Alexandra Beauregard

Family influences on the career life cycle

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In an era where 49% of UK workers report that balancing work and family responsibilities is an issue of significant concern to them (JP Morgan Fleming, 2003), the influence of family and personal life on career decisions is receiving increasing amounts of media attention. Today's business school graduates are "looking for a workstyle to go with their lifestyle," claims the HR consultancy Hay Group (The Economist, 2006). "Generation X and Generation Y workers, who are younger than 40, are more likely than boomers to say they put family before jobs," says an article in USA Today (Elias, 2004). "Today's younger employees are working to live rather than living to work," states a newspaper manager in the journalism newsletter Fusion (Williamson, 2006).

These media sound bites are supported by ongoing research conducted by Schein (1978; 1993; 1996) on the construct of career anchors. An individual's career anchor can be described as his or her self-concept, incorporating perceived career-related abilities and talents, values, and motivations and needs (Schein, 1996). The five original career anchors consisted of technical/functional competence, managerial competence, security and stability, creativity, and autonomy and independence. More recently, however, the "life style" anchor has emerged as an offshoot of the "security and stability" anchor, and is concerned not with economic stability like its predecessor, but with the stability of one's general life pattern. An employee identifying life style as his or her career anchor values putting down roots in a given location, does not wish to be moved every few years for the sake of his or her career, and places a high priority on balance between work and the rest of life. In Schein's observations of MIT Sloan School of Management students over the past 30 years, a growing number have begun to identify life style as their primary career anchor–as many as 50% of executive students from the late 1980s onward (Schein, 1996).

This chapter examines the myriad ways in which one's family and personal life can impact an individual's career. A review of some of the key research literature reveals that career choice is influenced by an individual's values, attitudes, and expectations concerning how work should be balanced with the rest of life. Individuals are also susceptible to influence from their families of origin with regard to occupational choice and prioritizing work over family, or vice versa. Career opportunities, in the form of prospects for advancement within an organization or more generally in one's chosen field, are impacted by family commitments and the use of flexible working practices designed to assist employees balance their work and home responsibilities. The desire for a

balanced lifestyle between work and family also affects decisions to change jobs or accept a geographical transfer, and can help to shape employees' intentions to depart an organization or an entire career. The chapter will conclude by identifying some of the major implications of employees' determination to combine career with a meaningful life outside of work, for both organizations and individuals.

Career choice

Of the five career development stages identified by Greenhaus and Callanan (1994), occupational choice is perhaps one of those most influenced by family concerns, both present and anticipated. Preparation for work involves developing an occupational self-image, wherein an individual attempts to match his or her strengths and weaknesses, values, and preferred lifestyle with the requirements and advantages of a range of different occupations (find cite from photocopied Career chapter?). Brown (2002) describes the process of choosing a career as one of estimating one's ability and values, estimating the skills and abilities required for success in a given occupation, and estimating the work values that will be satisfied by the various occupational alternatives available.

Impact of work-family values on career choice

Values can be described as general evaluative standards that serve to influence an individual's behaviour so as to reach a desired end state (Rokeach, 1979). The availability of values-based information, specifying which values are likely to be reinforced in the workplace, has been shown to be influential in the career choice process (Judge & Bretz, 1992). As of late, research indicates that values among young workers may be shifting away from those of their predecessors; desired end states appear to reflect greater concern for a balanced lifestyle, involving flexible work schedules and respect for non-work activities, than for traditionally defined career success, involving high salaries, prestigious job titles, and intensive work hours. In a study of values among young people in four European countries, Lewis, Smithson, and Kugelberg (2002) found evidence that achieving work-life balance was of high importance to the participants. A study conducted in the USA found that young people were less likely to identify work as an important part of life than those of the same age a generation earlier (Smola & Sutton, 2002). Research by Smithson (1999) suggests that young people's occupational choices are influenced by the way in which they prioritize their work and family roles, and that they tend to place a high value on both work and family rather than on one or the other.

This generational shift in values may, however, be limited to Western nations. Research conducted in China suggests that the Chinese are less concerned than Westerners with choosing an occupation that allows sufficient time for non-work activities and interests (Shenkar & Ronen, 1987; Bu & McKeen, 2001). This may be attributable to Confucian tradition, which places duty above enjoyment and which sees work as a vital contribution towards the well-being of the family, and/or to the standard of living currently experienced by the mainland Chinese. Bu and McKeen (2001) suggest that having seen their predecessors lack the opportunity to excel due to economic and political restrictions, today's business students in China are determined to pursue career success and financial wealth even if it may be at the expense of their personal or family lives. This explanation is supported by research by Hui and Tan (1996), who report that university graduates in Taiwan, a more developed and prosperous society, expect their work life to adjust to their personal and family interests–echoing the changing generational values revealed in research on Western populations.

