DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 453 430 CE 081 853

TITLE	Human Resource Management Issues. Symposium 22. [AHRD Conference, 2001].
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	23p.; In: Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) Conference Proceedings (Tulsa, Oklahoma, February 28-March 4, 2001). Volumes 1 and 2; see CE 081 829.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Education; Aspiration; *Conflict; Coping; *Employee Assistance Programs; Employee Attitudes; *Family Work Relationship; Human Resources; Labor Force Development; Law Enforcement; Literature Reviews; *Personnel Management; Police; Program Evaluation; *Stress Management; *Student Educational Objectives; Student Financial Aid; Tuition

ABSTRACT

This symposium on human resource management issues consists of three presentations. "Work and Family Conflict: A Review of the Theory and Literature" (Susan R. Madsen) explores the literature related to work and family conflict and its possible implications to human resource development (HRD) theory and practice. It presents four existing theoretical frameworks and reviews the literature related to antecedents/determinants and possible outcomes of work-family conflict and provides recommendations and contributions to HRD professionals. "Behind the Badge: Implications for Employee Assistance Programs in Law Enforcement" (Lynn Atkinson-Tovar, Kathleen Kiernan) reports a study on how stress affects the daily lives of federal and local law enforcement officers and whether they are willing to seek assistance. Findings indicate professionals in law enforcement are willing to acknowledge the need for employee stress reduction programs. "Employee Expectations, Characteristics, and Perceived Goal-Attainment of Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) Participants" (Ronald L. Jacobs, Mark Skillings, Angela Yu) presents these results of an evaluation study: individuals participated in TAPs because they primarily sought to achieve personal enrichment goals and an apparent discrepancy is suggested between what organizations might expect from offering a TAP benefit and the reported intents of individuals who use TAP benefits. (YLB)

2001 AHRD Conference

Human Resource Management Issues

Symposium 22

Tulsa, Oklahoma

February 28 - March 4, 2001

Work and Family Conflict: A Review of the Theory and Literature

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The purpose of this review is to explore the literature related to work and family conflict and its possible implications to HRD theory and practice. It defines work-family conflict and discusses its relevance to HRD practitioners and researchers. It presents four existing theoretical frameworks and reviews the literature related to antecedents/determinants and possible outcomes of work-family conflict. Finally, it provides recommendations and contributions to HRD professionals.

Keywords: Work-family, Conflict, Work-nonwork

McLagan (1989) defined human resource development (HRD) as the "integrated use of training and development, organization development, and career development to improve individual, group, and organization effectiveness" (p. 7). Interventions in these three HRD areas are sometimes focused directly at improving individual effectiveness, but, if successful, the performance of a group or the organization can also be directly or indirectly improved. In addition, interventions focused primarily at improving organizational effectiveness can and should, in most situations, spill over into increased group or individual effectiveness. One broad area that appears to relate to all employees at some level and also exemplifies this possible spillover is that of the work and family relationship. At the foundation of this relationship is the conflict that may occur between work and family domains. Developing a better understanding of work-family conflict (WFC) is important to employees and organizations for a number of reasons. One simple reason is because conflict is a source of stress and, therefore, is associated with numerous negative consequences, both in the workplace and in the home (Hammer, Allen, & Grigsby, 1997).

During the past two decades, research in WFC has expanded beyond the family and psychology fields to business, management, and human resources. As more employees are juggling work and family demands, it continues to be important for researchers to study WFC consequences and the implications they may have on the workplace and in the home (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). Frone, Yardley, and Martel (1997) stated that understanding the work-family interface is a "pivotal concern of both work and family researchers" (p. 145). Because of their current and future human capital and intellectual capital potential, employees play an essential role in the success of any organization. How to assist employees in contributing their best knowledge and ability has been an active HRD research agenda for many years. However, improving employee performance by designing interventions to assist in reducing their WFC levels is a new domain for HRD practitioners and researchers.

Purpose, Research Questions, Design and Data Collection

The purpose of this review is to explore the literature related to work and family conflict and its possible implications to HRD theory and practice. The following questions were investigated: 1) What are the existing WFC theoretical frameworks? 2) What are antecedents/determinants and possible outcomes of WFC? 3) What does the literature recommend? and 4) How does this information contribute to new knowledge in HRD? This review is a content analysis of scholarly literature located in various business, psychology, and family databases. Among the hundreds of articles located, the thirty-three that appeared to have the most applicable theoretical frameworks and HRD implications were subjectively chosen.

Definitions and Relevance

WFC has been defined as "a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect" (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77). Recent research has divided WFC into two types of conflict. Aryee, Luk, Leung, and Lo, (1999) explained that WFC stems from the interference of events in the work role with family role performance, while family-work conflict (FWC) stems from the interference of events in the family role with work role performance. Because of the changes in employee demographic

characteristics (e.g., increasing prevalence of dual-earner couples, influx of women into the workforce, nontraditional family arrangements) (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000), societal attitudes about work and family, and even in the changes that are occurring in the structure and processes for accomplishing work--balancing the demands of work and family roles has become a primary daily task for many employed adults (Williams & Alliger, 1994). As the demands of roles increase, it is unavoidable that one role will either interrupt or intrude in some way into the activities of the other role. Williams and Alliger (1994) stated that, "for many parents, work and family goals must compete for limited psychological, physical, and temporal resources" (p. 841). There is little doubt that workers today are confronting new and unique challenges in meeting the required demands with the resources available.

Conflict is a normal part of life. Experiencing conflict or strain between various roles is a typical result of being subject to the demands of multiple roles (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). In fact, having multiple roles has actually been linked with certain positive outcomes (e.g., self-esteem, life satisfaction, fulfillment of goals, pride). Understanding the positive and negative linkages between work conflicts, family conflicts, and the interface, is not only important for HRD, but also for organizations, families, and society.

Theoretical Framework

Grandey and Cropanzano (1999) purported that work-family researchers have not based their predictions on a strong conceptual framework and that often theories are not even mentioned in the literature. To date, there are few theories that make a direct connection between work, family, and conflict. The theories that do, appear to be primarily based in an applied psychology theoretical context. These theories and models include role conflict theory, sensitization theory, spillover theory, and conservation of resources.

Role Conflict Theory. Role conflict theory states that experiencing ambiguity or conflict within a role will result in an undesirable state. Because of conflicting demands among roles (e.g., time, lack of energy, incompatible behaviors), multiple roles lead to personal conflict as it becomes more difficult to perform each role successfully (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). According to Greenhaus and Beutell (1985), there are three forms of work-family conflict: time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behavior-based conflict. Time-based conflict is exhibited when the time demand by one role is seen as an interference with participation in the other role. Strain-based conflict emerges when the strain experienced in one role intrudes into and interferes with another role. Behavior-based conflict is believed to occur when certain behaviors are inappropriately transferred from one role to another (Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996). In addition, Aryee et al. (1999) explained that, to understand WFC, both directions (i.e., work to family, family to work) must be considered. Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000, p. 251) presented a chart of these forms and directions to create the six dimensions of work-family conflict (see Table 1).

Table 1. Dimensions of work-family conflict.

Forms of Work-Family Conflict	Work Interference with Family	Family Interference with Work
Tim	Time Based Work Interference with Family	Time Based Family Interference with Work
Strain	Strain Based Work Interference with Family	Strain Based Family Interference with Work
Behavior	Behavioral Based Work Interference with Family	Behavioral Based Work Interference with Work

Sensitization Theory. Foley and Powell (1997) reported on Pleck's work that suggests that men's self-esteem and identity have traditionally been connected to their performance of the work role, while women's self-concept has been associated with their performance of the spouse and parenting roles. It appears that some of the gender research in work-family conflict draws upon elements of this theory, whether it is formally acknowledged or not (e.g., Aryee et al., 1999; Frone, Russell, & Barnes, 1996; Kim, 1998).

