

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB ENGAGEMENT, WORK INTERFERENCE  
WITH PERSONAL LIFE, AND TURNOVER INTENTIONS

By

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## ABSTRACT

Research on work-life balance has increased significantly over the last decade (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris & Weitzman, 2013). The extent of work-life balance concerns is evident from the thousands of articles, websites, and blogs that focus on work-life balance issues (Grawitch & Barber, 2010). While work-life balance is a variable that has been the focus of numerous research articles, one relationship that has received limited attention is the link between this variable and employee engagement. While there is no question that engagement has positive implications for an employee's working life, what about for the employee's personal life? If an employee is fully engaged in their work, will they have the resources left to be fully engaged at home? This study empirically examined the link between employee engagement and work interference with personal life. Results of this study indicated that the two variables did not have a significant relationship. The study did, however, add to existing literature on the significant relationship between engagement and turnover, between access to work-life balance practices and work interference with personal life, and between work interference with personal life and turnover intentions. Implications for future research are discussed.

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## **CHAPTER I:**

### **Review of Literature**

Research on work-life balance has increased significantly over the last decade (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris & Weitzman, 2013; Vanderpool & Way, 2013). The extent of work-life balance concerns is evident from the thousands of articles, websites, and blogs that focus on work-life balance issues (Grawitch & Barber, 2010). Research has consistently demonstrated that employees often experience conflict between their working and personal lives. A study by Williams and Boushey (2010) found that as many as 90% of working mothers and 95% of working fathers reported regularly experiencing conflict between their work and personal lives.

#### **Work-Life Balance Defined**

Work-life balance was defined by Parkes and Langford (2008) as, “an individual’s ability to meet both their work and family, as well as other non-work responsibilities and activities.” (p.267). The term work-life balance is used in this study, as opposed to the term work-family balance, to encompass the recognition that all employees desire a more satisfying balance between their roles and responsibilities, not just those that are married or have children.

## **Why Work-Life Balance Research is Important**

In the last few decades, the workplace environment has undergone significant structural changes. Some of the changes in the workplace include globalization, changes in the level of demand of work, and fast-paced innovations in technology. These changes have resulted in extra demands being placed upon workers. At the same time, there have also been significant changes in the structure of American families that have also resulted in extra demands being placed upon the worker such as a significant increase in the number of dual-career couples, single parent families, and families with elder care responsibly (Kossek, 2005). Despite the declining number of American families following the traditional model of a working father and a mother who cares for the children and house, many companies are still guided by more traditional workplace policies (Darcy, McCarthy, Hill, & Grady, 2012). The changes that are occurring simultaneously within the workplace and family structure makes it increasingly important that we study and understand the nature of work-life balance and how conflict between the different roles can be alleviated.

## **What Are Work-Life Balance Benefits?**

In order to help employees balance the demands between their work and personal lives, there are a number of organizational interventions that can be offered. Lazun, Morganson, Major, and Green (2010) conducted a study to determine exactly what it is that employees request for work-life balance accommodations. Participants included 425 supervisors from a Fortune 500 company employing over 48,000 people in the United

States. Supervisors were asked to inquire about the work-life balance accommodations that their subordinates needed and employees were instructed to bring any work-life balance requests that they had to their supervisors. After a couple weeks, a total of 1,150 requests had been reported to the supervisors. Their findings showed that, at a total of 45.5% of the overall requests made to supervisors, the most common work-life balance requests were for schedule changes and time off (e.g. flex-time, telecommute, compressed work week). The next most frequent category, with 29% of the total requests, were in relation to the workday (e.g. workload, meetings, travel, relocate). Next, with 20% of total requests, was work-life requests related to work resources (e.g. increased staff, training opportunities, technology to telecommute, tools or equipment). The least requested category, at 5.6%, was for emotional and instrumental support (e.g. emotional support, daycare, onsite amenities).

### **Positive Outcomes of Work-Life Balance**

An organization's acknowledgment and sensitivity to employees' demands outside of work has been linked to positive outcomes for both the employees and the organization. Some of the outcomes that have been consistently demonstrated in studies include improved recruitment and retention (Carless & Wintle, 2008), higher organizational commitment (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007), increased job satisfaction (Brough, O'Driscoll & Kalliath, 2005), decreased turnover (Bloom & Van Reenen, 2006), and lower absenteeism (Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, & Neuman, 1999). Positive outcomes of access to work-life balance benefits for employees include decreased stress

and increased life satisfaction (Md-Sidin, Sambasivan & Ismail, 2010). These outcomes indicate that if an organization wants to improve business outcomes they should consider improving the work-life balance of their employees.