Impact of family of origin on career choice

Values and attitudes related to the balancing of work and family are influenced by a number of factors, including the family of origin and exposure to trends in the labour force. Over the last two or three decades, an increasing number of mothers have taken on paid employment (Duffield, 2002). This change in the employment pattern of women may exert an influence on the attitudes of young women in the process of considering the occupational choices available to them (Marks & Houston, 2002). Both young women and young men now appear to desire a more integrated approach to work and family, rather than the dominance of one area of life over the other. In developing the Career-Family Attitudes Measure (CFAM), Sanders, Lengnick-Hall, Lengnick-Hall, and Steele-Clapp (1998) found that American high school students expressed a preference for integrating their choices regarding work and family, in contrast to making trade-offs between the two domains.

These work-family attitudes show evidence of being influenced by factors related to the family of origin. High school students who expressed positive attitudes toward a traditional family structure, with a homemaker mother and an employed father, were more likely to have grown up in such a family themselves (Sanders et al., 1998). This has clear implications for the continuing importance of work-family concerns in choosing a career; as increasing numbers of women participate in the labour market, a corresponding number of children will grow up with a different family structure on which to model their own values and attitudes concerning the combination of work and family roles likely to be afforded to them by a given occupation.

In addition to familial influence on an individual's preferences for combining work and family, research shows that the occupational choices made by parents can exert a direct influence on the career choices of their children. According to Brown (2002), family or group influence impact both the decision-making process and the career an individual chooses. Research by Corcoran and Courant (1987) demonstrated that the degree to which a mother's occupation and industry were stereotypically "female" was positively related to the extent to which her daughter chose an occupation that was similarly sex-typed. This type of familial influence may be even stronger for individuals in collectivist cultures. In such cultures, respect for and obedience to one's parents is often a highly prioritized value (Lee, 1991), and the attitudes and values of family members may be the primary determinant of an individual's choice of career (Sue & Sue, 1990; Yagi & Oh, 1995).

Family influence on career choice may also manifest itself unconsciously. According to psychoanalytic theory, familial heritage plays a significant role in occupational choice. Individuals will tend to choose an occupation that enables them to satisfy needs that were unfulfilled in their childhood, and actualize dreams passed on to them by their family (Pines & Yanai, 2001). For example, in his psychoanalytic analysis of successful business leaders, Kets de Vries (1995) suggested that many successful managers embark upon their careers in order to compensate for the absence, either physical or psychological, of their fathers during childhood. "The desire to be a manager expresses a desire to become one's own father. It means raising yourself again 'the right way', with total control of your life" (Pines & Yanai, 2001: 172).

Impact of work-family expectations on career choice

Young people's expectations regarding how they will combine work and family in the future also play a role in influencing career choice. Research by Okamato and England (1998, cited in Badgett & Folbre, 2003) suggests that young women take family responsibilities into account when choosing an occupation. Marks and Houston (2002) conducted a study of academically high-achieving girls aged 15 to 17 years, and found that their education and career plans were significantly influenced by perceived social pressure to give up work to care for their children. The more social pressure they perceived, the less certain they were about their plans to pursue educational qualifications and establish a career. According to Marks and Houston (2002), it is therefore more likely that these high-achieving girls will choose occupations in which they believe they can most easily combine work and family, and that these occupations will in all probability be in feminized professions such as nursing and teaching, which provide girls with examples of how

this might be done in a way that male-dominated occupations such as science and technology do not. In this way, occupational sex segregation will be perpetuated.

Research conducted on the perceived attractiveness of individuals as dating or marriage partners provides further insight into the role of work and family expectations in determining career choice. In a survey of attitudes among undergraduate students majoring in science, most young men reported that women studying in male-dominated disciplines such as engineering, physics, chemistry, and applied sciences were inherently unattractive (Seymour & Hewitt, 1997). In an experiment in which job type and job status were manipulated in dating profiles shown to participants, Badgett and Folbre (2003) found that men and women in occupations that do not conform to traditional gender stereotypes were rated as less attractive potential romantic partners. The prospect of incurring this type of penalty in the dating and/or marriage market, and by extension decreasing one's chances of having a family of one's own, may well influence young people's career choices by deterring them from pursuing occupations perceived as non-traditional in terms of gender roles.

As we can see from these studies investigating young people's expectations of combining a career with finding a partner and having children, in addition to person factors such as values, attitudes, and demographics, the barriers, opportunities, and support perceived to exist in one's environment impacts the development of career interests (Tharenou, 2003). Here, too, work-family concerns play their part in determining occupational choice. In a study of Norwegian MBA graduates who had chosen either self-employment or a more traditional career as an employee within an organization, participants were asked to identify the main reason for choosing one career path over the other. Work load, incorporating family and leisure concerns, was cited by significantly more individuals who had chosen organizational employment rather than entrepreneurship, and was the second-most cited reason among this group behind job and financial security (Kolvereid, 1996). As a perceived barrier to work-life balance, the heavy work load expected from self-employment acted as a deterrent to those choosing traditional employment.