Spillover Theory. Spillover theory is used to explain how work influences family life. Positive spillover would be exhibited when the satisfaction, energy, happiness, and stimulation an individual has at work would cross over into positive feelings and energy at home. Negative spillover from work to family is demonstrated when the problems, conflicts, or energy at work has strained and preoccupied an individual, making it difficult to participate

in family life effectively and positively (Foley & Powell, 1997). This theory can also be used when considering the effects of family spillover on work.

Conservation of Resources (COR). The COR model encompasses several stress theories. According to Grandey and Cropanzano (1999), the model proposes that "individuals seek to acquire and maintain resources. Stress is a reaction to an environment in which there is the threat of a loss of resources, an actual loss in resource, or lack of an expected gain in resources" (p. 352). Resources include objects, conditions (e.g., married status, tenure), personal characteristics (i.e., resources that buffer one against stress), and energies (e.g., time, money, knowledge). This model proposes that "interrole conflict leads to stress because resources are lost in the process of juggling both work and family roles" (p. 352). This can lead to a negative state of being, which may include depression, dissatisfaction, anxiety, or physiological tension.

Literature Review

The experience of interrole conflict has been shown to have negative implications for well-being (Aryee et al., 1999). Regardless of the cultural context, it appears that parents are more willing to allow work responsibilities to interfere with family responsibilities than to let family interfere with work. Conflict between work and family often manifests itself in an incompatible schedule, excessive work time demands, and fatigue and irritability caused when an individual attempts to fulfill roles related to work and family (Eagle, Miles, & Icenogle, 1997). If a person is frequently struggling to meet the demands at work because of interference from home, reduced quality of work life is reported, and, if a person is struggling to meet the demands at home because of work interference, reduced quality of home life is reported.

WFC is more prevalent than FWC among both sexes in the United States and Finland (Eagle et al., 1997; Kinnumen & Mauno, 1998). Yang, Chen, Choi, & Zou (2000) conducted a study that compared WFC between U. S. Americans and Chinese and found that, even though employees in both countries reported WFC, U. S. American employees experienced greater family demand with a correspondingly greater impact on WFC. They reported that the statistical effect of FWC on stress has been shown to be greater than WFC, meaning that family demand is a major source of stress. Kinnumen and Mauno (1998) found that WFC had negative consequences on work well-being and FWC had negative consequences on family well-being. In this sample, FWC had negative effects in the home but not in the workplace, while WFC had negative consequences in both domains.

Antecedents and Determinants of Work-Family Conflict

Much research has been conducted attempting to identify the antecedents or determinants of WFC and FWC and to analyze the possible relationships involved. By the identification of these antecedents, it is hoped that interventions can be designed and implemented to assist individuals in preventing or managing WFC more effectively, thus decreasing the negative, and sometimes detrimental, outcomes for the individual, family, and organization.

One of the most common antecedents of WFC is that of multiple-role conflict. The more roles or positions a person acquires and is expected to engage in, the more complex it becomes to fulfill the responsibilities of each role (Aaron-Corbin, 1999). Role demands may "originate from expectations expressed by work and family role senders, as well as from values held by the person regarding his or her own work and family role behavior" (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000, p. 182). It is not simply the number of roles that is most critical in WFC, but how one perceives each role and the interactions between them. Carlson (1999) researched situational determinants (i.e., role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload), dispositional determinants (i.e., Type A, negative affectivity), and various demographic variables on the three forms of WFC described earlier (i.e., time-, strain-, behavior-based). She found that negative affectivity and the number of children in a family were both significant determinants of all three forms of WFC. The relationship between work role conflict and strain-based conflict was significant, and work role conflict, family role conflict, and Type A personality were significantly related to behavior-based conflict. Interestingly however, the significant relationship between WFC and Type A personality was negative, suggesting that Type A individuals in this study may be compartmentalizing their conflict into the separate domains. She also noted that, overall, the greater the role conflict, the higher the level of reported WFC. Eagle et al. (1997) also found that, as the number of children in a family increased, so did the level of FWC.

Numerous studies have been conducted in the United States researching gender as a possible determinant in WFC/FWC. Maupin (1993) examined family and career orientation differences between men and women accounting students in the United States. Even though there is a movement toward gender equality, it was concluded that there were still numerous differences and potential conflict between genders in combining work and family. In

studying a sample at the Department of Social Services in New York state, Kim (1998) observed marked gender differences in terms of work-family. It was reported that WFC was higher in the women sampled, which supports the sensitization theory. Eagle et al. (1997) found, however, that there were no gender differences with regard to the permeability of work and family boundaries in their sample, yet the Hammer et al. (1997) study showed significant gender differences in the antecedent discussed earlier. In this study men reported lower WFC, higher career priority, and higher perceived work schedule flexibility than women. These are just a few of the many reported studies related to gender and WFC in the U. S. Even though the research findings vary, it appears that many U. S. women continue to perceive greater levels of WFC/FWC than do men.

WFC gender research can also be found for other countries. Kinnumen and Mauno (1998) studied employees in Finland and found that there were no gender differences in the overall levels of conflict. Results concluded, however, that WFC had negative consequences on work well-being, FWC had negative consequences on family well-being, and, as the educational level of the male increased, so did the level of WFC. Aryee and Luk (1996) studied WFC in Hong Kong and found that there were no significant gender differences related to overall career satisfaction and more specifically to certain determinants (i.e., child-care arrangements, supervisor support, skill utilization, and organization-based self-esteem). There are many variables (e.g., smaller family size, more domestic help) that can be identified to explain the difference between these studies and the U. S. studies described. The purpose of this limited gender review, however, is just to note a few international differences.

Other determinants of WFC/FWC include the level of childcare arrangement satisfaction, job insecurity, work involvement, perceived flexibility, partners' WFC, perceived control and goal progress. Consistent with the role conflict theory, the lack of satisfaction with childcare arrangements for young children was shown to increase significantly a woman's FWC (e.g., Aryee & Luk, 1996). It was found that, when a women was satisfied with these arrangements, she experienced better balance between parental demands and satisfaction in life. Kinnumen & Mauno (1998) investigated the effect that job insecurity had on FWC in a Finnish population. Results suggested that this relationship is significant for both sexes. Hammer et al. (1997) studied personal and partners' work and family involvement, career salience, perceived flexibility of work schedule, and partners' WFC. The researchers reported a significant relationship between these variables and the individuals' WFC. In addition, Williams and Alliger (1994) found that personal control and perceived goal progress may be important regulators of daily mood which can affect WFC. They reported that "juggling work and family roles throughout the day is related to both concurrent mood and reported end-of-day work-family conflict" (p. 859). These results generally support the spillover theory. The researchers concluded that spillover of unpleasant moods occurred both from work to family and from family to work, while positive mood spillover were weak.

Other antecedents of WFC/FWC relate to social support (e.g., supervisor, co-worker, family, spouse) and organizational culture. Aryee and Luk (1996) found that supervisor support of work-family issues influenced career satisfaction in both genders. Boles, Johnston, and Hair (1997) reported that low social support from co-workers lead to dissatisfaction. Adams, King, and King (1996) found that higher levels of work interfering with family predicted lower levels of family emotional and instrumental support and that higher levels of this support were associated with lower levels of family interfering with work. Hammer et al. (1997) observed both in females' and males' WFC that a partner's WFC accounted for a significant amount of variance. Thompson, Beauvais, and Lyness (1999) purported that, when there is a work-family supportive organizational culture, employees are able to manage WFC more effectively, loyalty and commitment to the organization is increased, and retention is higher.