### **Outcomes of Work-Life Conflict**

With such a tremendous amount of research in support of the positive outcomes of work-life balance, why don't all employees achieve a balance between their working and personal lives? A study by Anderson, Coffey, and Byerly (2002) found that one factor that strongly predicted work-life conflict was a perception of negative career consequences, such as being less likely to be considered for future promotions. If employees believed that using work-life balance benefits would hurt their chances of career progression or cause them to be viewed unfavorably at work, then they were unlikely to use available benefits, causing them to experience work-life conflict. Organizations should be concerned with their employees experiencing work-life conflict because it has been shown that experiencing work-life conflict has more of a negative effect on an employee's working role than on their non-work role (Md-Sidin et al., 2010). Anderson et al. (2002) found that conflict was linked to job dissatisfaction, turnover intentions, and stress. These negative outcomes have been consistently demonstrated in other research studies (e.g. Bell, Rajendran & Theiler, 2012).

Despite employees' concerns that using work-life balance benefits is a career-limiting move (Anderson et al., 2002), there have been a number of studies that have demonstrated that workers who use work-life balance benefits perform equally well and

are equally committed to their employers (Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright & Neuman, 1999; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Konrad and Young (2012) conducted a study in which they found that using benefits may actually be beneficial to a career and can lead to increased chances for promotion. Employees in need of benefit usage who do not use them may avoid the negative stigma in the short run, but risk performance and motivation losses in the long run. By using benefits when needed, employees gain energy resources that are necessary to be effective at work.

### **Employee Engagement**

Although there is a plethora of research articles that have explored the antecedents and outcomes of providing work-life balance benefits and promoting a supportive culture, one relationship that has received limited attention in research is the relationship between access to work-life balance practices and employee engagement. Employee engagement is defined as “a heightened emotional and intellectual connection that an employee has for his/her job, organization, manager, or co-workers that, in turn, influences him/her to apply additional discretionary effort to his/her work” (Gibbons, 2006, p.5). According to Macey and Schneider (2008), high levels of employee engagement can be characterized by an absorption in work tasks, excitement about one’s job, and a commitment to and concern in the role. Research has shown that the outcomes of employee engagement include increased retention and productivity, customer satisfaction, profitability, and job satisfaction (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Meyer & Allen, 2002), outcomes that are very positive for the organization.

While research on the relationship between work-life balance and employee engagement is limited, there have been a number of studies that look at the relationship between work-life balance and organizational commitment (e.g. Siegel, Post, Brockner, & Fishman, 2005). Although organizational commitment and employee engagement have some overlap, the two cannot be treated as completely equal. Commitment has been defined as an attachment or binding between an individual and the organization (Meyer, Becker, & Vandenberghe, 2004). While commitment is certainly a facet of job engagement, it does not capture engagement in its entirety.

Research suggests that one way that engagement develops is through the process of exchange (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison & Sowa, 1986), in other words, employee engagement should develop when the organization provides the employee with outcomes they desire. Based upon this, Richman, Civian, Shannon, Hill, and Brennan (2008) suggested that providing access to a work-life supportive work-environment should enhance the development of employee engagement. Their study found that supportive work-life practices and perceived flexibility had a strong, independent, and positive relationship with employee engagement and retention. Another important finding of this study was that employee engagement mediated the relationship between perceived workplace flexibility and expected retention. Workplace flexibility is a type of work-life balance practice offering employees flexibility in when and where work is done. Some examples of work flexibility options include reduced number of work hours, alternative work schedules, flextime, and compressed work week (Jacob, Bond, Galinsky and Hill, 2008).

In addition to the previously mentioned study, there are a couple of other studies in support of the positive correlation between access to work-life balance practices and employee engagement, with most of them specifically focusing on workplace flexibility. This type of work-life balance benefit has consistently predicted higher levels of organizational commitment, whereas low levels of flexibility in an organization has consistently predicted higher levels of employee turnover (Meyer, 1997). A study by Grawitch and Barber (2010) found a positive and direct correlation between access to work flexibility and employee engagement.

Jacob et al. (2008) completed another study demonstrating a positive relationship between work flexibility and employee engagement. In a survey of 2810 waged and salaried employees in the United States, a strong, positive relationship was found between these two variables, with 66% of those reporting high workplace flexibility also scoring high in job engagement. As a result, they concluded that flexibility can help employees manage the conflicting demands of their work, personal and family lives, resulting in the kinds of business success outcomes that employers should be concerned about. The previously mentioned studies demonstrate that access to work-life balance practices, such as work flexibility, are related to higher levels of work engagement.

