4).

Following the process described above, factor analysis confirmed that the following scales were unidimensional scales: *Lack of organisational support*, *Supervisor support*, *ICAS support*, *Domestic support* and *Fairness of FFHRP*. The eigenvalues for each factor was greater than 1 for all of these scales.

Table 1.*Factor analysis for the work-family conflict scale*

Codes	Items	BEH	WIF	FIW
WIFT1	My work keeps me from my family responsibilities more than I would like	0.06	0.79	0.14
WIFT2	The time I devote to my work keeps me from participating equally at home	0.06	0.83	0.03
WIFT3	I miss family responsibilities due to the amount of time I spend at work	0.08	0.85	0.16
WIFS1	I'm too frazzled to participate in family responsibilities when I get home from work	0.18	0.68	0.01
WIFS2	When I get home from work, I am often so emotionally drained that it prevents my contribution to family activities	0.13	0.73	-0.01
WIFS3	Due to pressures at work, I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy when I get home	0.12	0.74	0.09
FIWS1	Due to stress at home, I am often preoccupied with family matters at work	0.15	0.07	0.75
FIWS2	The stress from family responsibilities makes it difficult to concentrate at work	0.22	0.09	0.89
FIWS3	Tension and anxiety from my family life often weakens my ability to do my job	0.14	0.10	0.81
WIFB1	The problem solving behaviours I use at work are not effective in resolving problems at home	0.62	0.09	0.26
WIFB2	Behaviours that are effective and necessary at work would be counterproductive at home	0.60	0.15	0.01
WIFB3	My behaviours that make me effective at work do not help me be a better parent/spouse/family member	0.67	0.18	0.09
FIWB1	The behaviours that work for me at home do not seem to be effective at work	0.83	0.10	0.19
FIWB2	Behaviours that are effective and necessary at home would be counterproductive at work	0.89	0.05	0.11
FIWB3	The problem solving behaviours I use at home are not effective in resolving problems at work	0.86	0.06	0.13
Eigenvalue		5.12	2.75	1.62
% Total variance		34.16	18.31	52.47
% Cumulative		1.62	10.80	63.26

Notes: N= 146 after casewise deletion of missing data; Varimax normalised; WIF=work interference in family; FIW= family interference in work; BEH= behaviour-based conflict; WIFT= time based work interference in family; WIFS= strain based work interference in family; FIWS= strain based family interference in work; WIFB= behaviour-based work interference in family; FIWB= behaviour-based family interference in work.

Table 2.*Factor analysis for the organisational commitment scale*

Codes	Items	ACO	CCO	NCO
ACO1	I feel a strong sense of "belonging" to this organisation	0.83	0.15	0.18
ACO2	I feel "emotionally attached" to this organisation	0.81	0.14	0.21
ACO3	I feel like "part of the family" in this organisation	0.87	0.05	0.18
ACO4	This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me	0.72	0.13	0.25
CCO1	It would be very costly for me to leave this organisation right now	0.13	0.83	0.01
CCO2	Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave this organisation right now	0.13	0.83	0.13
CCO3	I would not leave this organisations right now because of what I stand to lose	0.08	0.86	0.06
CCO4	For me personally, the cost of leaving this organisation would be far greater than the benefit	0.08	0.74	0.10
NCO2	I would feel guilty if I left my organisation right now	0.27	0.13	0.85
NCO3	I would not leave this organisation right now, because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it	0.24	0.07	0.81
NCO4	I would violate a trust if I quit my job with this organisation now	0.19	0.09	0.85
Eigenvalue		4.46	2.18	1.27
% Total variance		40.47	21.50	70.59
% Cumulative		40.47	61.97	72.56

Notes. N= 146 after casewise deletion of missing data; Varimax normalised; ACO= affective commitment; CCO=continuance commitment; NCO=normative commitment.

Table 3.*Factor analysis for the control over work and home environment scale*

Codes	Items	CTLhome	CTLwork
CTL1	How much flexibility do you have over the amount and quality of day care available for your children?	0.55	0.16
CTL2	How much choice do you have over the amount and quality of care available for a sick child?	0.55	0.12
CTL3	How much choice do you have in obtaining adult supervision for your child before/after school?	0.73	0.07
CTL4	How much flexibility do you have over the amount and quality of day care available for elder care?	0.70	-0.03
CTL6	How much flexibility do you have in arranging part time employment?	0.74	-0.02
CTL9	How much choice do you have over when you can take a vacation or days off?	0.11	0.64
CTL10	How much control do you have over when you can take a few hours off?	-0.07	0.99
CTL11	How much control do you have over the limit on personal calls you can make or receive?	0.12	0.62
Eigenvalue		2.34	1.72
% Total variance		29.25	21.51
% Cumulative		29.25	50.76

Notes. N= 146 after casewise deletion of missing data; Varimax normalised; CTL =control; CTLhome= control over home environment; CTLwork= control over work environment.

Table 4*Factor analysis for the family social support scale*

Codes	Items	Parents	Partner
PARTNER1	My partner goes out of his/her way to make my work life easier	0.12	0.57
PARTNER2	It is easy for me to talk to my partner	0.14	0.78
PARTNER3	I can rely on my partner when things get tough at work	-0.10	0.79
PARTNER4	My partner is willing to listen to my personal problems	0.15	0.53
PARENT1	My parents goes out of their way to make my work life easier	0.75	0.23
PARENT2	It is easy for me to talk to my parents	0.84	0.12
PARENT3	I can rely on my parents when things get tough at work	0.78	0.04
PARENT4	My parents are willing to listen to my personal problems	0.90	0.05
Eigenvalue		3.02	1.65
% Total variance		37.80	20.68
% Cumulative		37.80	58.47

Notes. N= 67; all numbers are after casewise deletion of missing data; Varimax normalised; Partner= husband, wife, life partner; Parents= in-laws, extended family members

Reliability analysis

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alphas (α) for the fourteen summary scales presented in Table 7. The co-efficient alphas in this study ranged from 0.77 to 0.92, exceeding the 0.7, which, according to Hair et al. (2003), is generally considered to be an acceptable level of reliability. The reliability analysis process followed the guideline provided by Hair et al. All final scales contained no fewer than three items, each of which was positively correlated.

Descriptive statistics

Table 5 showed high mean scores for *Value attached to FFHRP*, *Partner support*, *Parental support* and *Fairness of FFHRP*. The skewness of *Parental*

support (-1.5 , $M= 4.2$, $SD=1.05$) and *Partner support* (-2.33 , $M=4.65$, $SD=0.67$) indicate that working parents received strong emotional and instrumental support from their partners and parents.

The results indicated that the level of *WIF* in this study sample was moderate ($M= 3.2$, $SD= .93$). Likewise, the level of *FIW* was low ($M= 2.1$, $SD= .73$) and the level of *Behaviour-based conflict* was moderate ($M= 2.7$, $SD= .81$).

More participants responded to items associated with control over their work than their home environments. The mean value for *Control over work* environment was higher ($M= 3.38$, $SD = 0.89$) than *Control over family* environment ($M= 2.44$, $SD= 0.76$).

Table 5.