Possible Outcomes of Work-Family Conflict

There has also been much research conducted linking WFC and FWC to possible outcomes in the home and workplace. Many of these researched outcomes appear to be directly or indirectly linked to either a decrease in individual performance in the home and workplace or to the lack of potential performance improvements for the individual, group, or organization.

Kossek and Ozeki (1998) examined the relationship among work-family conflict, policies, and satisfaction and found that there was a consistent negative relationship among all forms of WFC and job-life satisfaction. Boles et al. (1997) surveyed a sample of shift work employees and found that greater work/non-work conflict was associated with dissatisfaction in work after six and eighteen months. Other studies found that WFC was significantly related to and has an important effect on job and life satisfaction (e.g., Adams et al., 1996; Yang, 1998). Thomas and Ganster (1995) reported that job satisfaction is increased and WFC is decreased when employees perceive control over work and family.

The various repercussions of turnover in the workplace is a topic of great interest and concern for practitioners and researchers. Abbott, De Cieri, and Iverson (1998) studied the cost-of-turnover implications of WFC

at management levels in Australia. They found that the total costs (e.g., reparation, replacement, training) associated with the exit of high-performing women at management level was about $75,000 per employee. Even though various financial turnover costs have been reported, it appears that researchers agree that it is expensive and difficult for many employers. Abbott et al. (1998) reported that implementation of family-friendly policies (FFP), where they are lacking, can assist in reducing this turnover. Boles and Babin (1996) found that emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction were significantly related to WFC which, in turn, was related to a salesperson's propensity to leave employment.

Another growing body of research that appears to support the COR model (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999), relates to the health and wellness outcomes of various forms of WFC. The negative health effects of stress in general have been researched for many years. A number of studies (e.g., Aryee, 1992; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) supported a positive relationship between perceived job stress and WFC. It has been suggested that WFC/FWC represent a potent stress that can negatively influence an employee's health (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1997). A substantial body of research (e.g., Aryee, 1992) provides evidence that family and work role tension can lead to psychological and physical problems of workers. Other researchers have explained that the subjective quality of an individual's work and family roles, not the actual employment and family status, are the most important elements of psychological well-being (e.g., Williams & Alliger, 1994). Results from the Frone, Russell, and Cooper (1997) four-year longitudinal study suggested that FWC is related to poor physical health, incidence of hypertension, and elevated levels of depression. They concluded that FWC may be causally antecedent to employee health outcomes. Other research studies link WFC and role conflict to emotional exhaustion (Boles & Babin, 1996) and higher alcohol consumption (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1993). The negative effects of WFC on organizations have been found to include high health insurance claims, lost work days, and reduced productivity which contributes to high economic costs for organizations and families (Yang, 1998). The good news is that perceptions of supportive workplace practices were found to be associated with lower levels of depression, somatic complaints, and blood cholesterol (Thomas & Ganster, 1995).

Organizational commitment is another area of research in both the work-family and HRD fields. Various commitment forms have been shown to predict work outcomes, such as tardiness, absenteeism, turnover, turnover intentions, and performance (Cohen, 1995). Cohen (1995) purported that "it is the way in which organizations react toward nonwork domains of their employees, and not the effective management of work-nonwork domains by employees, which can increase work commitment" (p. 257). In her study of three types of organizational responses to work and family challenges, Kirchmeyer (1995) found that increasing boundary flexibility through respect practices (i.e., practices that provide workers with the support and consideration to accomplish nonwork responsibilities themselves) was associated with higher organizational commitment. Cohen (1995) examined the relationship between various commitment forms and nonwork domains with a sample of nurses from two hospitals. The findings showed that "nonwork domains affect all work commitment forms examined in this study, especially organizational commitment" (p. 239) This leads to the conclusion that the way people feel toward their nonwork domains has an important effect on their work attitudes.

As is clear, there are numerous possible determinants and outcomes of WFC (see Table 2). Understanding these can assist practitioners in assessing and evaluating individuals and organizations so that appropriate WFC-reducing interventions can be designed and implemented. Much of the reviewed literature provides suggestions for these types of interventions.

Recommendations and Contributions

After reviewing ideas for possible interventions (see Table 2), some may mistakenly think that this author is recommending that all organizations implement numerous programs and initiatives to assist employees. This list, however, provides ideas of interventions that may be effective for certain organizations if a thorough assessment by an experienced practitioner deems them to be of strategic value to the organization. May, Lau, and Johnson (1999) explained that

> The effects of numerous human resource development factors on business performance have been reported in business research literature in recent years. After years of organizational restructuring and work reengineering, management recognizes that a productive workforce is increasingly important to attain sustainable competitive advantages for business organizations on a global basis. (p. 1)

Why should organizations implement WFC initiatives? The literature has shown that employees can be more productive and effective workers if WFC/FWC is managed appropriately. Many employees cannot do this without the assistance of their employers. Bond, Galinsky, and Swanberg, (1997) stated that "the quality of workers' jobs and the supportiveness of their workplaces" (i.e. flexibility in work arrangements, supervisor support,

supportive workplace culture, positive coworkers relations, absence of discrimination, respect in the workplace, and equal opportunity for workers of all backgrounds) "are the most powerful predictors of productivity--job satisfaction, commitment to their employers, and retention. Job and workplace characteristics are far more important predictors than pay and benefits" (p. 1).

Table 2. Work-Family Conflict Antecedents, Outcomes, and Possible Interventions

WFC/FWC Antecedents/Determinants	Outcomes	Possible Interventions
age of children	absenteeism	active counseling
career salience	alcohol consumption	boundary flexibility
childcare arrangements	blood cholesterol levels	child care assistance (on-site, resource and referral, voucher, discounts)
coping strategies	career/job satisfaction	compressed work week
educational level	depression	coping strategies
employment of spouse	emotional exhaustion	dependant care assistance plans
family involvement (individual)	goal achievement	elder care consultation & referral
family involvement (spouse)	happiness	employee assistance programs
family support	high health insurance claims	employee WFC training
gender	incidence of hypertension	family illness days
job insecurity	intention to leave employment	flextime
job satisfaction	job anxiety	individual situation adjustments
life satisfaction	job involvement	integration intervention
mood	life satisfaction	job design
negative affectivity	lost workdays	job rotation
non-day shift	marital satisfaction	job sharing arrangements
number of children	organizational citizenship	lateral transfer
organizational culture	organizational commitment	leaves of absence
organizational nonwork support	overall performance	organizational culture changes
partner's WFC	parental satisfaction	part-time return-to-work options
perceived control	physical exhaustion	part-time schedules
perceived goal progress	physical problems	resource and referral services
perceived schedule flexibility	psychological concerns	respect practices
priorities	reduced productivity	sick childcare options
role ambiguity	somatic complaints	support groups
role conflict/tension	spillover	teleworking/telecommuting
role overload	stress levels	temporary schedule adjustments
self-esteem	tardiness	wellness/health programs
spousal/partner support	turnover/retention	work-family coordinator
stress level		work-family handouts
supervisor support/relationship		work-family management training
tenure		work-family seminars
Type A personality		
work ethics		
work influence		
work involvement (individual)		
work involvement (spouse)		

The literature has revealed numerous suggestions that may be helpful to practitioners in designing and implementing WFC/FWC interventions. First, organizations should identify the sources of work-family conflict that are most relevant to their employees and start with the domain that poses the most problems. This includes assessing the form of conflict (i.e., time-, strain-, and behavior-based), as well as the direction (i.e., WFC, FWC) so that tailored assistance strategies or career programs can be successfully designed and implemented. Careful analysis of the employee's tasks and responsibilities should also be considered when designing work-family programs or opportunities (e.g., flextime, teleworking) that may assist in reducing conflict. Assessing employee's job requirements can also help to ensure that jobs are conducive to meeting both work and family needs and requirements. Enormous hour requirements limit time with partners and children, restrict time for exercise and recreation, and discourage community and service involvement. An overall analysis of organizational culture should also be included in a thorough assessment (Thompson et al., 1999).