*Hypothesis 1: Access to work-life balance practices will be positively related to employee engagement.*

While it is generally agreed upon that engagement has positive implications for an employee's working life, what about for the employee's personal life? If an employee is fully engaged in their work, will they have the resources left to be fully engaged at home?

According to the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory, individuals seek to acquire and maintain resources (Hobfoll, 1989). According to this model, a loss, or threat of loss of resources will result in stress. Macey and Schneider (2008) suggested that this theory has implications for work-life balance and engagement stating that, “There are limits on the pool of energy and resources available to employees.... Sustained levels of engagement will be difficult to achieve” (p.25). Based on the COR theory, it is feasible that employees’ who are highly engaged in their work, requiring a substantial amount of energy and resources, may not have much energy and resources left to spare for activities outside of work. Access to work-life balance practices may reduce the detrimental impact that work demands may have on employees’ personal lives.

*Hypothesis 2: Access to work-life balance practices will be negatively related to work interference with personal life.*

With regards to the COR theory, Halbesleben, Harvey, and Bolino (2009) hypothesized that high levels of work engagement may be related to work interference with family. Work interference with family is a type of interrole conflict where the role pressures from work and personal life domains are incompatible in some way (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Based on their hypothesis, Halbesleben et al. created a study to explore the idea that work engagement may actually be linked to negative consequences for the employee with regards to their ability to balance their family lives with work. The results of their study showed that employee engagement was positively and significantly related to work interference with family. In other words, the higher the level of an employee’s engagement in their work, the higher the level of conflict they reported experiencing in



their family lives. Although employee engagement has primarily been discussed in a positive light, these findings suggest that the outcomes of job engagement may not always be positive.

Another study with consistent findings on the positive relationship between employee engagement and work interference with family was done by Parkes and Langford (2008). Although the study discusses the relationship between work-life balance and engagement specifically, a closer look at the work-life balance scale shows that at least three of the four items are actually measuring work-interference with personal life, allowing us to interpret the results as a study of the relationship between work interference with personal life and employee engagement. As a result of their study, it was found that work interference with life had a moderate and positive significant correlation with employee engagement. This demonstrates that being highly engaged in work may interfere with an employee's ability to have a balanced personal life. It is noted that, "highly engaged employees will sometimes sacrifice work-life balance to achieve organizational goals," (p.279).

The previously mentioned studies demonstrate that although high work engagement may be a good thing for work life, it may have negative implications for an employee's ability to balance their personal life. In other words, highly engaged employees may be unable to maintain a work-life balance. This interference or inability to maintain a balance, due to high levels of employee engagement is a relationship that has received a limited amount of attention in the literature.

*Hypothesis 3: Employee engagement will be positively related to work interference with personal life.*

One question that remains is whether work interference with personal life may have negative implications for the organization in the long run. Will highly engaged employees who are experiencing work interference with personal life intend to remain with the organization?

### **Turnover Intentions**

Another variable of interest commonly found in work-life balance and engagement literature is turnover intentions (e.g. Jacob et al., 2008; Richman et al., 2008). Turnover intention, as assessed in the turnover model by Mobley, Horner, and Hollingsworth (1978), is defined as an employee's thoughts of quitting their job and an intention to seek out another job outside of the organization. An employee with a high degree of turnover intention is much more likely to leave an organization. However, there are a number of additional factors that play into whether or not an employee follows through with the intention and actually leaves the organization, such as the job market.

Having employees with intentions to leave can be costly to an organization. A study by Halpern (2005) found that employees who intended to leave an organization were likely to reduce productivity prior to leaving. Turnover intentions resulting in actual turnover can be extremely expensive to an organization due to costs associated with recruiting and training new employees, paying existing employees overtime due to a

shortage of employees, disrupted services, and increased turnover from current employees who feel overworked (Frank, Finnegan, & Taylor, 2004).

Research suggests that one way to increase retention and reduce voluntary turnover is to offer employees access to work-life balance practices. A meta-analysis by Beauregard and Henry (2009) found that practices such as offering reduced hours, onsite daycare, and flexible scheduling were significantly related to employee retention and reduced turnover (Milkovich & Gomex, 1976; Glass & Riley, 1998). It has also been found that as levels of work flexibility increase, turnover intentions decreased (Pierce & Newstrom, 1982).