Anticipated support for future work-family issues also contributes to job pursuit intentions. In a study of MBA students and alumni, Honeycutt and Rosen (1997) hypothesized that individuals with salient family and work-life balance identities would be more inclined to find organizations offering flexible career paths attractive. They found instead that all participants were more attracted to firms that provided flexible career paths, regardless of identity salience. This suggests that the availability of work-life benefits acts as a proxy for organizational support, an idea supported by the findings of

Casper and Buffardi (2004), whose research showed that work schedule flexibility and dependent care assistance offered by organizations had a positive relationship with job pursuit intentions. This link was fully mediated by anticipated organizational support. It appears that regardless of their current family commitments, job candidates are looking ahead to a future in which they anticipate barriers to work-life balance. Organizations that provide support for these anticipated problems will enjoy greater recruitment potential among this new generation of labour force entrants.

Career advancement

The second stage of Greenhaus and Callanan's (1994) career development model is concerned with entry into the organization chosen in the first stage. Here, too, work-life concerns come into play. In a longitudinal study of graduate trainees, Sturges and Guest (2004) found that achieving a balanced lifestyle is very important to the young workers both before they begin work, and once they have started at the organization. Once the participants had begun work, well over 80% of them rated maintenance of a balanced lifestyle as being either important or extremely important.

The third stage of Greenhaus and Callanan's (1994) model involves career establishment and achievement. Traditionally a time of intense effort in an attempt to position oneself favourably on the hierarchical ladder, this stage may be undergoing changes in line with those observed in the occupational choice process. Loughlin and Barling (2001) observe that over the past two decades, many young workers have seen their parents undergo corporate restructuring and subsequent job loss after years of long hours, hard work and loyal service. As a result, the authors suggest, this new cohort of workers may be less inclined to make similar sacrifices in terms of leisure or family time for the sake of their jobs. Zemke, Raines, and Filipeczak (2000) propose that young workers may be more interested in achieving work-life balance than in traditional work goals, such as advancing into positions of organizational leadership.

This interest notwithstanding, Sturges and Guest (2004) find that as graduates become embedded in their employing organization, the barriers to work-life balance pile up, primarily in the form of heavy demands on graduates' time and energy. In their interviews with graduate trainees, the authors concluded that while graduates are prepared to work long hours and maintain heavy workloads during the early stages of their career in order to advance within the organization, they see this very much as a short-term process. In the longer term, and once they begin to experience increased demands from their family responsibilities, they expect to work more reasonable hours and achieve

a more balanced lifestyle. Should this not occur for whatever reason, they would consider leaving the organization–as they "work to live, not live to work" (Sturges & Guest, 2004: 10).

At this third stage of Greenhaus and Callanan's (1994) model, in which an individual works to demonstrate competence, take on greater responsibility, and gain authority within the organization, access to opportunities for career development becomes very important. Access to these opportunities may be constrained in a number of ways related to family or non-work commitments. Career advancement can be impacted by family structure, by the necessity of prioritizing one career over another in dual-earner partnerships, by a reduced ability to relocate for work purposes due to concern for uprooting one's spouse and/or children, and by the use of flexible working practices including family leave. Decisions regarding expatriate assignments are also heavily influenced by personal and family concerns.

Impact of marriage on career advancement

There are three main theoretical perspectives on the role of marriage in determining career advancement. Human capital theory (Becker, 1975) holds that marriage is used as a proxy for stability and responsibility by organizations allocating wages and status. Men who are married, and especially those who have children, should therefore advance more than single men. Married women, in contrast, and especially those who have children, ought to take on less demanding jobs with lower pay in order to successfully combine employment with their household responsibilities (Becker, 1985). This would imply that single women, who have more time and energy for demanding jobs, are able to achieve greater career advancement than married women and/or those with children (Tharenou, 1999).

Secondly, there is the spousal support view (Kanter, 1977). This proposes that married men are able to invest more resources in their careers than single men because their wives, particularly those who are not employed themselves, provide their husbands with additional resources by managing the household and by contributing time and energy to the husbands' endeavours (Pfeffer & Ross, 1982). Married women, however, are more likely to provide resources for their husbands' careers rather than receive resources for their own careers from their husbands. According to this theory, therefore, married women will not be able to concentrate on their paid work to the same extent as single women, and will therefore experience less advancement in their careers (Tharenou, 1999).

Finally, conformance to social expectations theory (Landau & Arthur, 1992) posits that married men, as the primary earners in their families, need to advance further in their careers than single men, and that men with children need to advance even further. As women's primary role is to manage household and family responsibilities, it is not necessary for them to advance in their careers to the same degree as men.

Research findings appear to support the latter two perspectives to a greater extent than the propositions put forward by human capital theory. Valcour and Tolbert (2003) found that within dual-career couples, men's careers are given priority far more frequently than women's. Meanwhile, research by Kirchmeyer (2002) showed that having a spouse was associated with a higher income for male managers, and a lower income for female managers. The dominance of men's careers is in line with conformance to social expectations theory, and assists men's career success while helping to contribute to women's lower pay (Valcour & Tolbert, 2003).