Second, with the increasing effort of many companies to implement work-family initiatives and programs, managers will need to become more flexible. Quality management training is important so mixed messages between the overall organization and managers are not given. Organizational leaders and managers should be trained to encourage strong social support networks among supervisors, subordinates, and coworkers.

Third, consider interventions that assist employees in reducing work-family juggling and conflict during working hours and beyond. To assist, provide training and/or mentoring for all employees on coping strategies for work-family conflict, consider assisting employees with childcare options, design interventions that encourage health and wellness, and make social and political changes which include attention to the specific needs of dual-earner couples, single parents and others.

Lastly, remember that organizational responses to nonwork domains affect employees' commitment and attitude toward an organization. The most effective response is for the organization to implement respect practices as defined previously (Kirchmeyer, 1995). In addition, programs and initiatives will not be successful in the long-term if they are not aligned strategically with the organization's goals and endorsed by the top management. Link work-family interventions with the benefits to the organization (e.g., increased retention and recruitment, reduced absenteeism, increased productivity). In addition, the use of financial forecasting should be used to link WFC/FWC interventions to the financial bottom-line.

WFC/FWC research provides HRD practitioners with a new domain to consider in assessing, designing, and implementing performance improvement interventions in the workplace. In addition, the success of other HRD efforts will be enhanced as employees and organizations are able to benefit from reduced WFC/FWC and focus more attentively on the work at hand. To impact positively the work and personal lives of employees, organizations must stop viewing work/life benefits as an accommodation and start looking at the benefits as strategic business initiatives that propel organizational culture change. The performance of people at work remains a critical factor for the success of the organization and for the well-being of its employees. Employees are the human resources, the human capital, and the intellectual capital essential for success in organizations present and future. Work and family conflict is a fact of life. There are no quick formulas for avoiding or managing it. As we look to the future, it is our responsibility as HRD professionals to consider organization development, training and development, and career development WFC interventions that have been shown possibly to lead to both short-term and long-term performance improvement at the individual, group, and organizational level. By doing this we can expand the role of HRD in organizations everywhere.

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Behind the Badge: Implications for Employee Assistance Programs in Law Enforcement

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This exploratory, qualitative research study sought to understand how stress effects the daily lives of federal and local law enforcement officers and whether or not they are willing to seek assistance. Findings indicate professionals in law enforcement are willing to acknowledge the need for employee stress reduction programs, however, considerable attention from research and human resource development assistance is needed. Law enforcement still has a long way to go.

Keywords: Employee Assistance, Law Enforcement, HRM

Our Nations' law enforcement officers gladly take an oath to risk their own lives to serve and protect society, yet paradoxically, there is a scarcity of resources dedicated to serving and protecting them. Officers are given training, firearms, and bulletproof vests to equip them to survive critical incidents (Solomon, 1995). However, until the last decade, there has been little formal training to help these same personnel survive potential emotional consequences. In order to understand what makes cops tick, you have to know as much about where they work as what they do. It is the law enforcement agencies' responsibility to look at alternative human resource programs to assist officers and their families with the stress brought on by the impact of policing in the 21st century.

Mitchell (1983, p2.) defines a critical incident "as any situation beyond the realm of a person's usual experience that overwhelms his or her sense of vulnerability and/or sense of control." In law enforcement there is the inherent likelihood for those types of issues to happen frequently, and these include: armed confrontations, traffic fatalities, in the line of duty deaths, brutal domestic incidents and child abuse cases. Most law enforcement organizations have procedures in place to deal with officer-involved shooting incidents. However, scant attention has been paid in the past to involved personnel at the scene and the families of the individual who actually pulled the trigger. Aside from the military forces during combat, law enforcement officers and emergency service personnel are in the only professions that run towards danger, not away from it.

The life behind the badge is not nearly as exciting as that which seems to exist in front of it. A life, which many envy, however, very few outside the culture of law enforcement understand. The implications and demand for research is evident not only for law enforcement and HRD practitioners but for society's protectors. Strategic human resource intervention alternatives at all levels within law enforcement should be implemented, however, additional empirical data is required on the success and relevance of stress reduction programs on cumulative stress. Rarely if ever is the person behind the badge considered to have the range of human emotion and experience as that of ordinary people, whatever their vocational calling. Society requires instead they be superhuman in terms of strength, endurance and courage; invincible in battle and resistant to temptation. The "macho" image of law enforcement was not ready to recognize that many situations, beyond using fatal force, could trigger an officer's sense of vulnerability. The officer was expected to absorb and "get used to" tragedies- they were part of the job (Everly, 1995).

Those are the attributes and values that have traditionally been reinforced in formal academy training, and informally within the organizations. Conflict may arise when law enforcement officers begin to view themselves in very much the same manner, different from the larger society and if not better, at least more resilient and less given to emotional reaction. This sense or feeling of invincibility, even when it is not well founded, serves to allow law enforcement officers to enter high risk situations without hesitation, to repeatedly face danger, and to unselfishly put themselves at risk in their efforts to save others (Everly, 1995).

Psychological trauma as noted by Janoff-Bulman in 1992 and again by Everly in 1994, represents a contradiction, or violation, to some key psychological assumption, belief, expectation, or phenomenological construction about the world (Everly, 1995). As the result of the mission of law enforcement to protect and serve society at all levels, these contradictions surface on a frequent if not daily basis.

Cumulatively the impact of these events can cause erosion of an individuals' self-confidence if there is not an acceptable outlet for the law enforcement officer. There is a second factor in the phenomenological construction of post traumatic stress which is psychological hypersensitivity consisting of a violation or contradiction, or at least a disruption of one's sense of safety, and/or very sense of self.

Acceptable relief of the cumulative impact of stress has traditionally been found in the consumption of alcohol, telling of war stories and the masking of feelings through joking and ridicule of criminals, victims and society as a whole. Departure from this posture is viewed as weakness and may engender ostracism from the peer group and the contempt of colleagues. These colleagues are the same individually on whom one has to rely upon in life or death situations, thus the stakes are higher than in traditional organizations.

Society demands that those who pin on the badge are somehow immune to the evils of the world, as if they were inoculated against reacting in a visceral, tangible way to human frailty. The high incidence of police suicide clearly shatters that perception. Actual numbers are difficult to obtain as a direct result of the insularity of the profession. Police suicides may be misclassified routinely as either accidents or undetermined deaths. Because police officers traditionally subscribe to the myth of indestructibility, they view suicide as particularly disgraceful to the victim officer, and to the profession (Skolnick, 1997). The desire to shield victim officers, their families, and their departments from the stigma of suicide may lead investigators to overlook certain evidence intentionally during the classification process (Wagner and Brzeczek, 1983). The efforts to shield and protect one another from outside scrutiny, extends to concealing weaknesses, even perceived weaknesses, not only from the outside but from each other.

The Journey from Denial to Acceptance

People in all walks of life must find ways to cope with degrees of stress. However, in the past 25 years, researchers and criminal justice officials have identified stress factors unique to, or more pronounced among law enforcement officers. Despite the growing understanding of stress factors within the law enforcement profession and enhanced treatment for stress related problems, many officers feel law enforcement is more stressful now than ever before. This statement can be traced to several factors, including the rise in violent crime during the 1980's and early 1990's; perceived increase in negative publicity, public scrutiny, and lawsuits; fiscal uncertainty; fear to airborne and blood borne diseases, such as AIDS and tuberculosis; rising racial tensions; and the transition from reactive to problem-oriented policing (Finn, 1997).