*Hypothesis 4: Access to work-life balance practices will be negatively related to turnover intentions.*

A study by Yavas, Babakus, and Karatepe (2008) examined the effects of work-family conflict on turnover intentions. Work-family conflict was defined in this study as a type of interrole conflict experienced when the demands created by work interfere with performing family-related responsibilities. It was found that employees experiencing high levels of work-family conflict were significantly more likely to have intentions to leave the organization, a finding also confirmed by a number of other studies (e.g. Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Lyness & Thompson, 1997). Not only has it been found that experiencing conflict in the balancing of your work and personal life predicts turnover intentions, a meta-analysis by Allen, Herst, Bruck, and Sutton (2000) found that turnover intention was the job outcome most strongly correlated to work-life conflict, over and above other job outcomes such as absenteeism and job performance.

*Hypothesis 5: Work interference with personal life will be positively related to turnover intentions.*

In addition to turnover intentions correlating with work-life balance, researchers have found that it is also negatively correlated with employee engagement (Alacron & Edwards, 2010; Shuck, Reio & Rocco, 2011). This link is believed to stem from the employee's high levels of investment and commitment to the work. If an employee is highly engaged in their work, they may be less likely to want to leave the job, partly because they are really invested in it and have high levels of identification with the work (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008).

*Hypothesis 6: Employee Engagement will be negatively correlated with turnover intentions.*

Based on the limited amount of research on work interference with personal life and its relationship with employee engagement, the present study aims to further examine this relationship. In addition to this relationship, this study will also explore the connection between these variables and turnover intention to determine whether highly engaged employees experiencing work interference with life are more likely to have intentions to leave the organization. Based on our review of the literature, we propose the following hypotheses. Figure 1 displays these relationships.

*H1: Access to work-life balance practices will be positively correlated with employee engagement.*

*H2: Access to work-life balance practices will be negatively related to work interference with personal life.*

*H3: Employee engagement will be positively related to work interference with personal life.*

*H4: Access to work-life balance practices will be negatively correlated with turnover intentions.*

*H5: Work interference with personal life will be positively correlated with turnover intentions.*

*H6: Employee Engagement will be negatively correlated with turnover intentions.*

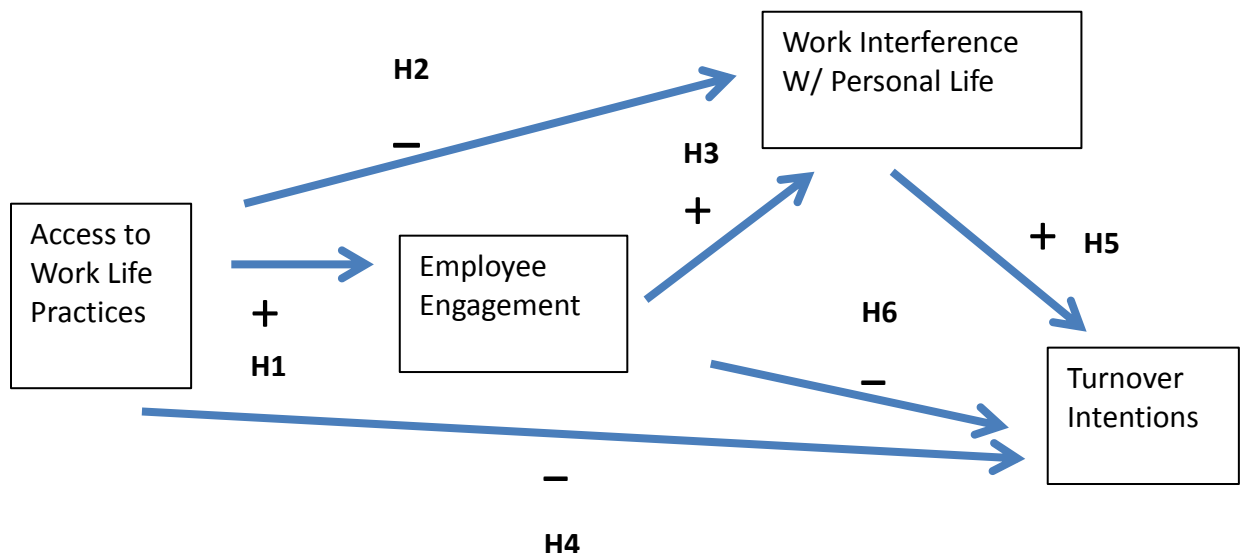


Figure 1. Model of Hypothesized Relationships

## CHAPTER II:

### Methods

#### Participants

Participants in this study included 251 currently employed professionals working at least 25 hours per week in the United States. Participants were recruited online using Amazon's Mechanical Turk (AMT). AMT is a crowdsourcing internet marketplace that allows the workforce to choose tasks that they would like to participate in. In return for participating in our study, participants were compensated \$0.20. Using AMT to recruit participants, allowed us to have access to a large, diverse, and representative sample pool, preventing range restriction that could result from gathering data from only a couple of organizations. AMT allows participants to stay anonymous, increasing the likelihood that they will answer honestly.