Han and Moen (1998) found a negative relationship between marital stability and career advancement for women, a result consistent with both conformance to social expectations theory and spousal support theory. Also consistent with both these theories were the results of Schneer and Reitman (2002), who found that in a longitudinal study of MBA alumni, the highest earners were married men who had children, and the lowest earners were single, childless men. While these findings would also appear to support human capital theory, single women were found to achieve similar career progress as married women, rather than outperform them as implied by the precepts of human capital theory. A longitudinal study of managers and professionals conducted by Tharenou (1999) revealed that in the private sector, married fathers with stay-at-home wives enjoyed greater career advancement than married fathers in dual-earner partnerships, who in turn enjoyed greater career advancement than single men with no children. This too is consistent with spousal support theory, as the resources provided by wives to their husbands' careers diminish once the wives have their own careers requiring resources, and the single men receive no spousal support at all.

The implications of spousal support theory are that single women's careers should advance more than married women's, as the resources of single women can be devoted entirely to their own careers. Some of Tharenou's (1999) findings, however, appear to dispute this. Mothers in dual-earner partnerships enjoyed greater career advancement than single women, but less advancement than married women whose husbands were not employed. This suggests that husbands can also provide

resources for their wives' careers, at least when their time and energies are not required for careers of their own.

It appears that all other things being equal, having a spouse is preferable to being single in terms of career advancement. Whether this is due to the effects of spousal support, the benefits of conforming to social expectations, or to the greater perceived financial need of families compared to single individuals, married employees enjoy more progress within their occupations, with married men enjoying the greatest progress of all.

Impact of children on career advancement

The gender difference observed in the effect of marriage on career advancement becomes even more pronounced when the impact of having children is examined. A survey conducted by Opportunity Now (2000, cited in Marks & Houston, 2002) revealed that 83% of female respondents agreed that commitment to family responsibilities impedes women's career progress. The empirical literature would appear to bear out this conclusion. Stoner and Hartman (1990) found that the decision to have children, and the adjustments this decision required in terms of career strategies, was identified as detrimental to career progress by 80% of the female managers who believed their careers were damaged in some way by their household and family responsibilities. Valcour and Tolbert (2003) found that having children was associated with greater career progression within the same organization for men, but reduced career progression within the same organization for women. In a large-scale study of American public sector workers, having children was linked to greater career success for white men, but not for white women or for any ethnic minority staff (Daley, 1996). Research on mid-career managers by Kirchmeyer (2002) showed that having children was associated with increased income levels for men, but lower levels of pay for women.

These results can be explained by the propensity for women to take on the bulk of childcare and household responsibilities (Hundley, 2001; Sullivan & Lewis, 2001; Vanier Institute, 2000). Women are also more likely to perform intensive care activities for elderly relatives than are men (Mooney, Statham, & Simon, 2002). So while men can enjoy the image of 'stable family man' while eschewing primary childcare responsibility, women–and ethnic minorities in Daley's (1996) research–are perceived by their employers as diverting their time and energy toward childcare, and of contributing less to the organization. Thus, the presence of children assists men's career progress but obstructs that of employees whose priorities are assumed to lie elsewhere.

This theme of employer perceptions of women with children being less committed to the organization runs through the literature assessing the effects of children on career advancement. On the one hand, it is clear that the presence of children in the household requires some adjustment in terms of parents' work schedules, particularly if they have been accustomed to working long hours, socializing with clients after-hours, and/or travelling for business purposes. In their interviews with managerial and professional women, Stoner and Hartman (1990) found that mothers of preschool-age children were unable to work the same number of hours and carry the same workload whilst devoting a sufficient amount of time and energy to their new family responsibilities. Other research has found that when dual-earner couples recognize the need for one partner to reduce their work hours and perhaps their career goals, women are disproportionately likely to be the ones to implement these cutbacks (Becker & Moen, 1999; Han & Moen, 2001).

On the other hand, there is also evidence that employers *assume* a reduction in organizational commitment or job effort when none may in fact exist. Among the female managers interviewed by Stoner and Hartman (1990), a number suggested that their decision to have children was interpreted by their employers as a signal regarding the prominence and priority of these women's careers. Many of the study participants reported that having children damaged their careers not because of actual conflict between work and family demands, but due to the assumptions made by management that such conflict would inevitably occur. Some women were excluded from after-hours meetings and other work functions because their employers assumed that they would be unable to attend due to family responsibilities. In organizations where long hours at work are the norm and are important for promotions, family commitments are seen as an obstacle to women's availability in the workplace. Having children is therefore perceived as an obstacle for women's career advancement.