Descriptive statistics for summary scales

Variables	N	M	SD	SE	Skewness	Kurtosis
<i>Lack of organisational support</i>	146	3.20	0.77	0.06	-0.21	-0.89
<i>WIF</i>	146	3.19	0.93	0.08	-0.21	-0.74
<i>FIW</i>	104	2.15	0.73	0.06	0.90	1.05
<i>Behaviour-based conflict</i>	146	2.70	0.81	0.07	0.42	-0.41
<i>Control over home</i>	50	2.44	0.76	0.11	0.48	-0.07
<i>Control over work</i>	140	3.38	0.89	0.08	-0.14	-0.45
<i>Value attached to FFHRP</i>	146	4.01	0.56	0.05	-0.29	-0.23
<i>Supervisory support</i>	146	3.54	0.86	0.07	-0.81	0.72
<i>ICAS support</i>	75	3.67	1.13	0.13	-0.68	-0.06
<i>Domestic support</i>	53	3.64	1.24	0.17	-0.69	-0.43
<i>Partner support</i>	125	4.65	0.67	0.06	-2.33	5.49
<i>Parental support</i>	108	4.20	1.05	0.10	-1.50	1.68
<i>Fairness of FFHRP</i>	146	4.01	0.67	0.06	-0.44	-0.30
<i>ACO</i>	146	3.23	0.97	0.08	-0.45	-0.52
<i>CCO</i>	146	3.20	1.03	0.08	-0.31	-0.51
<i>NCO</i>	146	2.45	1.05	0.09	0.42	-0.75
<i>Use of FFHRP</i>	104	4.30	3.23	0.32	0.40	-0.40
<i>Knowledge of FFHRP</i>	104	8.68	3.44	0.34	-0.80	0.10
<i>Future use of FFHRP</i>	104	5.99	4.06	0.40	0.10	-1.20

Notes. FFHRP= family friendly human resource practices; N= number of respondents after casewise deletion of missing data; some questions provided for a 'not applicable' option; M= mean; SD=standard deviation, SE=standard error; WIF= work interference in family; FIW= family interference in work; ACO= affective commitment; CCO= continuance commitment; NCO= normative commitment.

Family-friendly HR Practices (FFHRP)

The descriptive statistics of the 14 family-friendly practices examined in the survey are presented in Table 6.

Use and knowledge FFHRP

The most commonly used family-friendly practices (i.e. used by 50% of the sample) were *Special leave* - for moving or time taken as compassionate leave ($N=73$, $M=.50$, $SD=.50$) and *Personal time off* - used for examinations or to take care of family matters ($N=72$, $M=.49$, $SD=.50$). The results in Figure 2 indicated that the use of *Work-family balance training* ($N=61$, $M=.42$, $SD=.49$) and *Sport and recreational facilities* ($N=61$, $M=.42$, $SD=.49$) were also amongst the better-used practices. The participating organisation offers employees an in-house, subsidised gymnasium, access to a fully functional business and social library, a subsidised bar facility and a number of sporting and family events throughout the year. Only 47% ($N=68$) of the employees indicated knowledge of the available flexible work practices, while such practices were used by only 25% of the employees ($N=37$).

Figure 2 reflects that respondents have knowledge of the FFHRP offered by the organisation and while they may not all be fully use them, their scores for future use are higher than that of current or past use of FFHRP (see Table 6). The knowledge of FFHRP offered by the organisation ($M=8.68$, $SD=3.44$) is much higher than current use ($M=4.3$, $SD=3.23$) or future use of FFHRP ($M=5.99$, $SD=4.06$).

The least commonly used FFHRP were *Child/elder care information and facilities*, *Paternity leave* and *Maternity leave* practices. It is worth noting that the participating organisation does not offer any assistance with childcare in terms of facilities, or subsidies. However, 40% ($N=58$) participants indicated that they would use this practice if it were offered by the organisation.

It was found that 83% of employees ($N=121$) were most knowledgeable about ICAS as a FFHRP. While only 36% of respondents indicated current use of this practice, the percentage of future use was much higher at 53%.

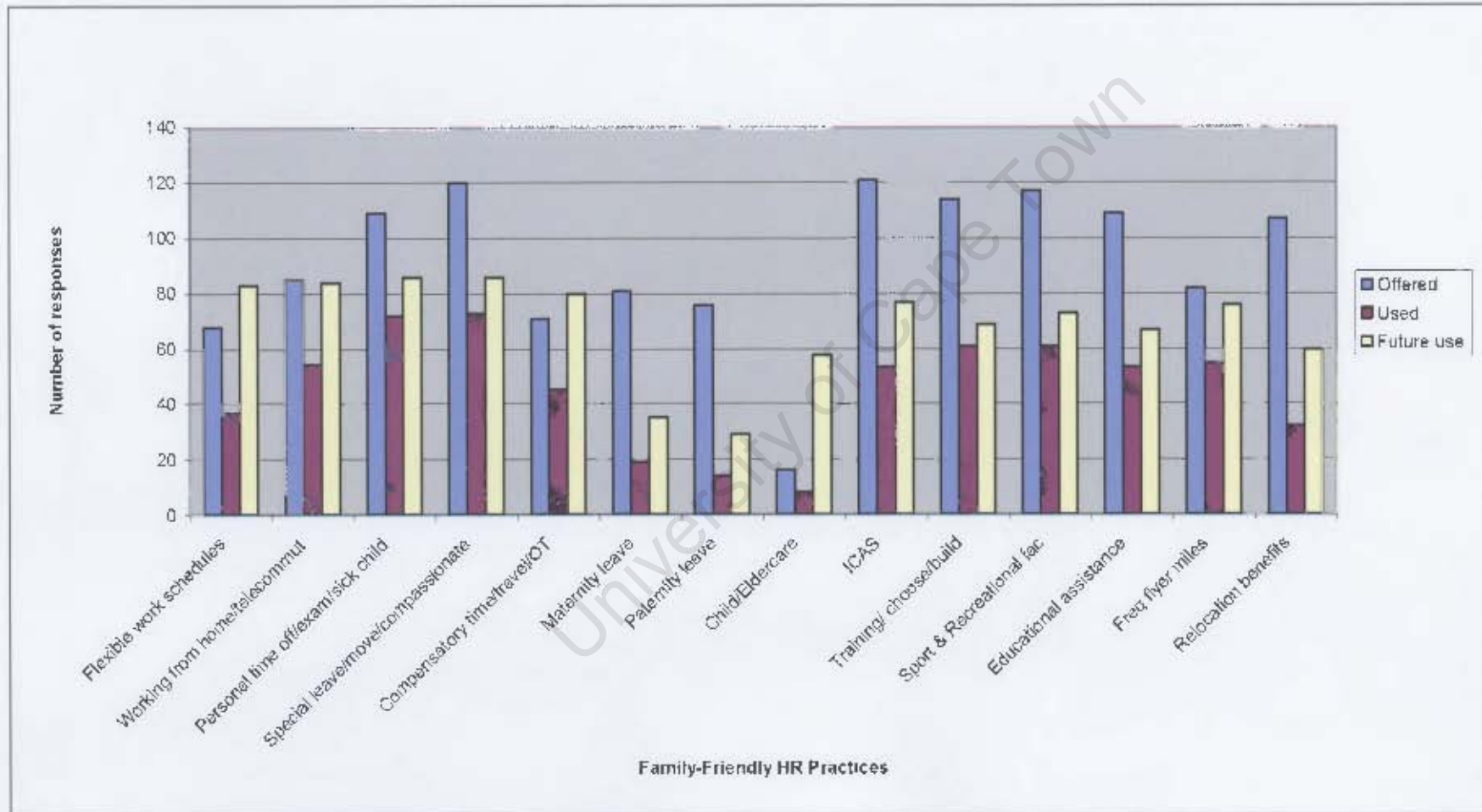
Table 6.
Descriptive statistics for FFHRP