Keeping this in mind, what has law enforcement done for the wellness of it's officers? Who is protecting the nation's protectors? Many researchers, as well as officers and family members themselves, consider law enforcement to be one of the most stressful of all occupations. No one disagrees that it is essential to continue to address the stress law enforcement officers and their families face, for the sake of their own personal well being, their productivity on the job, and improved performance of police services (National Institute of Justice, 1997).

Law enforcement administrators are beginning to look towards employee assistance programs along with peer support programs as a means to wellness for their officers dealing with stress. Why has the law enforcement profession been so slow to react to the needs of their officers? Ten years ago an employee assistance program looked a lot different from the standard programs that exists today. Employee assistance programs in the past only dealt with legal and financial assistance to employees' rather then psychological counseling. Administrators looked at employee assistance programs as an invasion of their personnel's personal privacy. Often law enforcement unions or deferred compensation packages existed to assist officers with their legal or financial needs so administrators avoided employee assistance programs. The mere fact that more and more law enforcement agencies are making employee assistance or stress programs available to their personnel indicates these services have begun to take a threshold of acceptance. Although it has taken a long time for acceptance amongst law enforcement, the increased educational level and awareness of physical and emotional reactions to stress by the younger officers have resulted in the acceptance. Today's generations of police officers are different; they used to be mainly military veterans who either hid their stress, did not know the terms or could handle things better. More college-oriented cops understand the value of social service programs to improve their careers. Another factor are many administrators are understanding of the need for psychological services and willing to devote resources to an employee assistance stress program. The biggest obstacles are the old-timers who think officers should still tough it out. The older generation is derisive toward what the new generation wants. But it still remains among younger and older officers the stigma or fear of stigma attached to psychological counseling remains strong in many agencies (National Institute of Justice, 1997). At the same time, police administrators might not accept what they perceive to be the intrusion of a mental health professional into department operations. Administrators may also believe they do not have the time or resources to make the desired changes by implementing a stress program, or they simply might

not agree that changes will reduce officer stress. This is a key statement, because law enforcement managers are use to working with hard facts, and at the present time empirical data pertaining to law enforcement on the success of stress reduction through employee assistance or stress programs is limited due to confidentiality issues.

A part of a large-scale study conducted by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) of programs devoted to reducing law enforcement officer's stress interviewed nearly 100 stress management program directors, law enforcement administrators, mental health providers, union and association officials, law enforcement officers, and their families, and civilians. The respondents agreed that the negative effects of stress on individual officers typically harm agencies as well as officers. As observed by the respondents, the cumulative effects of stress among officers in an agency can lead to: impaired officer performance and reduced productivity, reduced morale, public relations problems, labor-management friction, civil suits stemming from stress-related shortcomings in personnel performance, tardiness and absenteeism, increased turnover due to leaves of absence and early retirements because of stress-related problems and disabilities, and the added expenses of training and hiring new recruits as well as paying overtime, when the agency is left short staffed as a result of turnover (Finn, 1997).

Traumatic Events and their Consequences

Every year, hundreds of officers experience intense, traumatic events that have serious long-term consequences for them, their families, and their agency. Often times an officer might not suffer physical injury as a result of an incident, but the emotional trauma can be just as painful, if not more so. The actions taken by the agency in the ensuing weeks and months will determine in large part whether the officer copes effectively with the stress induced by this critical incident or whether its effects become debilitating (Kureczka, 1996). Stress can come into an officer's life in a much different form, which may include, shift work, paramilitary structure, unproductive management styles, lack of career development, lack of adequate training and supervision, and equipment deficiencies and shortages (National Institute of Justice, 1997).

Officers who are specially selected/trained individuals to function in emergency situations can and are affected by traumatic events outside of the "normal" events of policing. A traumatic event is an occurrence of such intensity and magnitude that it overwhelms a person's normal ability to cope. A traumatic event can involve death, serious injury, and emotions of intense fear, helplessness or horror. The bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995, left many people (including law enforcement officers.... many who lost colleagues) stunned and wondering if any place is truly safe. Or on a more local personal view, a police officer who witnesses a car speeding down the road, lose control and flips over, later to view two of his daughters friends trapped lifeless bodies in the crumpled car.

There are many kinds of reactions to a traumatic event ranging from a moderately uncomfortable response known as general stress, cumulative stress, critical incident stress, or to a full-blown psychological disorder known as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

General stress: effects everyone all the time and waxes or wanes with the hassles of everyday life.
Cumulative stress: can also be referred to as burnout. It is a prolonged unrelieved wear and tear of demands that a person can't respond to. Overtime, unrelenting cumulative stress can result in damage to one's emotional and physical well-being.
Critical incident stress: is incident specific, you can point to the incident that caused the stress. Critical incident stress generates considerable psychological and physical discomfort for a period of two to four weeks after the incident. This type of stress is an occupational hazard for approximately 80-87% of all emergency workers including police officers at least once in their careers (Pierson, 1989).
Post-traumatic stress disorder: many people still think it is diagnosed only for war veterans and those who have been in combat or captivity; the disorder can affect anyone who has been through any kind of traumatic event. PTSD affects about 15% of emergency workers, and creates major distress and long lasting, disruptive changes in a person's life.

There are two major categories of traumatic incidents that effect law enforcement officers, they are natural disasters and/or human-made catastrophes. There is some evidence that indicates that a natural disaster may be less stressful for police officers because it is unavoidable. The distinctions between natural and human-made catastrophes are important for law enforcement officers because many of the traumatic incidents they experience are intentional, not accidental. Exposure to the many ways in which humans intend to harm each other, rape, assault, robbery, abuse can change a person's view of the world and their trust and admiration for others (Kirschman, 1997).

Addressing the Stress in Law Enforcement

Law enforcement officers favor the illusion that they are in control and not helpless. When people enter policing they expect to be in control even when they encounter violence. They have no real way to anticipate the psychological impact of losing control, or how it will feel to have a close brush with death, or take another person's life (Kirschman, 1997). Fred Rainguet, chief of the Fort Collins, Colorado Police Department, agrees that police work is more challenging than ever before. Sited in Hepler, H., Pater, R., McClellan, P., 1994, he says there are so many issues that police officers have to deal with that did not exist 10 years ago, from youth crime, gangs, domestic disputes, traffic congestion, homelessness, transients to computers, with the police officer being the initial contact person.

Clearly, administrators can no longer afford to ignore the issues of traumatic stress caused by involvement in a critical incident. Such stress impairs an officer's ability to perform his/her duties and impacts on the entire agencies operations. Police agencies can be held liable in court for ignoring stress related problems or for disciplining officers who exhibit the behavioral effects of trauma from a job-related critical incident. Courts have made significant case awards to officers whose agencies did not provide them with professional assistance. Agencies through their organizations should be proactive and develop a critical incident response that addresses the likelihood of psychological injury with the same attention and concern as the likelihood of physical injury. Unfortunately, police officers typically resist seeking available assistance because they do not want to be stigmatized as weak or crazy.

Generally speaking, law enforcement officers have been slow to recognize the positive contribution that can be made by mental health professionals. Police officers often have difficulty trusting and confiding in someone outside the close circle of sworn personnel. They fear that seeking professional counseling help in dealing with a traumatic incident will mark them among their fellow officers as incapable in some way. Delivering mental health care to the law enforcement community is difficult. Police officers often resist counseling for several reasons; they have strong sense of self-sufficiency and insist they can solve their own problems. Officers generally are great skeptics of outsiders. On the other hand counselors sometimes do not understand police work, nor can they easily grasp the daily stresses faced by officers. Because of these reasons law enforcement administrators must choose mental health professionals carefully and work to ensure they provide the best service for their agency's employees. Another means of getting help for officers is for the administration to establish a peer support program (Kureczka, 1996). When law enforcement administrators establish an assistance program whether it's an employee assistance program with outside counselors or an internal peer support group, administrators must not forget about themselves.