Impact of flexible working practices on career advancement

Issues related to time spent in the workplace crop up again in the literature chronicling the effects of using flexible working practices offered by organizations. In a survey conducted by Croner Consulting, 61% of HR professionals reported a belief that employees are reluctant to use flexible working practices and other work-life benefits for fear of hindering their career prospects (Management Services, 2004). This reluctance may be justified in some cases. A study conducted in a Big Five accounting firm by Cohen and Single (2001) found that employees using flexible work arrangements were perceived as less likely to advance to partnership and more likely to leave the firm than employees not participating in flexible work arrangements. Teleworking has been linked to professional isolation, which in turn impedes professional development activities associated with

career progress such as networking, informal learning, and mentoring (Cooper & Kurland, 2002). Working reduced hours is frequently unavailable as an option for senior managerial and professional positions, and when it is available, part-time work is often stigmatized and part-time workers viewed as less committed to the organization and less suitable for promotion (Higgins, Duxbury, & Johnson, 2000; Raabe, 1996). As a result, employees have expressed concern that using flexible working arrangements will damage their prospects for career advancement (Houston & Waumsley, 2003; Lewis, 1997).

Women, due to their greater involvement in childcare and household responsibilities, make up the majority of those working reduced hours (Lundgren & Barnett, 2000) and are more likely to express interest in using other 'family-friendly' working practices (Butler, Smart, Gasser, & Li, 2002). They are therefore more likely than men to reap any negative career consequences of using such practices. Men, however, may suffer unique penalties for making use of available practices. Individuals who behave in ways that are inconsistent with gendered social norms will often incur negative judgments from others (Mueller & Yoder, 1997). Hence, men are frequently reluctant to participate in flexible working practices because they anticipate reprisal from their employers for deviating from the traditional sex-stereotyped view of men as 'breadwinners', a role emphasizing paid employment with long hours at work and little participation in family life (Powell, 1997). This reluctance may be justified. Allen and Russell (1999) found that men who took parental leave of absence were less likely to be recommended for organizational rewards than were men who did not take leave, while a laboratory experiment conducted by Butler and Skattebo (2000) demonstrated that men who reported missing work to care for a sick child were given lower performance ratings and lower recommendations for quarterly bonuses than were women reporting the same absences.

Time is an issue in these cases because time at the workplace is viewed by employers as a proxy for productivity, performance, and organizational commitment (Bailyn, 1997). Raabe (1996) describes how organizational settings are rife with assumptions regarding the link between time at work and quantity and quality of output, and assumptions regarding the necessity for managers to work long hours in order to be constantly available for consultation, coordination, and control. Senior managerial attitudes toward the promotion of those working fewer than standard full-time hours or those not visibly present in the workplace on a daily basis reflect these assumptions; those employees who do not devote the maximum amount of time possible to the organization are seen as less productive and less committed, and therefore less valuable (Lewis, 1997). As a result, individuals available to work long hours and be present in the workplace are better able to compete successfully for career development opportunities (Burke, 2001).

Impact of family leave on career advancement

In keeping with the idea that time away from the workplace has deleterious consequences for career progress, research indicates that taking family leave can result in career roadblocks (Waner, Winter, & Breshears, 2005). Judiesch and Lyness (1999) found that taking leave of any kind was associated with fewer subsequent promotions and smaller salary increases for managers, regardless of their performance ratings. As women are more likely to take family leave than men (Judiesch & Lyness, 1999; Kossek, Barber, & Winters, 1999), these career roadblocks are predominantly faced by female employees. In Stoner and Hartman's (1990) research on professional and managerial women, respondents noted that maternity leave resulted in a loss of career momentum. Being away from the workplace removed these employees from the organizational focus, and raised questions among their managers regarding return dates, shifting priorities between work and family, and changes in commitment to the organization. According to Stoner and Hartman (1990), leaves of absence are inconsistent with managerial career progression and those who take such leaves are apt to find that career opportunities occur less frequently.

The effects of family leave on careers are far-reaching. Research by Jacobsen and Levin (1995) showed that women who had worked continuously for twenty years since their last employment interruption had still not caught up in terms of career progress with comparable women whose employment history was uninterrupted. It is perhaps knowledge of results like this that deter some employees from taking the family leaves available to them. For instance, research by Finkel, Oswang and She (1994) found that over three-quarters of the female employees surveyed expected that taking maternity leave would have negative consequences for their careers, and only 30% of those who gave birth took the full amount of leave provided by their employers. Similar concerns were identified in research reported by Hammonds (1997), Perlow (1995) and Schwartz (1995).

Impact of family on relocation decisions

As we have seen, upward mobility within organizations can be challenging for individuals with family commitments. Equally, mobility between organizations can be difficult when career decisions are made with family circumstances taken into account. In dual-earner partnerships, it is common for men's careers to receive priority when decisions are made that may affect both spouses' careers (Pixley, 2000). Women may therefore be unable to relocate to advance their own careers due to the negative effects the move would have on their husbands' career progress. Reporting such results in their own research, Stoner and Hartman (1990) note that the female managers in their

study were denied growth opportunities and promotions due to their lack of mobility. These women identified lack of mobility as the single greatest family obstruction to their career progress.