Variables	Actual number of FFHRP selected	Mean	SD	SE	Skewness	Kurtosis
<i>Flexible work schedules O</i>	68	0.47	0.50	0.04	0.1	-2.0
<i>Flexible work schedules U</i>	37	0.25	0.44	0.04	1.1	-0.7
<i>Flexible work schedules F</i>	83	0.57	0.50	0.04	-0.3	-1.9
<i>Working from home O</i>	85	0.58	0.49	0.04	-0.3	-1.9
<i>Working from home U</i>	54	0.37	0.48	0.04	0.5	-1.7
<i>Working from home F</i>	84	0.58	0.50	0.04	-0.3	-1.9
<i>Personal time off O</i>	109	0.75	0.44	0.04	-1.1	-0.7
<i>Personal time off U</i>	72	0.49	0.50	0.04	0.0	-2.0
<i>Personal time off F</i>	86	0.59	0.49	0.04	-0.4	-1.9
<i>Special leave O</i>	120	0.82	0.38	0.03	-1.7	0.9
<i>Special leave U</i>	73	0.50	0.50	0.04	0.0	-2.0
<i>Special leave F</i>	86	0.59	0.49	0.04	-0.4	-1.9
<i>Compensatory time off O</i>	71	0.49	0.50	0.04	0.1	-2.0
<i>Compensatory time off U</i>	45	0.31	0.46	0.04	0.8	-1.3
<i>Compensatory time off F</i>	80	0.55	0.50	0.04	-0.2	-2.0
<i>Maternity leave O</i>	81	0.55	0.50	0.04	-0.2	-2.0
<i>Maternity leave U</i>	19	0.13	0.34	0.03	2.2	3.0
<i>Maternity leave F</i>	35	0.24	0.43	0.04	1.2	-0.5
<i>Paid paternity leave O</i>	76	0.52	0.50	0.04	-0.1	-2.0
<i>Paid paternity leave U</i>	14	0.10	0.30	0.02	2.8	5.8
<i>Paid paternity leave F</i>	29	0.20	0.40	0.03	1.5	0.3
<i>Child/eldercare facilities O</i>	16	0.11	0.31	0.03	2.5	4.4
<i>Child/eldercare facilities U</i>	8	0.05	0.23	0.02	4.0	13.8
<i>Child/eldercare facilities F</i>	58	0.40	0.49	0.04	0.4	-1.8
<i>ICAS support O</i>	121	0.83	0.38	0.03	-1.8	1.1
<i>ICAS support U</i>	53	0.36	0.48	0.04	0.6	-1.7
<i>ICAS support F</i>	77	0.53	0.50	0.04	-0.1	-2.0
<i>WF balance training O</i>	114	0.78	0.42	0.03	-1.4	-0.1
<i>WF balance training U</i>	61	0.42	0.49	0.04	0.3	-1.9
<i>WF balance training F</i>	69	0.47	0.50	0.04	0.1	-2.0
<i>Sport & recreation O</i>	117	0.80	0.40	0.03	-1.5	0.3
<i>Sport & recreation U</i>	61	0.42	0.49	0.04	0.3	-1.9
<i>Sport & recreation F</i>	73	0.50	0.50	0.04	0.0	-2.0
<i>Education assistance O</i>	109	0.75	0.44	0.04	-1.1	-0.7
<i>Education assistance U</i>	53	0.36	0.48	0.04	0.6	-1.7
<i>Education assistance F</i>	67	0.46	0.50	0.04	0.2	-2.0
<i>Frequent flyer miles O</i>	82	0.56	0.50	0.04	-0.3	-2.0
<i>Frequent flyer miles U</i>	55	0.38	0.49	0.04	0.5	-1.8
<i>Frequent flyer miles F</i>	76	0.52	0.50	0.04	-0.1	-2.0
<i>Relocation benefits O</i>	107	0.73	0.44	0.04	-1.1	-0.9
<i>Relocation benefits U</i>	32	0.22	0.42	0.03	1.4	-0.1
<i>Relocation benefits F</i>	60	0.41	0.49	0.04	0.4	-1.9

Notes. N= 146 after casewise deletion of missing data; O= offered by organisation; U= Currently/past use; F= will use this benefit in future; WF- work-family.

Figure 2.

FFHRP: Knowledge of, Use and Future use



Value attached to FFRHP

Respondents most valued those family-friendly practices related to: *Personal time off* ($N=104$, $M= 4.38$, $SD= 0.73$), *Educational assistance* ($N=104$, $M= 4.38$, $SD= 0.80$), *Special leave* ($N=104$, $M= 4.22$, $SD= 0.74$), *Flexible work schedules* ($N= 104$, $M= 4.16$, $SD = 0.97$), *Relocation benefits* ($N= 104$, $M= 4.13$, $SD =1.06$) and *Working from home* ($N= 104$, $M= 4.10$, $SD = 1.04$).

Fairness of FFHRP

There were two significant findings in this study related to *Fairness of FFHRP*. First, parents with children younger than 5 years considered the availability and use of FFHRP as fair ($p < .05$). Second, the result between *Race* and *Fairness* was significant ($p < .05$).

Correlation analysis

Examining the correlations amongst the study variables facilitated the testing of propositions one to five. The correlation matrix is presented in Table 7, highlighting values at the significance levels of $p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$ and $p < .001^{***}$.

Affective organisational commitment (ACO) correlated significantly negatively with *Lack of organisational support* ($r = -.26$, $p < .01$). *Continuance commitment (CCO)* correlated significantly positively with *Family interference in work* ($r = .27$, $p < .01$), indicating that commitment decreased as a result of increased family interference in work. *Continuance commitment* also negatively correlated with *Value attached to FFHRP* ($r = -.27$, $p < .05$). The commitment variables correlated with one another; *NCO* correlated significantly positively with *ACO* ($r = .51$, $p < .001$) and with *CCO* ($r = .22$, $p < .05$).

Knowledge of FFHRP correlated significantly positively with *Supervisor support* ($r = .24$, $p < .05$). *Use of FFHRP* correlated significantly negatively with *Behaviour-based conflict* ($r = -.26$, $p < .05$) and with *CCO* ($r = -.23$, $p < .05$). *Use of FFHRP* correlated strongly with *Supervisor support* ($r = .34$, $p < .001$) and positively with *Control over work environment* ($r = .21$, $p < .05$). The *Future use of FFHRP* correlated strongly with the *Past and Current use of FFHRP* ($r = .62$, $p < .001$) indicating a relationship between current and future use of FFRHP.

Table 7.
Correlation analysis for summary scales

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Lack of organisational support	3.20	.77	(.88)													
2. WIF	3.19	.93	0.53***	(.91)												
3. FIW	2.15	.73	0.20*	0.20*	(.73)											
4. Behaviour-based conflict	2.70	.81	0.32**	0.23*	0.31**	(.89)										
5. Control over work environment	3.38	.76	-0.28**	-0.19	0.00	-0.37***	(.77)									
6. Value attached to FFHRP	4.01	.56	0.05	0.12	-0.03	-0.11	0.03	(.81)								
7. Supervisor support	3.54	.86	-0.26**	-0.39***	-0.06	-0.27**	0.35***	0.06	(.92)							
8. Fairness of FFHRP	4.01	.67	0.23*	0.19	0.25*	-0.03	-0.03	0.49***	-0.01	(.81)						
9. ACO	3.23	.97	-0.26**	-0.12	0.08	-0.13	0.10	-0.13	0.16	-0.07	(.92)					
10. CCO	3.20	1.03	0.01	-0.01	0.27**	0.19	-0.12	-0.27*	-0.13	-0.06	0.15	(.89)				
11. NCO	2.45	1.05	-0.06	-0.09	-0.12	-0.01	-0.19	-0.05	-0.04	-0.02	0.51***	0.22*	(.91)			
12. Use of FFHRP	4.30	3.23	0.07	-0.02	-0.03	-0.26*	0.21*	0.10	0.34***	0.08	-0.11	-0.23*	-0.17	(.80)		
13. Knowledge of FFHRP	8.68	3.44	-0.03	0.06	-0.12	-0.13	0.13	0.09	0.24*	-0.05	0.05	-0.17	-0.19	0.19	(.83)	
14. Future use of FFHRP	5.99	4.06	0.18	0.08	0.11	-0.08	0.02	0.22*	0.18	0.20	0.05	-0.25*	0.04	0.62***	0.02	(.86)

Notes. N=101 after casewise deletion of missing data; *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001. (a) Cronbach's alpha reflected in brackets

Future use of FFHRP also correlated positively with the Value attached to FFHRP ($r = .22, p < .05$) and negatively with CCO ($r = -.25, p < .05$).