A total of 260 participants took part in the survey. However, eight participants were screened out for failing to correctly respond to at least 75% of the manipulation checks (3/4) and one participant was screened out for not meeting the requirement of working at least 25 hours per week. This resulted in 251 participants retained.

Demographic items were added to the end of the survey instrument (see Appendix A) to allow us to obtain descriptive information on our sample. Demographic tables regarding the 251 participants can be viewed in Appendices B-J. Of the 251 participants, 60.4% were male, 59.2% were between the ages of 21 and 30, 71.4% were not married,

72% had no children, 76.4% worked full-time, the largest portion of participants worked in customer service, and 46% were hourly workers.

## **Measures**

The survey contained several measures that assessed the constructs relevant to this study, including:

**Job engagement.** This variable was assessed using a modified version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale by Seppala, Mauno, Feldt, Hakanen, Kinnunen, Tolvanen, and Schaufeli (2009). This scale was determined to have good construct validity and was recommended over the 17 item scale previously published. The items included in the scale are grouped into three subscales that are reflective of the three dimensions of engagement. Vigor (items 1, 2, 5) was assessed using three items, absorption (items 6, 8, 9) was assessed using three items, and dedication (items 3, 4, 7) was assessed using three items. Responses were reported on a 5 point scale ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Almost Always). A full list of items included in this measure can be seen within the survey instrument in Appendix A.

**Access to work-life balance practices.** Access to work-life balance practices was assessed using a modification of a scale created by Grawitch and Barber (2010). The scale contained items that assess the existence of eight popular work-life balance practices, including four work flexibility initiatives (e.g. telecommuting, flexible scheduling, job sharing/ option to reduce from full-time to part-time if employee prefers, compressed work week) and four non-work support benefits (e.g. personal time off,

flexible paid leave options, childcare benefits, eldercare benefits). The seventh item included on their scale, “life management services” was not include in our survey because we felt participants may be unsure of what that work-life balance practice entailed. In addition, “eldercare benefits” was added to the measure because of its popularity in recent literature. Participants responded to the items by either indicating 1 (not available to me), 2 (available to me, but I never use) 3 (use to a small extent), 4 (use to a moderate extent), or 5 (use to a great extent). A full list of items included in this measure can be seen within the survey instrument in Appendix A.

**Work interference with personal life.** Work interference with personal life was assessed using a scale created by Fisher, Bulger, and Smith (2009). The scale includes five items that measure the extent to which an employee’s working life has prevented them from maintaining a work-life balance in the past three months. Responses will be given on a 5 point scale ranging from 1 (Not at all) to 5 (All the time). A full list of items included in this measure can be seen within the survey instrument in Appendix A.

**Involuntary job demands.** This variable was assessed using a five item scale created for the purposes of this study. The items determined the extent to which the employee must put in extra time and effort to complete their work because it is mandatory, not because they choose to do so. Adding this control variable to the study will help to ensure that any work-interference with personal life that is assessed in our sample is due to job engagement, as opposed to resulting from demands that are placed on the worker involuntarily. The response scale will range from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5



(Strongly agree). A full list of items included in this measure can be seen within the survey instrument in Appendix A.

**Turnover intentions.** This variable was accessed using a three item measure created for the purposes of this study. The items on the scale determined whether the employee is likely to voluntarily leave the organization in the near future. The response scale ranged from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly agree). A full list of items included in this measure can be seen within the survey instrument in Appendix A.

### **Procedures**

In order to test the stated hypotheses, a survey was created and administered using the online survey tool Qualtrics. Qualtrics and AMT allowed participants to maintain complete anonymity, therefore increasing the likelihood that they would answer the survey questions truthfully. Prior to completing the survey, participants were informed that their involvement in the study is completely voluntary and that there will be no penalty if they do not wish to continue. A total of four manipulation checks were inserted into the survey to ensure that each participant is carefully answering each question. Participants that did not respond correctly to at least 75% (3 of the 4) of the manipulation check items were disqualified from the study. A complete list of manipulation checks can be reviewed in Appendix K.

## CHAPTER III:

### Results

The reliability of each scale was assessed to determine the internal consistency of the scale's item. Cronbach's alpha ranged from .72 to .90. A full list of the scale reliabilities can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1.