An employee assistance program (EAP) is a proven strategy for assisting employees and their families with personal and work related problems, difficulties and concerns, which they may experience from time to time. According to the Employee Assistance Professionals Association, an EAP is a work-site based program that is intended to identify and resolve productivity problems. Problems maybe associated with employees impaired by personal concern, which may adversely affect employee job performance. These problems, difficulties and concerns can and do effect the work performance of an employee. The private lives of employees have always affected work performance to some degree. Over the last two decades, however, the ordinary personal difficulties faced by employees have become more vexing. At the same time, the traditional organization or law enforcement agency that used to provide support, such as family and community, are often less available or less helpful. As these personal problems and stress from the workplace begins to affect performance, the administrators or the agency's human resource department are challenged to address these increasingly complex situations. Additionally, community social service programs are continuing to lose much of their financial and community supports, which leave individuals with fewer options for help. Using an EAP can help restore an officer to their former level of performance, thus increasing productivity, reducing turnover, and containing agency cost. When personal problems escalate, the results are decreased energy and efficiency, leading to a substantial decline in the ability to function in the workplace. The officer who is preoccupied with their personal matters ultimately cost the agency significant dollars in lost time and diminished performance (Atkinson-Tovar, 2000). Police administrators understand all too well the cost associated with replacing officers who take early retirement or go on disability. The department not only must pay benefits to departing officers, but it also must pay to recruit, test, hire, train, and equip these officers. In smaller agencies, sudden turnover can result in serious staff shortages that require paying other officers' overtime. An employee assistance program is based on the concern for the high human and financial costs to industry and the community of these problems, which manifest themselves in such factors as: absenteeism, lateness for work, poor productivity, high staff turnover, friction between employees and accidents in the workplace.

By offering law enforcement employees and their families the opportunity to obtain professional assistance through counseling, on many occasions these problems, difficulties and concerns can be resolved before they impact

upon the officer's work performance. By actively encouraging self-referral by officers and their immediate families, employee assistance programs are early intervention strategies for agencies. An employee assistance program staff can help an officer overcome stress-related problems; the department may benefit not only by retaining a valuable officer but also by inspiring the officer to be more motivated, compassionate, and loyal to the department.

Reducing stress should lead naturally to better morale, improved productivity, and, therefore, enhanced overall department efficiency. A well-publicized statement from the department's administration recognizing the stress officers' experience and expressing support measures to reduce sources of stress demonstrates management's concern about officer's well being (Finn, 1997).

No one can predict how powerful an incident will be or what effects it will have on them. It is incumbent upon police administrators to prepare their employees for such incidents by teaching them the signs and symptoms of critical incident stress and establishing a program that will help the officer during a time of need for themselves, their family and the department. An officer that responds to a terrible incident does not need to succumb to the debilitating effects of critical incident stress.

ATF Peer Support Program

An example of a stress reduction program implemented as a result of the Oklahoma bombing by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), was a peer support program. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms is one of four law enforcement agencies under the Department of the Treasury, and is primarily responsible for the enforcement of the federal laws related to firearms, explosives and arson. Its regulatory responsibilities include the oversight of tax collection on the alcohol and tobacco and firearm industries.

In the early 1980's, societal violence continued to escalate and consequently, the role of the agency in response was enhanced. Many employees who were involved in critical incidents suffered physical, emotional and psychological stress that affected not only themselves and their ability to be successful in their job, but their colleagues, spouses, families and those with whom they interact as customers; citizens, criminals and victims of crime. Others within the agency recognized the urgent need for some form of intervention strategy. Thereafter, the concept of peer support was introduced to the agency and viewed as a type of emotional first aid whereby employees volunteered to help one another before, during and after a traumatic event. The early and continued success of the program, now institutionalized was the direct result of the fact that employees trusted one another, particularly those that had personally experienced similar situations on the job. The awareness that human beings experience a normal and predictable reaction to abnormal events was revolutionary within the ranks of the agency. The validation by psychologists that certain reactions were normal opened the door for acceptance and relief. For many it was the first opportunity to admit in a safe venue they experienced a host of problems that they were unable to publicly articulate due to the sub-culture of law enforcement organizations that reinforces toughness and again, invincibility.

Peer Support Teams (PST) are currently available within the organization to respond to critical incidents. Over the past decade the concept has expanded to include four teams in response to an internal awareness of employee needs. These include: critical incident, alcohol/substance abuse, undercover, and spousal/family teams. The critical incident team is centered around response to the primary victims of an incident, that is, those individuals most directly affected by a crisis, disaster or trauma; typically thought of as the "direct victims" of the trauma (Every and Mitchell, 1995).

The undercover team evolved from an employee suggestion related to the cumulative stress endured by an employee and their families during protracted and often dangerous undercover assignments. The family and the agent experience feelings of anxiety, fear and isolation, often not being able to respond to one another for long periods of time. A team was trained in 1997 and is deployed by the Special Operations Division (SOD), which monitors the long-term undercover operations.

The spousal/family team was developed and implemented to address the often invisible and unarticulated needs of ATF families. The concept of whole health extends to the support system of the employee, often the tertiary victims of cumulative stress encountered by the spouse in the law enforcement profession. They are affected indirectly by the trauma via later exposure to the scene of the disaster/trauma or by a later exposure to primary or secondary victims (Everly and Mitchell, 1995). The resources are available to any employee who requests them, whether the individual is a sworn law enforcement officer or serving at another level or assignment within the organizational structure.

Conclusion

Who is protecting those who are sworn to serve and protect others? Society owes a debt to those who

selflessly serve in the line of duty. Furnishing our law enforcement personnel with the best equipment, resources, and training does not adequately prepare them to psychologically confront the extremes of human behavior, violence, and death on a regular basis. The acknowledgment of the need to provide this service is axiomatic, and clearly makes good business sense. An effective critical incident stress program can reduce and sometimes eliminate the debilitating effects of critical incidents and cumulative stress. It can promote positive coping behavior, create a more positive work atmosphere, and reduce the emotional isolation often experienced after critical incidents. It is the responsibility of law enforcement managers to utilize strategic human resource intervention alternatives at all levels within the organization starting in the police academy. Training must be provided reference the cumulative impact of stress on job performance and production and the acceptance of employee assistance or peer support programs to address the needs of primary, secondary, and tertiary victims. Additionally law enforcement and HRD need to collaborate in an effort to conduct further research on selected groups of officers, both federal and local, on the relevant impact of the implementation of an employee assistance or peer support program.

Primary barriers to the implementation of an effective critical incident stress management team within law enforcement organizations has been the prevailing sub-culture of the organization which reinforces resilience to perceived emotional weakness, and the traditional reluctance of management personnel to support them. Accepting help from a peer or trained counselor must be demystified, no longer viewed as a weakness, but in fact as strength to build a healthier organization. The administrative policy should legitimize critical incident stress and recognize that officers frequently confront overwhelming situations (Everly, 1995). As McMains points out that a supportive policy acknowledges that police officers are ordinary people doing an extraordinary job, not extraordinary people doing an ordinary job. There is not a valid alternative to failing to invest in the human resource of organizations, particularly those that are at most risk...and risk the most.

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Employee Expectations, Characteristics, and Perceived Goal-Attainment of Tuition Assistance Program Participants

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Organizations are increasingly providing tuition assistance programs to their employees. Most of the research has studied TAP from the perspective of its benefits to organizations. However, little is known from the employee's perspective. The results of this evaluation study showed that individuals participated in tuition assistance programs because they primarily sought to achieve personal-enrichment goals. The results also suggest an apparent discrepancy between what organizations might expect from offering a TAP benefit and the reported intents of individuals who use TAP benefits.