Fairness of FFHRP correlated significantly positively with Value of FFHRP ($r = .49, p < .001$) and with Lack of organisational support ($r = .23, p < .05$) as well as the extent to which Family interfered in work ($r = .25, p < .05$).

Supervisor support yielded a significant negative correlation with WIF ($r = -.39, p < .001$), Behaviour-based conflict ($r = -.27, p < .05$) and Lack of organisational support ($r = -.26, p < .01$). There was a significant positive correlation between Supervisor support and Control over the work environment ($r = .35, p < .001$). Control over work environment correlated negatively with Behaviour-based work-family conflict ($r = -.37, p < .001$) and Lack of organisational support ($r = -.28, p < .01$).

Proposition 2 assessed the extent to which working parents who used FFHRP experienced significantly less work-family conflict as a result of the use. The analysis was done through correlating Use of FFHRP with the three work-conflict variables: WIF ($N=107, M= 3.2, SD=. 93$), FIW ($N=107, M= 2.1, SD=. 73$) and Behaviour-based conflict ($N= 107, M= 2.7, SD=. 81$). There was partial support for this proposition and this study found that WIF increased as a result of working from home ($r = .21, p < 0.5$) yet decreased when child and eldercare benefits were used ($r = -.21, p < .05$). This is interesting finding as *Child and elder care facilities* are not offered by the participating organisation. It was found that WIF was negatively correlated with *Work-family balance training* ($r = -.22, p < .05$).

Behaviour-based conflict assessed the extent to which behaviours used at home or at work were transferable, correlated negatively with the use of the *Sport and recreational facilities* ($r = -.22, p < .05$), *Compensatory time off* in lieu of travel or extra time worked ($r = -.21, p < .05$) as well as the use of the employee wellness programme, *ICAS* ($r = -.20, p < .05$).

Similar to the findings of O' Driscoll, et al. (2003), the three work-family conflict variables correlated as follows: *Behaviour-based conflict* correlated significantly with *Lack of organisational support* ($r = .32, p < .01$), and with the other two conflict variables; *FIW* ($r = .31, p < .01$) and *WIF* ($r = .23, p < .05$). *FIW* correlated positively with *Lack of organisational support* ($r = .20, p < .05$) and *WIF* ($r = .20, p < .05$). *WIF* correlated highly significantly with *Lack of organisational support* ($r = .53, p < .001$).

ANOVA Analysis

ANOVA analysis was used to examine the differences in *Use of FFHRP* and *Race, Gender, Parental status, Age of children and Marital status*. There were no significant results. *Job grade* and *Occupational type* were highlighted as significant ($p < .05$) indicating that the higher the employees' job level, the higher their usage of FFHRP. ANOVA analysis showed that non-parents ($M = 4.4, SD = 0.45$) valued *ICAS support* significantly more ($p < .01$) than parents ($M = 4.0, SD = 0.45$). It must be noted that the sample of non-parents in this study was small ($N = 43$).

Further ANOVA analysis showed that non-parents, more than working parents, used *Sport and recreational facilities* ($p < .05$). It was also highlighted that more women than men used the amenities associated with *Sport and recreational facilities*.

Regression Analysis

Hierarchical multiple regression analysis was used to determine the relationships between organisational commitment outcome variables and seven control variables. Step 1 of the regression equation included the *Number of children, Marital status, Race, Gender, Age, Tenure and Job grade*. *Value attached to FFHRP* was entered in Step 2 and all six support variables were entered in Step 3 (i.e. *Supervisor Support, ICAS support,*

Parental support, Partner support, Domestic support and Lack of organisational support). None of the results were significant ($p > .05$)

Value attached to FFHRP and increased affective commitment

Propositions 1a to 1c concerned the extent to which the perceived *Value of FFHRP* explained a significant proportion of the variance in organisational commitment. To examine propositions 1a-1c, hierarchical multiple regressions were conducted. The value of each FFHRP was individually examined for outcome control variables *ACO, CCO, NCO. Parental status* and *Lack of organisational support* were entered into Step 1 of the regression equation to assess their relationship with the commitment variables. Only *Lack of organisational support* was found to be a significant predictor of *Affective commitment* (Beta = $-.254$, $p = .002$) in Step 1. The variables associated with the *Knowledge of FFHRP* and value associated with each of the 13 FFHRP offered by the participating organisation were added in Step 2. Only the value attached to *Sport and recreational facilities* was highlighted as having a significant impact on *Affective commitment* (Beta = $.301$, $p = .04$). (The results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 8.)

Proposition 1a was partially supported as value attached to *Sport and recreational facilities* accounted for a significant amount of unique variance associated with *Affective commitment* ($R^2 = .197$, $\Delta R^2 = .133$, $p < .05$). The same analysis process was followed for *NCO* and *CCO* and there was no support for propositions 1b and 1c (see Table 8).

Use of FFHRP and reduced work-family conflict

Proposition 2 concerned the extent to which working parents who used FFHRP experienced significantly less work-family conflict as a result of the use. The regression results for proposition 2 indicated that *Behaviour-based conflict* accounted for a unique amount of variance associated with *Use of FFHRP* (Beta = $-.249$, $p = .01$), ($N = 104$, $R^2 = .062$).

Table 8.

Regression analysis for knowledge and value of FFHRP and commitment

Variables	ACO	CCO	NCO
Step 1:			
<i>Parental status</i>	.064	-.012	-.100
<i>Lack of organisational support</i>	-.181*	-.061	.112
<i>R²</i>	.064*	.003	.018
Step 2:			
Value attached to:			
<i>Flexible work schedules</i>	.006	-.065	-.000
<i>Working from home/telecommuting</i>	-.024	.047	-.167
<i>Personal time off</i>	.042	.083	-.125
<i>Special leave</i>	.009	.120	.010
<i>Compensatory time off</i>	-.118	.011	.011
<i>Maternity leave beyond legislation</i>	-.193	.003	-.004
<i>Paid paternity leave</i>	-.098	-.162	-.128
<i>ICAS support</i>	.047	-.075	.168
<i>Training associated with work-family balance</i>	-.041	.011	-.082
<i>Sport and recreational facilities, events</i>	.301**	-.209	.125
<i>Educational assistance</i>	-.058	-.138	-.025
<i>Frequent flyer miles retention</i>	-.001	-.040	.158
<i>Relocation benefits</i>	-.043	-.066	-.078
<i>Knowledge of FFHRP</i>	.070	-.107	-.097
<i>R²</i>	.197*	.146	.155
<i>Δ R²</i>	.133*	.143	.137

Notes. N=146 after casewise deletion of missing data; * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$; ICAS = independent counselling advisory service

Use of FFHRP in a supportive environment

The extent to which supervisor and organisational support positively correlated with the use of family-friendly practices amongst working parents was tested in proposition 3. The results using regression analysis showed that there was support for proposition 3a; i.e. *Use of FFHRP* correlated significantly positively (Beta = .349, $p = .00$) with *Supervisor support* ($R^2 = .12$, $p = .00$). Proposition 3b assessed the extent to which *Lack of organisational support* contributed to the *Use of FFHRP* amongst working parents. The same analysis process was followed as with proposition 3a. There were no significant results for proposition 3b; therefore support for this proposition was found using regression analysis.

ICAS support

Proposition 4 assessed whether the availability of *ICAS support* moderated the relationship between *WIF* and *ACO* amongst working parents. Both propositions 4 and 5 were assessed using hierarchical regressions with centred variables to test the moderating relationships between *WIF* and the dependant variables (organisational commitment), to determine whether these relationships changed as a function of the level of the third variable (moderator, i.e. *ICAS support* in proposition 4 and *Control over work environment* in proposition 5).