Feeling constrained in their ability to relocate, women reported choosing jobs based on family-friendliness rather than career impact (Stoner & Hartman, 1990). Positions that provided flexibility, additional time for family needs, or geographical proximity to children's schools or daycare were selected over those that would help career advancement. A reluctance to disrupt their children's social lives and schooling was also evident in women's explanations of their inability to relocate.

The priority assigned to husbands' careers over wives' also manifests itself in relocations that are beneficial to men's career progress, but disadvantageous for the career advancement of their spouses. If a man is offered a relocation opportunity that benefits his career, the decision is most often to take it, which results in disruption to the continuous employment of his wife with her organization (Valcour & Tolbert, 2003).

Impact of family on expatriation

The choice to accept expatriate assignments and the success of those assignments are heavily influenced by family considerations (Harvey, 1996). Research consistently identifies marriage, in the form of spousal attitudes and considerations regarding the impact of expatriation on the spouse's career, as the most frequent barrier to an individual's willingness to take on international work (Aryee, Chay, & Chew, 1996; Brett & Stroh, 1995; Harvey, 1998). Punnett (1997) found that 80% of employees who refused international positions cited family reasons, and the impact on their spouses' careers in particular, for doing so. Tharenou (2003) found that in addition to the presence of partners and their career considerations, more subjective family influences also affected individuals' receptivity to international assignments. Employees reported a reluctance to give up their current family life and social contacts for the purposes of working abroad, and these findings were also applicable to younger employees without children and/or partners.

Once again, we see gender differences in effect. Research by Linehan and Walsh (2000) indicates that more women than men perceive the necessity of choosing between family commitments and an international career. In their study, female international managers reported additional psychological strain and feelings of guilt when balancing an expatriate assignment with their responsibilities as a parent. The 'either-or' decision faced by these women is prompted by the perceived inflexibility of their organizations, their employers' assumptions regarding the primacy of women's role in child-

rearing, and a male model of career success that does not take into account the effects of marriage, pregnancy, childcare and household work (Linehan & Walsh, 2000).

For those who do take on international assignments, factors related to family play a significant role in determining expatriates' satisfaction with those assignments and their overall success. Researchers have found that the success of expatriate assignments is strongly influenced by the adjustment of the expatriate's spouse and children to the foreign locale (Harvey, 1996). Failure to complete the assignment, which carries a penalty for career progression, is often attributed to family issues rather than work-related problems (Harvey, 1995).

Shaffer and Harrison (1998) found that the more family responsibilities an expatriate employee had, the more salient were family-related factors when the decision was being made as to whether or not to withdraw from the international assignment. Family responsibilities and the experience of the spouse during expatriation influenced expatriates' adjustment and non-work-related satisfaction, which in turn were associated with plans to search for other employment, general thoughts or consideration of quitting, and intentions to quit (Shaffer & Harrison, 1998).

The interplay between work and family can also exert a negative influence on expatriates' likelihood of successfully completing their assignments. The degree to which work demands interfere with family life, as well as the degree to which family responsibilities interfere with the fulfilment of work tasks, have been found to predict expatriate employees' assignment withdrawal cognitions (Shaffer, Harrison, Gilley, and Luk, 2001). This sort of psychological withdrawal from work includes the intention to quit expatriate assignments before they are completed, and this intention to quit has widespread and negative implications for the expatriate employee's career (Black, Gregersen, & Mendenhall, 1992).

Turnover and career exit

The fourth stage of Greenhaus and Callanan's (1994) career model is entitled 'Mid-career', and is usually characterized by some sort of re-evaluation of career and life direction among workers. At this stage, employees who are dissatisfied with their career progress or current situation may consider withdrawing from their organization in favour of other pursuits. Leaving an organization often has profound implications for an individual's career. Either one takes up a new position elsewhere, which may or may not represent an improvement in career prospects, or one withdraws from the labour force altogether.

Decisions to forego one organization for another are frequently influenced by concerns with regard to work-life balance. Research consistently shows that organizations demonstrating support for their employees' personal lives and family commitments reap rewards in terms of increased attachment and reduced intentions to turnover. Sturges and Guest (2004) found a close, positive relationship between organizational support for non-work responsibilities and activities, and organizational commitment. Employees whose supervisors provide support for work-family issues report fewer intentions to leave the organization (Allen, 2001; Aryee, Luk, & Stone, 1998), as do those who perceive a supportive organizational work-family culture, characterized by managerial support for work-life issues, fewer negative career consequences for using flexible working practices and other family-friendly programs, and fewer organizational time demands placed on employees (Allen, 2001; Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness, 1999). A supportive work-family culture has also been associated with female employees' plans to return to work more quickly after giving birth (Lyness, Thompson, Francesco & Judiesch, 1999), and employees who perceive organizational values that are supportive of work-life balance report greater satisfaction with their careers and less intent to quit (Burke et al., 2003).