*Scale Reliabilities*

Variable	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Engagement (Absorption)	.73
Engagement (Vigor)	.82
Engagement (Dedication)	.83
Access to Work-Life Balance Practices	.72
Work Interference with Personal Life	.90
Turnover Intentions	.84

Descriptive statistics were analyzed to summarize response sample size, means, and standard deviation. The same size for each scale was 251 participants. Descriptive statistics, including mean scores and standard deviation, are reported in Table 2.

To test the hypotheses, a series of bivariate correlations were run to determine statistical significance. As a result of the analyses, three of the six hypotheses were

supported. Hypothesis 1 stated that access to work-life balance will be positively related to employee engagement. This hypothesis was supported for each of the three subscales of

Table 2.

*Descriptive Statistics for all Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Engagement (Absorption)	3.29	.78
Engagement (Vigor)	3.01	.85
Engagement (Dedication)	3.41	.90
Access to Work-Life Balance Practices	2.23	.73
Work Interference with Personal Life	2.63	.98
Turnover Intentions	2.70	1.13

engagement including absorption ( $r=.18$ ,  $p=.004$ ), vigor ( $r=.29$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and dedication ( $r=.25$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Hypothesis 5, work interference with personal life will be positively correlated with turnover intentions, was supported ( $r=.32$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Lastly, hypothesis 6, employee engagement will be negatively correlated with turnover intentions, was supported at all three subscales of engagement including absorption ( $r=-.32$ ,  $p<.001$ ), vigor ( $r=-.40$ ,  $p<.001$ ), and dedication ( $r=-.55$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Correlations for hypotheses 2 (access to work-life balance practices will be negatively related to work interference with personal life), hypothesis 3 (employee engagement will be positively related to work

interference with personal life), and hypothesis 4 (access to work-life balance practices will be negatively correlated with turnover intentions) were not significant. See Table 3 for the correlation matrix.

Table 3.

*Correlation Matrix*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Absorption		.65*	.67*	.18*	.02	-.32*
2. Vigor	.65*		.73*	.29*	-.06	-.40*
3. Dedication	.67*	.73*		.25*	-.08	-.06*
4. Access to Work-life Balance Practices	.18*	.29*	.25*		.02	-.05
5. Work Interference with Personal Life	.02	-.06	-.08	.02		.32*
6. Turnover Intentions	-.32*	-.40*	-.55*	-.05	.32*	

\* Correlation is significant at .05 level.

## **CHAPTER IV:**

### **Discussion**

#### **Overall Findings**

The results of this study supported three of the six hypotheses. While the correlations were low to moderate, access to work-life balance practices was correlated with all three of the subscales of engagement. Work interference with personal life was moderately related to turnover intentions. Lastly, turnover intention was strongly correlated with all three subscales of engagement. Turnover intentions had a particularly strong correlation with the dedication subscale.

Three of the six hypotheses were not supported. The data did not support the hypothesis that access to work-life balance practices would be related to work interference with personal life. It is quite possible that this relationship was not supported because, while the measure took into account access to work-life balance practices, it did not measure whether the employee's supervisor was supportive of utilizing the practices. According to Anderson et al. (2002) the two main components of a work-life balance supportive organization are work-life balance supportive practices and work-life balance supportive supervisors. Therefore, it is possible that an employee has access to work-life balance practices but is not able to use them due to lack of support from their supervisor. This could result in an employee experiencing work interference with personal life even though they technically have access to practices aimed at reducing the level of conflict.

Hypothesis 3 (Employee engagement will be positively related to work interference with personal life) was also not supported, despite it being supported in a few previously published studies (e.g. Parkers & Langford, 2008). While it is unclear why this hypothesis was not supported, one possible reason comes from the Spillover Theory (Zedeck, 1992). According to the Spillover Theory, a person's working life and personal life have a strong influence over one another and the positive or negative aspects of one domain may affect the other. Therefore, it is possible that when a person is experiencing high levels of engagement at work, it may positively affect their attitudes and emotions in ways that may spill over to also benefit them in their personal life, reducing or eliminating any work-life conflict.

It is unclear why hypothesis 4 (Access to work-life balance practices will be negatively correlated with turnover intentions) was not supported. Similar to the second hypothesis, it is possible that no relationship was found because supervisor support of work-life balance was not measured. It is also possible that a significant relationship was not found because there are a number of other factors that may affect turnover intentions, in addition to access to work-life balance practices.