In proposition 4, a hierarchical model was fitted with *ACO* as the outcome and WIF_c and $ICAS_c$ were added in Step 1 as predictors. The interaction $WIF_c \times ICAS_c$ was brought into Step 2 to test whether the availability of *ICAS support* would moderate the relationship between *WIF* and *ACO*. Proposition 4 was not supported by the results as no significant results were highlighted, indicating that the support provided by *ICAS*, did not moderate the relationship between *WIF* and *ACO*.

Control over the work environment and perceptions of WIF

Propositions 5a and 5b, assessed whether the ability of working parents to exercise control over their work environment would moderate the relationship between *WIF* and both *ACO* and *NCO*. Both propositions 5a and 5b were supported by the results indicating that the ability of working parents to control their work environment significantly moderated the impact of *WIF* for both *Affective commitment* ($N= 101$, $Beta = .329$, $p = 0.001$), ($R^2 = .128$, $\Delta R^2 = .108$, $p = .003$) and *Normative commitment* ($N=101$, $Beta = .251$, $p = .01$), ($R^2 = .114$, $\Delta R^2 = .062$, $p < .01$). The results are shown in Table 9. *Control over work environment* explained 10.8% of additional variance in *Work interference in family* and *Affective commitment* indicating that employees were more likely to be attached to the organisation when they had high levels of control over their work environment. *Control over work environment* explained 6.2% of additional variance in *Work interference in family* and *Normative commitment*.

Table 9.

Regression analysis for DV= ACO and NCO

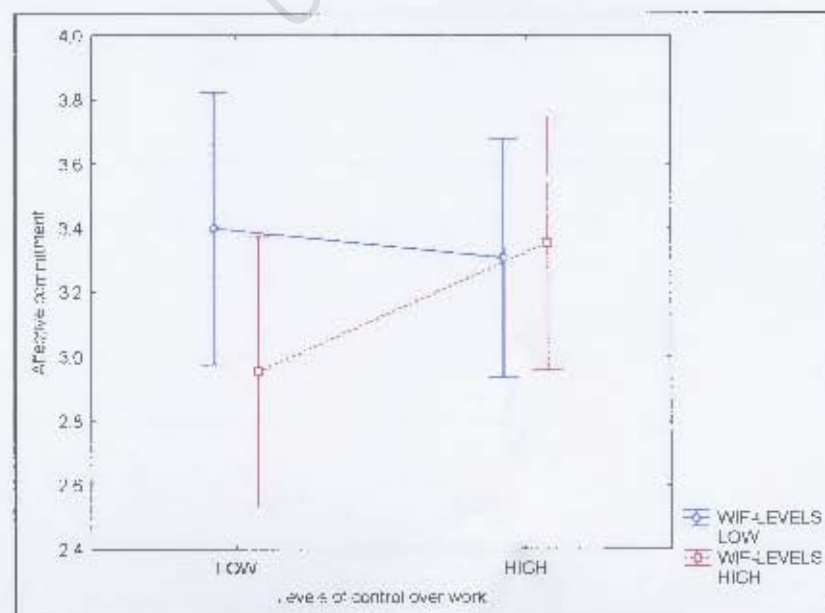
Variables	ACO	NCO
Step 1:		
WIF	-0.123	-0.139
CTLWorkc	0.056	-0.228*
R ²	0.020	0.051*
Step 2:		
WIFc x CTLWorkc	0.329***	0.251**
R ²	0.128**	0.114
Δ R ²	0.108***	0.062**

Notes. * $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$; N= 101 after casewise deletion of missing data. DV= dependent variable; WIFc=work-family conflict, centred variable, CTLWorkc=control over work environment, centred variable, ACO= affective commitment; NCO = normative commitment.

An important finding in this study was that having control over the work environment made no significant difference for those working parents with low levels of work-family conflict. However, when the perceptions of work interference with family were high, then *Control over work environment* moderated the relationship between WIF and ACO (see Figure 3).

Figure 3.

ACO, Control over work environment and WIF



Summary

This study provided empirical evidence to support the proposition that supportive supervisors facilitated the *Use of FFHRP* amongst working parents. Perceptions of *Control over the work environment* moderated the relationship between *WIF* and *Affective commitment* when working parents experienced high levels of work interference in family. The use of certain family-friendly practices correlated significantly with reduced work-family conflict while working from home increased *FIW*. The value attached to certain FFHRP accounted for 13% of the variance in *Affective commitment* amongst working parents. Table 10 reflects a summary of the main findings of this study for each proposition.

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Table 10.

Summary results of propositions

Proposition and level of support	Main findings
<p>1a. <i>Value of FFHRP</i> explains a significant proportion of variance in <i>ACO</i> amongst working parents</p> <p>Level of support: Partial</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Lack of organisational support</i> and the value attached to <i>Sport and recreational facilities</i> accounted for 13% of the variance in <i>ACO</i>. • Non-parents and women attached more value to <i>Sport and recreational facilities</i>
<p>1b. <i>Value of FFHRP</i> explains a significant proportion of variance in <i>CCO</i> amongst working parents</p> <p>Level of support: None</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant results
<p>1c. <i>Value of FFHRP</i> explains a significant proportion of variance in <i>NCO</i> amongst working parents</p> <p>Level of support: None</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant results
<p>2. Working parents who use <i>FFHRP</i> experience significantly less work-family conflict</p> <p>Level of support: Partial</p>	<p>Main findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>WIF</i> increased as a result of <i>working from home</i> and decreased with the use of <i>Child/elder care facilities</i> • <i>FIW</i> decreased when the training related to work-family balance, conflict handling, time management offered by the participating organisation was used by working parents • <i>Behaviour-based conflict</i> reduced as a result of the use of <i>Sport and recreational facilities</i>, <i>Compensatory time off</i> and <i>ICAS support</i>
<p>3a. <i>Use of FFHRP</i> will significantly correlate with <i>Supervisor support</i></p> <p>Level of support: Full support</p>	<p>Main findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The results indicate that the support offered by supervisors correlated positively significantly with the <i>Use of FFHRP</i> amongst working parents
<p>3b. <i>Use of FFHRP</i> will significantly correlate with <i>Lack of organisational support</i></p> <p>Level of support: None</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant results
<p>4. <i>ICAS support</i> will moderate the relationship between <i>WIF</i> and <i>ACO</i> amongst working parent</p> <p>Level of support: None</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant results
<p>5a. <i>Control over work environment</i> will moderate the relationship between <i>WIF</i> and <i>ACO</i> amongst working parents</p> <p>Level of support: Full support</p>	<p>Main findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Control over work environment</i> significantly moderated the relationship between <i>WIF</i> and <i>ACO</i> and accounted for 10.8% of the variance.
<p>5b. <i>Control over work environment</i> will moderate the relationship between <i>WIF</i> and <i>NCO</i> amongst working parents</p> <p>Level of support: Full support</p>	<p>Main findings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Control over work environment</i> significantly moderated the relationship between <i>WIF</i> and <i>NCO</i> and explained 6.2 % of the variance.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses the results of this study and specifically each proposition in the context of the organisation and the current literature on the topic. Limitations of this study are covered and recommendations for future research are presented.

The aim of this study was to examine the effects of FFHRP on work-family conflict and organisational commitment, amongst working parents.