For employees dealing with simultaneous work and family demands, flexible working practices or other family-friendly programs can be very important in choosing whether to stay with or leave an employer. The availability of flexible work hours has been linked to organizational commitment and employee loyalty for those with caregiving responsibilities for children (Roehling, Roehling, & Moen, 2001; Scandura & Lankau, 1997). Research has also shown a positive relationship between the provision of voluntary reduced hours and employee retention (Williams, Ford, Dohring, Lee, & MacDermid, 2000), and between employee satisfaction with work schedule flexibility and intentions to leave the organization (Aryee et al., 1998). In a 1995 study by Grover and Crooker, four individual work-life practices–parental leave, childcare information and referral, flexible working hours, and financial assistance with childcare–were found to predict organizational attachment among employees, regardless of their family commitments. Similarly, Thompson et al. (1999) found a link between work-family benefit availability and turnover intentions, and women with school-aged children in Roehling et al.'s (2001) study reported greater levels of loyalty to the organization.

These associations between work-family support and turnover intentions can perhaps be explained by the concept of value congruence. Value congruence is said to occur when an individual employee and an organization share similar values (Meglino & Ravlin, 1998). Perrewe and

Hochwarter (2001) suggest that value congruence would occur if an individual employee viewed participation in family activities as a crucial aspect of life, and these activities were supported by the employing organization. Such support could take the form of sympathetic and helpful supervisors, a culture that encourages work-life balance amongst employees, or the provision of work-life programs such as flexible hours. In contrast, were an organization interested only in maximizing an employee's work outputs at the expense of the employee's personal life, and provided none of the above-mentioned supports, this would represent a lack of congruence. Research by Cable and Judge (1996) has linked value congruence to increased employee involvement and satisfaction with work, and fewer intentions to quit.

In some cases, problems balancing work with family commitments lead to a decision to exit the labour force entirely. This tends to be a predominantly female phenomenon, although there is some evidence of increasing numbers of men opting out of successful careers in order to spend more time with their families (Cobb, 2006). In their study of female 'fast-track' managerial and professional employees who gave up their careers to stay home with their children, Stone and Lovejoy (2004) cited workplace inflexibility as a major factor prompting women to quit. Study participants spoke of the unavailability of reduced-hours options for high-level positions in their organizations, and reported that their choice was between working forty hours or more per week or quitting. Among the women who had planned to continue working after having children, 40% attempted to negotiate reduced work hours with their employer, but were denied.

Of those who were able to work part-time or make job-sharing arrangements, many women found that this reduction in work hours resulted in a 'career derailment' (Stone & Lovejoy, 2004: 69) that eventually influenced their decision to leave the work force. Organizational restructuring also played a role in prompting women's decisions to leave; turnover of the managers to whom these employees reported disrupted the family-friendly work arrangements that had been negotiated, in turn leading to the turnover of the women themselves.

Family members also played their part in the decision-making process. Of the female managers and professionals who participated in Stone and Lovejoy's (2004) research, 72% referred to the desire to spend more time with their children as a factor in their decision to quit. Three-quarters of these women left their jobs when their children were infants or toddlers. Spouses, too, played a role. Approximately two thirds of the women in the study spoke of their husbands' key influence on the decision to quit. Often mentioned were the lack of assistance their husbands provided with

parenting responsibilities, and their husbands' perception of the women's careers as secondary to their own, regardless of the status or income associated with those careers.

Career satisfaction and subjective career success

Attitudes toward balancing a career with family commitments, as well as the actual experience of managing competing demands from work and from home, are likely to be a significant predictor of employees' satisfaction with their career outcomes (Sanders et al., 1998) and perceptions of career success. Career success can be assessed either objectively, by means of pay, promotion, and status, or subjectively, by means of workers' reactions to their career experiences (Heslin, 2005; Hughes, 1958), and is thought to be associated with greater employee satisfaction, motivation, and performance (Peluchette, 1993).

The intersection of attitudes and experiences in predicting satisfaction and perceived success can be explained by person-environment fit theory (French & Caplan, 1972), which posits that discrepancies between an individual's needs and preferences and the environment's ability to satisfy those needs and preferences will lead to stress and physical, psychological, and behavioural strain. Based on this, Sanders et al. (1998) propose that if employees' expectations for the configuration of work life and family life are not met, the ensuing gap between their work-family attitudes and reality will produce dissatisfaction, strain, and other negative repercussions. Correspondingly, if there is a good fit between work-family expectations and the actual intersection of work and family life, one would expect positive outcomes such as satisfaction and self-perceived success.

There is conflicting evidence for the effects of family commitments and work-life concerns on employees' career satisfaction and subjective perceptions of success. On the one hand, research has shown that women attempting to combine professional or managerial careers with family commitments report less job satisfaction, less job involvement, and less career satisfaction than women who chiefly emphasized their careers (Burke & McKeen, 1993). Kirchmeyer (2002) found that having children is associated with reduced perceptions of career success for female managers, and employees experiencing strong difficulties balancing competing work and home responsibilities have also reported lower levels of subjective career success (Peluchette, 1993).