### **Implications**

The current research has a number of implications for an organization. First, all three subscales of employee engagement have a strong and negative relationship with turnover intentions. As previously mentioned, turnover intentions are related to a number of negative implications for an organization. This finding implies that an organization

should strive to actively engage their employees. While there are a number of ways an organization can increase the engagement of their employees, this research also implies that one way to do so is to offer employees access to work-life balance practices.

Another implication of this research is that an organization should strive to reduce the degree to which their employees experience work interfering with their personal life in order to reduce turnover intentions. While this research did not support the hypothesis that access to work-life balance practices could reduce work interference with personal life, research does show that having both supportive work-life balance practices, as well as work-life balance supportive supervisors, is representative of an organization's attempt to support employees in their effort to balance their conflicting roles (Anderson et al., 2002).

### **Future Research**

Given the limited amount of research on the relationship between employee engagement and work interference with personal life and the fact that the present study's findings were inconsistent with previous research, there is a need for further research in this area. Future research could address whether there are any variables that moderate this relationship, such as characteristics of the organization, family circumstance, nature of the work, or personality traits. Research by Halbesleben et al. (2009) found that one personality trait, conscientiousness, moderated the relationship between work interference with personal life and job engagement.

An additional possibility for future research could be to combine supervisor

support for work-life balance and access to work-life balance practices into a variable called *Supportive Organization* and then determining if there is a relationship between this variable and turnover intentions and employee engagement. Creating this variable could account for any possible limitations that resulted from only looking at access to work-life balance practices.

### **Limitations**

A potential limitation of this study is that the sample was drawn from Amazon Mechanical Turk (AMT). Research on AMT indicates that its users are representative of the overall internet user population and that it is a reliable source for social research (Mason & Suri, 2012; Ipeirotis, 2010). However, the demographic information obtained from our sample shows that over 70% of the participants were male, 72% had no children, the majority were younger than 30, and 71.4% were single. It is likely that young, unmarried males with no children may have very different work-life balance needs than those who are married with children. Future research could explore the relationship between work interference with personal life and job engagement, targeting a specific group, such as married females with children, who may find access to work life balance practices as more important.

### **Conclusion**

Future research will be needed to further examine the relationship between work interference with personal life and job engagement. While the amount of research



currently available is rather limited, the present study's finding contradict these studies. What can be taken away from this study is that both engagement and work interference with personal life have a strong relationship with turnover intentions. With the negative outcomes associated with turnover intentions, an organization should actively seek to engage their workforce and help them maintain a balance between their working and personal life.

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**APPENDICIES**

## Appendix A: Survey Instrument

### Informed Consent

The purpose of this research is to study the effects of job engagement on the balance between work life and personal life.

By participating in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey that will take approximately 10-20 minutes.

This is a research project being conducted by Kristen Schilling, an Industrial/Organizational Psychology Master's candidate at Middle Tennessee State University, as part of a thesis requirement.

This research has been reviewed and approved according to Middle Tennessee State University IRB procedures for research involving human participants.

Your participation in this research study is completely voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

Your individual response will be kept confidential.

If you have any questions about the research study, please contact Kristen Schilling via email at [kls9b@mtmail.mtsu.edu](mailto:kls9b@mtmail.mtsu.edu).

### ELECTRONIC CONSENT:

Clicking on the next button below indicates that:

- You have read the above information
- You voluntarily agree to participate

If you do not wish to participate in the research study, please decline participation by closing out of the survey.

## Measures

### *Job Engagement*

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost Always
At work, I feel that I am bursting with energy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
At my job, I feel strong and vigorous.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am enthusiastic about my job.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My job inspires me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
When I get up in the morning, I feel like going to work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel happy when I am working intensely.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am proud of the work I do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am immersed in my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get carried away when I am working.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

### *Access to Work-life Balance Practices*

	Not available to me	Available to me but I never use	Use to a small extent	Use to a moderate extent	Use to a great extent
Telecommuting/Work from home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexible scheduling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Compressed work week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job sharing/ Option to reduce from full-time to part-time if employee prefers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal time off	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexible paid leave options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Childcare benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Eldercare benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Work Interference with Personal Life*

	Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Almost all of the time
I often neglect my personal needs because of the demands of my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My personal life suffers because of my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have to miss out on important personal activities because of my work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I come home from work too tired to do things I like to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My job makes it difficult to maintain the kind of personal life I would like.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Involuntary Work Demands*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I'm forced to work extra hours.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My workload is too heavy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I wish I could work at an easier pace.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My workload is affected by things I can't control.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My job's demands on my time are excessive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Turnover Intentions*

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I want to quit my job at this organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am actively seeking employment elsewhere.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
If an opportunity to work at another organization was available to me, I would leave my current organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Demographic Items**

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

What is your age?