Proposition 1: Perceived value of FFHRP and organisational commitment

This proposition identified the extent to which the perceived value attached to family-friendly practices explained the variance in organisational commitment. While propositions 1a-c were not fully supported, there was empirical evidence to suggest that working parents attached value to a specific FFHRP (i.e. *Sport and recreational facilities*) which accounted for a significant variance (i.e. 13%) in the level of affective organisational commitment experienced by working parents. This is of particular significance to the organisation which offers employees a subsidised in-house gymnasium, a fully functional business and social library, a subsidised bar facility (which encourages employees to relax in the company of their colleagues, while playing games such as pool, Trivial pursuit and darts). In addition, the organisation offers an annual Christmas function with partners, family days, sporting events and sponsored employee participation in events such as marathons. It is particularly interesting to note that non-parents valued this FFHRP more than parents. A possible explanation is that parents who are caught up with family responsibilities may not always have the time or inclination to use these amenities. The study also found that women valued this practice more than their male counterparts. This could be attributed to the convenience of having the amenities available, i.e. an in-house gymnasium or library saves the time, effort and cost associated with accessing external facilities and allows women to benefit from some form of relaxation and exercise.

It would be of interest for the participating organisation to note that more than 50% of the respondents in this study commonly used and valued those family-friendly practices associated with special and compensatory leave generally used for moving house, relocation, taking care of sick children, study and compassionate leave.

Given the previous findings discussed in the literature review chapter on the positive benefits of flexible work practices **for employees**, i.e. reduced stress (Poelmans et al, 2003), improved job satisfaction (Grover & Crooker, 1995) and improved morale (Haar & Spell, 2004), it was surprising to find that the use of flexible work schedules did not yield any significant results in this study. A possible explanation is that only 47% of employees in the study were aware of the practice being offered by the organisation and that only 25% of the sample indicated that they used it. It may well be that the organisational culture is viewed by employees as unsupportive. Whatever the reasons, this result has implications for the participating organisation as it has made a substantial investment in providing FFHRP and may not reap the benefits associated with FFHRP. According to the research cited earlier in the literature review chapter, the benefits associated with the provision of flexitime **for employers**, included employee retention (Poelmans et al.), reduced turnover (Haar & Spell), lower absenteeism (Grover & Crooker) and increased productivity (Glass & Estes, 1997). In her study, Allen (2001) found that employees rated full time flexible schedule work as the most valued benefit option, ahead of dependent care issues. Similarly, of the number of family-supportive policies that Thomas and Ganster (1995) considered, only flexible scheduling had any significant effect on outcomes such as psychological and physical job strain. Given this empirical evidence, the participating organisation would benefit from closely examining its implementation of flexible work scheduling practices.

Aside from the value attached to the various sport and recreational facilities, events and amenities offered by the organisation, this study did not find any other significant results linking the value employees attached to family-friendly practices and organisational commitment. These results are similar to the

study by Haar and Spell (2004) who found that the perceived value attached to FFHRP did not necessarily relate positively to organisational commitment.

Contextual factors during the period in which the study was conducted may have had an impact on the lack of organisational commitment. At the time of the study, the organisation was in the midst of a significant transformation process, which introduced new roles, processes and structural changes which resulted in uncertainty, job losses, relocation, and increased stress from taking on new roles. In light of this, organisational commitment may have been impacted as employees considered the manner in which the organisation was responding to them during times of change. Issues related to fairness and perceived control would have come into play (Meyer & Allen, 1997), if employees felt excluded from sufficient consultation during the transformation or if they did not support the business case for the organisational changes.

Proposition 2: Use of family-friendly practices reduces work-family conflict

Before discussing the impact of the use of FFHRP on levels of work-family, it must be noted that the levels of work-family conflict experienced by working parents in this study sample were not substantially high (i.e. *WIF*: $M = 3.2$, $SD = .93$; *FIW*: $M = 2.1$, $SD = .73$, and *Behaviour-based conflict*: $M = 2.7$, $SD = .81$). The positive correlation between the conflict that arose from the behaviour that employees exhibited both at home and at work and the two directions of work-family conflict suggested that working parents who experienced one form of conflict were also likely to experience the other forms of work-family conflict.

In this study the use of four specific FFHRP correlated directly with the reduction of work-family conflict. These were the support offered by the employee assistance programme, ICAS, the family-practice relating to sport and recreational events and facilities, the training offered by the organisation to assist employees meet their work and family demands and the time off offered in lieu of travel and extra time worked. These findings are important

for the participating organisation as it introduced a range of FFHRP to help employees to achieve work-family balance. The area of work-life balance is highlighted in the participating organisation's annual employee satisfaction survey results as an area of concern for employees, for the past four years and it is not a problem that is unique to South Africa. As a result the participating organisation responded with an initiative called "Choose". This is a training programme that helps employees to define their work and family/life priorities and develop a plan of action to ensure that priorities are addressed. It may be worth noting that both the ICAS and a number of recreational events offered by the participating organisation are inclusive of family members and that the services of ICAS counsellors are provided to immediate family members at no cost to the individual employee. Interestingly, the practices related to time off and training may also have a direct or indirect positive benefit for the family. Future research could look at the extent to which those FFHRP, which directly involved families, actually impact on work-family conflict management and commitment.

While the above-mentioned four practices were associated with a reduction in work-family conflict, the results indicated that working parents who worked from home experienced moderately more *Work interference in family*. There is a growing body of literature to support this finding (Poelmans et al, 2003; Quick et al., 2004). Quick et al. suggested that the use of technology blurred the boundaries between home and work and increasingly employees were expected to be available beyond traditional "work" hours, leading to greater levels of work-family pressure. This finding is important for the literature on work-family conflict and to organisations. If the purpose of introducing FFHRP is to reduce work-family pressure and instead, working from home is increasing the pressure and stress, then the aims of the organisation are in conflict and this could be sending mixed messages to working parents about the real intentions behind FFHRP. This may also impact on the positive benefits associated with the use of FFHRP, for example, organisational attachment. Grover and Crooker (1995) found that FFHRP were linked to organisational attachment and suggested that the provision of these benefits may signal to employees that the organisation cared about their wellbeing, which in turn fostered greater commitment to the company.

In assessing whether any of the demographic variables in this study significantly related to work-family conflict, it was found that the employee job level and the type of occupation were highlighted as significant. The results in this study suggest that the more senior the employee, the more likely they are to use FFHRP. Several possible explanations could be offered for this finding. First, senior employees in the organisation may be more knowledgeable about the practices and how they work, by virtue of the fact that they have more exposure and access to information. Second, senior employees have more autonomy over the application of the practices, especially if they are in supervisory roles. Third, a number of the practices are more relevant to senior managers by virtue of their positions and job roles, e.g. relocation benefits and frequent flyer miles. Fourth, senior and managerial level employees are in a better position to exercise control over work environment in terms of flexible work scheduling and this is more likely to increase with seniority and levels of responsibility within the organisation. Fifth, senior managers are more likely to experience higher levels of work-family conflict as a result of working longer hours and travel requirements.

Proposition 3a: Supervisor support in promoting the use of FFHRP

As outlined in the results chapter, this study found that supportive supervisors significantly influenced the extent to which working parents used FFHRP. The support for this proposition is important for the participating organisation for a number of reasons. First, employees are more likely to use family-friendly benefits when their supervisors are seen to be supportive. Therefore, ensuring that supervisors are placed in a position to support employees would be important for the organisation. Second, supervisors are in a unique situation to understand the needs of working parents and thus in a prime position to balance organisational and employee needs. Third, supervisors are gatekeepers of FFHRP and if they are perceived as supportive and actual users of the family-friendly amenities themselves, then the negative consequences associated with the use of FFHRP, namely, negative career consequences, are unfounded since these supervisors have progressed to managerial levels even though they use family-friendly practices. These findings are similar to those of O' Driscoll et al. (2003) who maintained that the supervisor often buffered the effects of work-family conflict on individuals.