Keywords: Tuition Assistance, Tuition Reimbursement, Employee Development

More and more companies have come to accept the principle that organizational competitiveness depends on having employees continually develop their competence through on-going training and education programs. The new economy, with its increased reliance on technology, workplace restructuring, globalization of marketplaces, shifts in labor market demographics, and employee expectations of greater work-life benefits, has placed a burden on human resource practitioners to both increase and improve their workforce development efforts. Simply put, the modern workforce needs to be well educated and trained to perform the necessary skills to maintain a competitive advantage in the marketplace and workforce development and a commitment to lifelong learning is becoming a corporate necessity (Jacobs, & Jones, 1995; Durr, Guglielmino & Guglielmino, 1996; Guglielmino & Murdick, 1997).

Organizations have sought to address employee development needs in two basic ways: 1) provide internal organization-sponsored training and development programs and 2) promote participation in external training and education programs, many of which have been paid for through tuition assistance programs (TAPs). In terms of internal programs, the 1997 Workforce Economics report, American companies spend between $55 to $60 billion on company-provided education and training programs. The report cites a study by the Saratoga Institute that an average firm allocates 1.4 percent of its annual payroll expense on the training and education of its employees, which is lower than the 1.8 percent figure reported by ASTD (Workforce Economic, 1997).

In terms of external programs, recent surveys have shown that six of ten organizations provide their employees with some form of tuition assistance funding, totaling nearly $10 billion annually. The National Household Education Survey reported that 76 million Americans participated in one or more adult education activities during the preceding year, which was a 25 percent increase in numbers between 1991 and 1995 (Caudron, 1999; Workforce Economics, 1997). According to Darr (1998), adult learners comprise 50 percent (7.5 million) of the national college population. These numbers support the notion of adults as self-directed learners who will engage in approximately four learning activities per year (Caffarella & O'Donnell, 1987; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Tough, 1978). Studies of adult learning activities report that one of the most frequently cited reasons for engaging in such learning activities were job-related and most tended to focus on professional or management-level employees (Caffarella & O'Donnell, 1991; Rymell & Newsom, 1981).

Participation in employment-related learning activities should not be surprising as corporate America has taught employees that one key to their employability is ongoing education (Caudron, 1999). From the perspective of organizations, tuition assistance programs are considered to be an employee benefit that assists in recruiting (Caudron, 1999; Flynn, 1994) and retaining employees (Dolce, 1999). Additionally, TAPs have been shown to be an easy and proven method for companies to invest in their human capital with the intent on developing a more educated and knowledgeable workforce (Caudron, 1999; Workforce Economics, 1997). According to Bassi & McMurrer (1998), companies that invest more in their human

capital are viewed as more successful and have higher profits than those that have minimal investment. In addition, the American Society for Training and Development conducted a two-year study of tuition assistance plans that indicates that companies that spent more on training were viewed more favorably by investors on Wall Street. Measures such as market-to-book ratio, a comparison of the market assessment of the total value of a company, including its intellectual capital and other intangible asset are viewed favorably by investors (Bassi & McMurrer, 1998).

According to O'Neil (1984), TAP was not used by many employees prior to changes in the 1979 Internal Revenue Tax Code that removed tuition reimbursement as income for any courses taken that were not directly related to the employee's current position. Additional barriers to participation included requirements that employees pay a percentage of the coursework, reimbursement percentage based on grade received for the course, and necessity for the employee to make the initial payment and receive their reimbursement after the grade has been reviewed by personnel in benefits (O'Neil, 1984; Wirtz, 1979).

Problem Statement

Tuition assistance programs (TAPs) are an employee benefit supported by organizations with the underlying intent of improving employee performance and increasing organizational capability. TAPs are among a growing number of self-directed workforce development efforts in organizations and expected to benefit employees as they shape their futures through enrollment in post-secondary education. However, there appears to be limited amount of research on TAPs, especially as they relate to the intents and goals of individuals who participate in such programs. As TAPs are costly to organizations, it makes sense that the available research has typically examined the effectiveness of TAP in terms of the design and policies of the program as well as how they may benefit organizations (Bassi & McMurrer, 1998; Darr, 1998; Dolce, 1999; Flynn, 1994; HR Focus, 1999; O'Neil, 1984; Wirtz, 1979; Workforce Economics, 1997).

Organizations are recognizing that their employees are important assets and that TAPs may have an impact on retaining employees within the company (Caudron, 1999). Also, employees are feeling empowered to make decisions concerning their learning choices and seen as proactive participants in their learning activities (Clardy, 2000). Therefore, determining the employees' perception and expectations of TAP has an equal measure of importance as that of why organizations may implement such programs (Jacobs & Cushine, 1999). However, beyond identifying the contents or policies of an effective program, the research has yielded little insight regarding how TAP has provided the employees their learning needs. Caudron (1999) asserts that there is an increase in "free agent learners" who take the initiative for their lifelong learning and decide on their own which topics might be best to meet present and future job and career requirements.

So if TAPs are being viewed as a critical component for ensuring that workforces are well trained and competent and little information exist as to why employees voluntarily participate in TAPs, then it seems vital to investigate why employees participate in order to design more effective TAPs. Thus, the purpose of this study is to determine the expectations, characteristics, and perceived goal-attainment that employees state for their participation in tuition assistance plans.

The following were the research questions of the study:

1. What are the expectations of employees who participate in tuition assistance programs?
2. What is the level of perceived goal-attainment for participating in tuition assistance programs?
3. What is the relationship among employees' years of education, length of tenure, and tuition assistance program participation?

Methodology

The following describes the setting and the process used to address the research questions. The study was conducted as part of an on-going evaluation of the Workforce Development Programs, supported by the state of Ohio and the Ohio Civil Service Employees Association (OCSEA) AFSCME 11. The Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) component is intended to help state bargaining unit employees pay for educational tuition to attend a range of training and educational opportunities. In addition, the state of Ohio TAP has been designed to allow the employee complete freedom of choice in course selection, allowing the employee to attend courses during work hours, without penalty, and participation is anonymous. Employees can make decisions without the need to notify management about their choices.

The following was the process used to conduct the study. The research project had three components: one, a mail response card that is sent to any employee that request reimbursement materials from the Workforce Development office; two, phone interviews of OCSEA members who have participated in the TAP programs; and three, phone interviews of state managers and union leadership who have had employees who have participated in the TAP programs. A research team from The Ohio State University was used to assure that the research project remain objective and to assure the confidentiality of responses.

The mail response cards, which were sent to OCSEA members who had requested reimbursement materials, were designed to collect a variety of information from the participants, including; demographic information and past TAP usage (reported in paper), the member's goals for participating in TAP (reported in paper), how TAP materials were requested and submitted, and the level of customer service received. At the time of the writing approximately 3,500 TAP cards had been distributed and 432 had been returned, resulting in an approximate response rate of 12.4 percent.

The phone interviews of OCSEA members who had participated in TAP during the previous fiscal year was designed to collect a variety of information from the participants, including; how they first learned about TAP, whether the information they received about the program accurately represented TAP, what was their intention for participation and their expectations of TAP, their satisfaction level with TAP policies and funding levels, and how TAP has impacted their current positions and whether their goals and expectations of TAP had been met. In an effort to assure that a variety of state agencies were represented and to assure a diversity of viewpoints, the 50 in-depth phone interviewees were randomly selected from the pool of 4,942 individuals were had participated in TAP during fiscal year that ended June 30, 2000.