On the other hand, Valcour and Tolbert (2003) found evidence that female employees with more children, and, presumably, a higher level of family demands, exhibit higher levels of perceived success in their work lives. The authors speculate that such a result may be due to the women's

boundaryless career patterns that have allowed them to effectively integrate work and family demands. Other research has shown that managers in dual-earner partnerships report higher levels of satisfaction with their careers than managers in single-earner households (Schneer & Reitman, 1993). This increased level of satisfaction may be attributable to the ability of the dual-earners' career paths to permit these managers to fulfil the multiple roles of spouse, parent, and worker (Schneer & Reitman, 1993); commitment to multiple roles has been related to life satisfaction, self-esteem, and self-acceptance among managerial women (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002). 'Breadwinners', who focus to a greater extent on work while their nonemployed spouses take care of family demands, may not feel a similar sense of fulfilment.

A study of female managers revealed several ways in which they considered family and household responsibilities to have influenced their careers in a positive way (Stoner & Hartman, 1990). The women spoke of honing skills at home that proved to be useful in the workplace: understanding and interacting with people, organizational skills, and crisis management were identified as helping their performance on the job. A sense of fulfilment and contentment derived from family life was also thought to provide perspective on life, allowing the managers to put forth greater effort and enjoy higher levels of productivity at work. Some women spoke of family commitments as "a change of pace that helps [me] to relax" (Stoner & Hartman, 1990: 9).

Conclusions

It is evident from this review of the literature that the influence of family members, and concerns for work-life balance, help to shape employee decision-making and outcomes throughout the career life cycle. Some of the key implications for individuals pursuing a career and a family life, and for the organizations that hire them, are as follows.

Growing significance of work-life issues in career-related decision making

Employees' concerns for balancing work and family are set to grow. Workers' values and expectations regarding the combination of work and family are modelled on those exhibited by their parents (Sanders et al., 1998), and dual-earner households are on the rise in both the UK and USA (Brannen, Moss, Owen and Vale, 1997; Cornell Employment and Families Careers Institute, 1999). As more and more young people whose parents were in dual-earner partnerships enter the workforce themselves, organizations will need to find ways to allow these young workers to meet their expectations of integrating a successful career with a meaningful family life. Students are being advised to familiarize themselves with family issues in the workplace, and to learn to

thoroughly research employers' benefits packages before making decisions to apply for or accept a position (Waner et al., 2005). By so doing, it is to be hoped that a mismatch between young people's expectations of balancing work and home and the reality of doing so can be avoided, and person-environment fit can be achieved.

Importance of organizational family-friendliness for recruitment and retention

Job candidates take family considerations into account when searching for work, and employees do likewise when deciding whether or not to remain with their employers. It follows that organizations offering attractive benefits, flexible working practices, and a supportive work-family culture will be in an advantageous position to both recruit and retain these workers. As developing countries become wealthier, this may soon become an issue for multinational firms that currently do not offer foreign workers the same benefits available to those working in the firm's home country. For instance, McKeen and Bu (1998) report that flexible working practices such as flextime, telework, and part-time hours are generally absent in China, and that Western multinationals that provide these practices in North America do not usually make similar provisions available for their employees in China. The experience of Taiwan cited in Hui and Tan (1996) suggests that work-life issues will become more prominent in developing nations as the standard of living rises; multinational firms would therefore be advised to develop more family-friendly initiatives in these regions in preparation for this time.

Persistence of gendered parenting roles and their negative effects on women's careers

As long as stereotyped views of mothers as primary caregivers for children and women as keepers of the household continue, women will struggle with progressing their careers alongside marriage and parenthood. By marginalizing those–predominantly women - who make use of flexible working practices or family leave, current societal attitudes toward the primacy of women's role in the home impede women who do not want to have to choose between having a family and pursuing a high-impact, successful career. These gendered assumptions about parenting roles also hinder men wishing to take a more active part in family life through participation in organizational work-life programs. "Organizations must not view balancing work and family as a woman's issue, but rather as a human issue" (Wentling, 1998: 21).

Effectiveness of organizational work-life programs

As long as employees fear negative career consequences of using flexible working practices or family leave, these measures will have a limited impact on helping workers balance their jobs with their family responsibilities. Hence, organizations are unlikely to enjoy any subsequent benefits attributed to the successful implementation of these practices (e.g., improved productivity, market performance, and profit rates) (Meyer, Mukerjee, & Sestero, 2001; Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000; Shepard, Clifton, & Kruse, 1996). Instead, research demonstrates that loss of employee commitment and increased intentions to quit are probable repercussions of an organizational failure to foster a supportive environment in which employees can balance their work demands with their personal or family commitments (Aryee et al., 1998; Burke et al., 2003). The continued emphasis on time spent at work as a criterion of successful performance and suitability for promotion is a key factor in the failure of many work-life programs to achieve their potential. Until organizations begin to shift toward measuring performance via outputs rather than inputs, work-life programs will not live up to expectations, careers will continue to be stalled, and valuable workers will continue to be lost.

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