Allen (2001) highlighted two findings that could shed light on the results of this study. First, she found that family supportive organisation perceptions (FSOP) mediated the effect that family-supportive supervisors had on work-family conflict. Second, she claimed that it was important to disentangle perceptions of supervisor support from perceptions of organisational support, as employees may perceive their supervisors as more family supportive than the organisation and visa versa. In line with Allen's claims, this study found a significant correlation between the levels of supervisory support and the use of family-friendly practices, but no significant correlation with organisational support.

Proposition 3b: The role of organisational support and use of FFHRP

The results in this study did not confirm the proposition that perceived *Lack of organisational* support for FFHRP would result in them not being used. Nevertheless, there are implications for the organisation as researchers claimed that a lack of a supportive work-family culture impacted on the use of FFHRP (Thompson et al., 1999; Allen, 2001) as well as reduced the level of work-family conflict (Thompson et al; Bond, 2004; Muano et al., 2005). Poelmans and Sahibzada (2004) maintained that implementation did not necessarily translate into actual use and this was apparent in the participating organisation. While a number of the family-friendly practices were available for a number of years and they were featured on the company's HR website, it was interesting to note that there were still employees who were unaware of the practices and benefits available to them.

It is therefore recommended that the participating organisation engage employees on the issue of limited use of FFHRP as this could be attributed to a number of factors already mentioned. These factors could pertain to the inconsistent application of the practices, the possible lack of supervisor training in implementing the practices, organisational communication problems and the lack of employee engagement in introducing the practices. Distrust could also play a role if employees perceive the organisational culture as unsupportive, especially if they see little evidence of reduced work hours or

improved work-family balance. Often, the lack of organisational and supervisory support is subtle and found in deeply entrenched work ethics, unwritten rules and unspoken behavioural expectations, which are difficult to document, measure, challenge and modify (Tombari & Spinks, 1999).

Perceived Fairness associated with FFHRP

There were two significant findings in this study related to the fairness associated with the provision of family-friendly practices. First, parents with children younger than 5 years considered the availability and use of FFHRP as fair ($p < .05$). This could be attributed to the need for flexibility amongst working parents with very young children. In some instances this need may be related to working parents being able to provide emotional or instrumental support, for example, when children are ill or to look after their children when the child minder does not come to work. Second, the result between *Race* and *Fairness* was significant ($p < .05$). In turning to the literature for possible explanations, it was found that Parker and Allen (2001) cited previous research that showed that minorities in the United States of America (USA) were more likely than Whites, to perceive FFHRP as fair. They surmised that because of their experiences with discrimination within organisations, minorities in the USA were more receptive to benefits designed to help meet the needs of employees. The authors claimed that another likely explanation lay in the collectivistic culture of minority members where there was greater reliance on extended family systems. Similar inferences could be drawn to the "apartheid" situation in South Africa where blacks were, prior to 1994, considered "minority groups" both socio-economically and politically.

Proposition 4: Moderating effects of ICAS

There was no support for the proposition that the organisation's employee assistance programme, ICAS, which is an independent counselling facility offered to all employees and their immediate families, moderated the relationship between work interference in family matters and affective commitment. Eighty three percent of employees in this study were most knowledgeable about this family-friendly practice. This may be attributed to the fact that the Health Services unit in the participating organisation actively

marketed this facility and given the organisational changes mentioned in the context of this study (Method chapter), there was particular focus on this amenity during the study period. Results in this study revealed that non-parents valued this practice significantly more than parents ($p < .01$). This is a surprising result that the company may choose to examine in more detail. It must be noted that the sample of non-parents in this study was small ($N = 43$).

Proposition 5: Moderating effects of control over work environment

This study makes a contribution to the existing body of literature on control as a moderator in work interference in family matters and organisational commitment. The results for propositions 5a and 5b reflected that perceptions of control over the work environment significantly impacted the relationship between work interference in family and the levels of affective and normative organisational commitment (see Table 9, in Results chapter). This suggests that working parents were more likely to be committed to the organisation when they experienced a sense of control over the work environment as this may have lessened the pressure associated with work interference in family. Some examples of control in the work environment include the ability to choose start/end times at work, having the freedom to make personal calls to check on sick children or on the safety of children after school and being able to exercise flexible scheduling. Thomas and Ganster (1995) found that this form of control lessened the strain that parents felt.

The results in this study show that perceptions of control at work moderated the effects of work interference in family matters on affective commitment to the organisation, when employees experienced high levels of work-family conflict (see Figure 7, in the Results chapter). This has implications for the organisation, as it needs to explore the mechanisms that increase perceptions of control amongst employees who experience high levels of work interference in family. This can be done through employee mechanisms such as surveys, focus groups, by accessing the wellness records for employee stress levels, etc. As proposed by Fu and Shaffer (2000), if individuals who had control over their work activities had more flexibility in allocating their limited resources at work and at home, it would minimise the work interference in family. Thomas and Ganster (1995), found that supportive

interventions increased the perceptions of employee control and that this cognitive processing played a central mediating role in helping individuals to cope with the competing demands of home and work. Given these findings, it would be important for the participating organisation to identify those family-friendly practices that increased the perceptions of control amongst working parents. For example, flexible work schedules or being able to work from home, as the literature supports the numerous benefits associated with these practices. Once these are identified, their implementation and use will need to be carefully monitored to achieve the benefits of reduced work-family conflict, improved perceptions of control and affective commitment.

Social support and work-family conflict

While family and external social support systems did not form part of the propositions in this study, the relationship between social support (from domestic helpers, partners, parents and extended family members) and work-family conflict was assessed because in a number of households in South Africa, dual earner families and single households relied on these support systems to lessen the stresses of child/eldercare and household responsibilities. In this study, working parents often received instrumental and emotional support from their partners and their parents. Perhaps this support offers an explanation for the moderate levels of conflict reported by the respondents. Quick et al. (2004) suggested that employees who received career and personal support with children, experienced less difficulty in balancing work and family domains.

Quick et al. (2004) highlighted that communication was key to fostering social support and cited examples such as letting your spouse know about work stress and additional time obligations as ways to enhance communication. The authors suggested that this communication could be extended to the employee asking for help from the home or supervisor and then accepting it. They also highlighted the issue of managing self-imposed expectations over which the employee had a degree of control.

Limitations and directions for future research

There have been a number of suggestions made to enhance the findings in this study in the light of the limitations of this study.

This study was conducted in a single organisation at a particular point in time. The results could be further interrogated and enhanced through longitudinal studies across a number of organisations. Longitudinal studies would help organisations assess the causal relationships between the availability, value and use of FFHRP, and the supportive environments in which these practices prosper. The timing of the study may have influenced the results as it was conducted during a transformation phase when there were a number of destabilising factors such as restructures, job losses and relocation.

Qualitative research data would enhance the self-reported data collected and would facilitate a richer understanding of the intricacies of the results. In this study, as with the study of Thomas and Ganster (1995) and Allen (2001), individual benefits have been found to have different relationships with other variables and it may be important to use benefit categories, instead of a summed composite of FFHRP to determine those benefits that really are perceived as useful and valuable. It must be noted that specific practices do not operate in isolation and that organisational culture and context will need to be carefully considered.

Data on the use of FFHRP could have some interesting implications for organisations as these practices could be used as tools to diagnose those benefits perceived as most valued and used. Once this is established, researchers and HR practitioners could investigate the specific obstacles and enablers to use. This may have implications for employee satisfaction measures, attraction and recruitment campaigns, and performance and retention issues. At an organisational level, the measures for supervisor and organisational support can help organisations to identify and address the sources of employee concern so that the cost and benefits associated with the provision of family-friendly practices are realised.

Other workplaces may offer fewer or more FFHRP than the participating organisation and this might impact on the overall influence of FFHRP on organisational commitment. In addition, the specific FFHRP considered in this research and their perceived value might be specific to the participating

organisation, industry or the sector and further investigation would determined the extent to which the results could be generalised to smaller or much larger organisations, to blue-collar workers and to other industries. Future research could explore the extent to which employees experience additional conflict as a result of self-imposed demands and the extent to which organisational commitment is influenced during a transformation process.