- 20 and under
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60

What is your marital status?

- Single
- Married

What is your parental status?

- Parent with 1+ dependent children
- Parent with no dependent children
- No children

What is your employment status?

- Full-time

- Part-time (greater than 25 hours per week)
- Part-time (less than 25 hours per week)
- Unemployed

How long have you been employed at your current organization?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10+ years
- Not currently employed

Which best describes the industry you are currently employed in?

- Accounting
- Banking
- Customer Service
- Education
- Engineering
- Government
- Healthcare
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Manufacturing
- Sales
- Transportation
- Other

Which job level is most descriptive of your current job position?

- Executive
- Mid-Level Manager
- Front-Line Manager
- Professional/Exempt
- Hourly
- Other

How many people are employed with your current organization?

- 100 or less
- 101-500
- 501-1000
- 1001+

**Appendix B: Gender**

	Frequency	Percent
Male	151	60.4%
Female	99	39.94%
Total	250	



**Appendix C: Age**

	Frequency	Percent
20 and Under	8	3.2
21-30	148	59.2
31-40	56	22.4
41-50	26	10.4
51-60	11	4.4
61 or older	1	.4
Total	250	

**Appendix D: Marital Status**

	Frequency	Percent
Single	178	71.4
Married	71	28.6
Total	249	

**Appendix E: Parental Status**

	Frequency	Percent
Parent with 1+ dependent children	62	24.8
Parent with no dependent children	8	3.2
No children	180	72
Total	250	

**Appendix F: Employment Status**

	Frequency	Percent
Full-time	191	76.4
Part-time (greater than 25 hours per week)	58	23.2
Part-time (less than 25 hours per week)	1	.4
Unemployed	0	0
Total	250	

**Appendix G: Job Tenure**

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 1 year	53	21.2
1-5 years	123	49.2
5-10 years	42	16.8
10+ years	32	7.8
Total	250	

**Appendix H: Employment Industry**

	Frequency	Percent
Accounting	12	4.8
Banking	16	6.4
Customer Service	39	15.6
Education	20	8
Engineering	7	2.8
Government	14	5.6
Healthcare	28	11.2
Human Resources	4	1.6
Information Technology	32	12.8
Manufacturing	7	2.8
Sales	32	12.8
Transportation	2	.8
Other	33	13.2
Total	249	

**Appendix I: Job Level**

	Frequency	Percent
Executive	13	5.1
Mid-Level Manager	25	9.9
Front-Line Manager	17	6.7
Professional/Exempt	72	28.6
Hourly	112	46.1
Other	12	3.2
Total	251	

**Appendix J: Organization Size**

	Frequency	Percent
100 or less	121	
101-500	61	
501-1000	13	
1001+	53	
Total	248	



### Appendix K: Manipulation Checks

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
For quality assurance purposes, please select "Never" for this question.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For quality assurance purposes, please select "Sometimes" for this question.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For quality assurance purposes, please select "Agree" for this question.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For quality assurance purposes, please select "Disagree" for this question	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

## Appendix L: IRB Approval Letter



1/21/2014

Investigator(s): Kristen Schilling, Patrick McCarthy, Ph.D, J.D.  
Department: Industrial/Organizational Psychology  
Investigator(s) Email Address: kls9b@mtmail.mtsu.edu; Patrick.Mccarthy@mtsu.edu

Protocol Title: The Relationship Between Job Engagement, Work Interference with Personal Life, and Turnover Intentions

Protocol Number: #14-186

Dear Investigator(s),

Your study has been designated to be exempt. The exemption is pursuant to 45 CFR 46.101(b)(1) Evaluation/Comparison of Instructional Strategies/ Curricula.

We will contact you annually on the status of your project. If it is completed, we will close it out of our system. You do not need to complete a progress report and you will not need to complete a final report. It is important to note that your study is approved for the life of the project and does not have an expiration date.

The following changes must be reported to the Office of Compliance before they are initiated:

- Adding new subject population
- Adding a new investigator
- Adding new procedures (e.g., new survey; new questions to your survey)
- A change in funding source
- Any change that makes the study no longer eligible for exemption.

The following changes do not need to be reported to the Office of Compliance:

- Editorial or administrative revisions to the consent or other study documents
- Increasing or decreasing the number of subjects from your proposed population

If you encounter any serious unanticipated problems to participants, or if you have any questions as you conduct your research, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Kellie Hilker  
Compliance Officer  
615-494-8918