Summary

The main findings of this study were discussed in this chapter in terms of their contribution to literature and implications for the organisation. Contextual factors may have impacted on the findings as this study was conducted during a time of transformation. A number of practical implications for human resources professionals and the organisation were offered to maximise the value that organisations could gain from the effective implementation of family-friendly practices. The challenge for organisations is to identify and leverage those FFHRP that employees most value and to ensure that support mechanisms are enhanced to promote use. The findings in this study suggest that benefits such as reduced work-family conflict and increased affective commitment may be realised in a family-supportive work environment and that employers should establish the mechanisms that increase employees' sense of control over their work environments.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to examine the effects of family-friendly human resource practices (FFHRP) on work-family conflict and organisational commitment, amongst working parents.

This study contributed to the literature in a number of ways. First, it was conducted in South Africa where there is limited research on this topic. Second, working parents were chosen as the sample as they are more likely to experience work-family conflict than non-parents. Third, the findings add to existing empirical evidence supporting the proposition that supportive supervisors facilitated the use of FFHRP amongst working parents. Fourth, the finding that control over the work environment moderated the relationship between parents with high levels of work interference in family and affective commitment also adds to the literature on the impact of perceived control over the work environment. Fifth, this study contributes to the limited literature on the impact of family and external social support systems provided by the home environment (including partners, domestic helpers, parental support and support from extended family members).

There were a number of recommendations made in this dissertation. Amongst these that organisations consider developing FFHRP in conjunction with employees and periodically review them for their relevance. It was evident from the findings in this study that the introduction and implementation of formal family-friendly practices is insufficient in ensuring use. These practices need to be considered in the context of supportive organisational norms and values.

It is hoped that the findings in this study are used by the participating organisation and that they are considered in conjunction with results from other "culture" information available to the organisation, such as employee satisfaction and "Best companies to work" surveys. This may give employees the assurance that their needs are understood and that the organisation is mindful of their wellbeing. It could also mean that the numerous organisational benefits mentioned in the literature can be realised.

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APPENDIX A

Survey questions used in final analysis

Lack of organisational support

1. Employees are regularly expected to put their jobs before their families
2. Attending to personal needs, such as time off for sick children, is frowned upon
3. Employees are given limited work opportunities to perform both their job and personal responsibilities well
4. Offering employees flexibility in completing their work is not viewed as a strategic way of doing business
5. Employees are often expected to take work home at nights and on weekends
6. To be viewed as favourable by management, employees must put their jobs before their families or personal lives
7. To get ahead in this organisation, employees are expected to work more than 50 hours a week, whether at work or at home
8. To turn down a promotion or transfer for family related reasons will seriously hurt one's career progression in this organisation
9. Employees who participate in available work-family programmes are viewed as less serious about their career

Work-family conflict

1. My work keeps me from my family responsibilities more than I would like
2. The time I devote to my work keeps me from participating equally at home
3. I miss family responsibilities due to the amount of time I spend at work
4. I'm too frazzled to participate in family responsibilities when I get home from work
5. When I get home from work, I am often so emotionally drained that it prevents my contribution to family activities
6. Due to pressures at work, I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy when I get home
7. Due to stress at home, I am often preoccupied with family matters at work
8. The stress from family responsibilities makes it difficult to concentrate at work
9. Tension and anxiety from my family life often weakens my ability to do my job
10. The problem solving behaviours I use at work are not effective in resolving problems at home
11. Behaviours that are effective and necessary at work would be counterproductive at home
12. My behaviours that make me effective at work do not help me be a better parent/partner/family member
13. The behaviours that work for me at home do not seem to be effective at work
14. Behaviours that are effective and necessary at home would be counterproductive at work
15. The problem solving behaviours I use at home are not effective in resolving problems at work

Control over work-family conflict

1. How much flexibility do you have over the amount and quality of day care available for your children?
2. How much choice do you have over the amount and quality of care available for a sick child?
3. How much choice do you have in obtaining adult supervision for your child before/after school?
4. How much flexibility do you have over the amount and quality of day care available for elder care?
5. How much flexibility do you have in arranging part time employment?
6. How much choice do you have over when you can take a vacation or days off?
7. How much control do you have over when you can take a few hours off?

8. How much control do you have over the limit on personal calls you can make or receive?

List of FFHRP

1. Flexible work schedules (i.e. flexitime, part-time work, job sharing, voluntary reduced time)
2. Working from home, telecommuting, video conferencing
3. Personal time off (i.e. exam leave, to take care of sick child)
4. Special leave (i.e. moving, compassionate)
5. Compensatory time off (i.e. in lieu of travel, extra time worked)
6. Maternity/adoption leave beyond legislation
7. Paid paternity/adoption leave
8. Childcare, eldercare facilities/information
9. Employee wellness programme (i.e. ICAS, wellness week, clinics)
10. Training relevant to balancing work and family (i.e. Choose, BUILD, time management, stress and conflict management)
11. Sport and recreation facilities (in-house gymnasium, library, family days)
12. Educational assistance
13. Frequent flyer miles retention
14. Relocation benefits

Supervisor support

My supervisor supports me by:

1. Switching schedules (hours, overtime, vacation) to accommodate my family responsibilities
2. Listening to my problems
3. Juggling tasks or duties to accommodate my family responsibilities
4. Sharing ideas or advice
5. Not holding my family responsibilities against me
6. Helping me to figure out how to solve a problem
7. Being understanding and sympathetic
8. Not showing resentment of my needs as a working parent / employee

Fairness of FFHRP

1. Having a child is a strain on parents and they deserve the aid of work-family benefits
2. The organisation should be willing to make special accommodations to help employees to balance their work and family responsibilities
3. Children are a necessary part of society and it is the responsibility of large companies to help in the effort
4. It is fair for companies to offer fathers paid paternal leave
5. It is fair for companies to offer mothers paid maternal leave beyond legislation

Organisational commitment

Affective commitment:

1. I feel a strong sense of "belonging" to this organisation
2. I feel "emotionally attached" to this organisation
3. I feel like "part of the family" in this organisation
4. This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me

Continuance commitment:

1. It would be very costly for me to leave this organisation right now
2. Too much of my life would be disrupted if I decided to leave this organisation right now
3. I would not leave this organisation right now because of what I stand to lose

4. For me personally, the cost of leaving this organisation would be far greater than the benefit

Normative commitment

1. I would feel guilty if I left this organisation right now
2. I would not leave this organisation right now, because I have a sense of obligation to the people in it
3. I would violate a trust if I quit my job with this organisation now

Family and external sources of social support

Partner:

1. My partner goes out of his/her way to make my work life easier
2. It is easy for me to talk to my partner
3. I can rely on my partner when things get tough at work
4. My partner is willing to listen to my personal problems

Parents:

1. My parents go out of their way to make my work life easier
2. It is easy for me to talk to my parents
3. I can rely on my parents when things get tough at work
4. My parents are willing to listen to my personal problems

ICAS support:

1. ICAS counsellors go out of their way to make my work life easier
2. It is easy for me to talk to ICAS counsellors
3. I can rely on ICAS counsellors when things get tough at work
4. ICAS counsellors are willing to listen to my personal problems

Domestic support:

1. My domestic is accommodating when work demands impact at home
2. I can rely on the support of my domestic with household responsibilities
3. I can rely on the support of my domestic when things get tough at work
4. I can rely on my domestic for childcare responsibilities

Key:

- "Partner": husband, wife and life partner
 "Parents": in-laws, extended family members
 "ICAS": independent counselling and advisory service
 "Domestic": helper, nanny, and housekeeper