Initial contact was made at each participant's place of employment and an interview appointment was scheduled based on the convenience of the participant's schedule. For each interview, the interviewer stated the purpose of the interview, and then asked each question in the same sequence for each participant. During and immediately following the interviews, hand-written notes were taken and the interviewer repeated the participants' responses to ensure accuracy. The interview data was analyzed in two ways. First, the responses were analyzed to determine the frequencies of similar responses. Second, the extended responses were content analyzed to identify patterns of information, which could be placed into categories.

Results

The data for Questions One and Two was collected via the phone interviews. The following show the descriptive statistics of the 50 participants who were interviewed, fourteen were male (28 percent) and thirty-six were female (72 percent). In terms of the participant's ages,

- 12 participants were from 20-30 years old (24 percent),
- 16 participants were from 31-40 years old (32 percent),
- 15 participants were from 41-50 years old (30 percent),
- seven participants were from 51-60 years old (14 percent).

Results for Question One. Table 1 and Table 2 present the results of expectations of the respondents from the telephone interviews.

Table 1

Participant's Intent	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Enroll in a four-year college	11	22
Enroll in a four-year college	11	22
Enroll in a two-year college	25	50
Enroll in a two-year college	25	50
Enroll in graduate school	3	6
Enroll in graduate school	3	6
Enroll in a certification program	2	4
Enroll in a certification program	2	4
Enroll in some other training program	1	2
Help me make career decisions	2	4
Other	6	12
Total	50	100

Table 2

Participant's Expectations	*Frequency*
Get a college degree	34
Improve my employability	13
Enhance promotion	2
Offer of financial assistance	5
Enhance job-related skills	8

Note: multiple responses permitted

The results showed that most participants have their expectations on getting a college degree, including the associate degree. Thirteen participants used the TAP to improve their employability. The results showed that a majority (78 percent) of the participants in the evaluation used the TAP to attend some form of higher education.

Results for Question Two. The following results were concluded from the fifty phone interviews. The responses showed that the participants' personal goals were mainly to obtain a degree and learn new skills. For career-related goals, most participants have not yet achieved their career goals, but are optimistic that when a degree is obtained, many of their career goals will follow. The following are representative comments related to achieving personal and career-related goals through TAP from the respondents:

Thirty-Four respondents indicated that TAP is assisting them "to obtain a degree other than to upgrade their knowledge." Six respondents reported, "I have learned more about computers." Individual responses include:

- "I understand the accounting/budget information a lot better now that I have taken managerial accounting."
- "Primarily I want to get my degree, but If I can eventually get a promotion that's great too."
- "Getting my associates degree after 20 years of trying."
- "Better able to work with clients, helping them to see their situations from another perspective."
- "Able to get job advancement because of the courses I've taken."
- "Enjoy learning and it is helping me to think about things to do after I retire."
- "Being able to go back to school is the greatest benefit."
- "The greatest benefit has been through my improved self-confidence."
- "Learning is a hobby for me."
- "Helped me to get a part-time job."
- "Allows me to stay current in my field."

Twenty-two respondents indicated that TAP has allowed them to perform or "understand my job better". Six respondents stated that their participation has had promotional implications. Ten respondents felt that their usage of TAP has had no impact whatsoever on their current position. Individual responses include:

- "Makes me better in my interactions with clients. Our program [at University of Cincinnati] uses role playing a great deal of the time, which has really helped me do my job better."
- "It has made me more knowledgeable about my position and how to do my job."
- "I am more knowledgeable about practices and procedures in accounting."
- "One of the biggest benefits has been my increased knowledge of computers and how I can use them to do my job better."
- "Hasn't really had any impact on my current job yet"
- "I've developed a better awareness of the job and know how to deal with situations better now."
- "Understand cost accounting, governmental accounting better now and that has helped me with my job."
- "I'm staying with the state because of the TAP program."
- "More confident in my writing and public speaking."
- "As I have gotten more knowledge about criminal justice, I have become a better officer."
- "I'm kind of at a stalemate right now. My current job does not require any of the skills I am learning but the jobs I will be applying for when I graduate will require them."

Twenty-two respondents reported, "It won't happen until I complete my degree." Seven respondents indicated they were able to move up to a new position and do my job better. Individual responses include:

- "Haven't tried to move up yet. What I have found is that it helps me do a better job as a part-time tutor at Columbus State."
- "Preparing me for a senior management position."
- "It will help me qualify for jobs that require a masters degree."
- "Through giving me better choices for career advancement."
- "As soon as I get my degree, I will be able to earn a lot more money."
- "It hasn't been beneficial yet, but I know that it will in the future."
- "Until I get my associates degree, I cannot move up."
- "I am one class away from my bachelors degree, then I will be able to get promotions."
- "It will have a great impact as I am taking the course that will allow me to apply for better positions."
- "Don't know if anything is applicable yet, I don't think I am far enough along for it to matter."
- "It's preparing me for tomorrow's job."
- "I will be better able to find another job."

Results for Question Three. In terms of the participants who responded to the mail questionnaire, Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations of the Years of Education and number of Years employed by the State for the participants who completed a mail response card. Table 4 presents the frequency counts for Years of Education and Table 5 presents the frequency counts for Years with State. Age and gender was not part of the mail questionnaire.

Table 3

	Years of Education	*Years Employed*
Mean	14.78	8.99
Std. Deviation	2.06	7.07

Table 4

Years of Education	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
12	82	19.0
13-14	148	34.3
15-16	134	31.0
17 and above	68	15.7
Total	432	100.0

Table 5

Years with State	*Frequency*	*Percentage*
1-3	133	30.8
4-13	194	44.9
13 and above	105	24.3
Total	432	100.0

In addition to evaluating the frequency of participation, both years with state and years of education were cross-tabulated with TAP usage to determine whether there was a relationship between an employees tenure and educational level with TAP usage. As this was an exploratory study, cross-tabulation was considered the best method to determine if a relationship may exist between the pairs of variables (e.g., years of education with TAP usage). The results of using the Somer's *d* statistic show whether the independent variable (years of education) was related to the dependent variable (TAP usage).

The results of the Somer's *d* cross-tabulation can range from a strongly positive relationship (1.00) to a strongly negative relationship (-1.00). That is, a positive Somers'*d* value indicates that as the independent variable increases (higher level of education) the dependent variable also increases (participants usage of TAP). As shown in Table 6, the results indicate that a low associative relationship exist between both years of education and years employed with state and participants usage of TAP.

Table 6. Cross-tabulation with TAP Usage

	Somer's d	*Std. Error*	*Alpha Level*

Years of Education	.182	.042	.05
Years with State	.181	.049	.05

Table 7 presents the results of the cross-tabulation of Participants Goals with both their Years of Education and Years with State.

Table 7. Cross-tabulation with Goal for Participation

Description	*Frequency*	*Education*	
Update skills for current job	153	-.039	-.032
Develop skills to prepare for a new career opportunity	263	-.035	.058
Develop skills to increase opportunity for promotion	295	.008	-.042
Develop skills to prepare for retirement	54	-.014	.128*
Personal Development	226	.012	.042
Earn a degree/certification	29	-.004	.013
Other	6	N/A	N/A

Note: Multiple responses allowed
* *Significant < .05*

Positive relationships for Years of Education were found with the following goals:

- Develop skills to increase opportunity for promotion
- Personal Development

Positive relationships for Years with State exist with the following goals:

- Develop skills to prepare for a new career opportunity
- Develop skills to prepare for retirement
- Personal development
- Earn a degree

Summary and Discussion

In summary, the results generally showed that individuals participated in tuition assistance programs because they primarily sought to achieve personal-enrichment goals. These results are consistent with previous evaluations of this tuition assistance program (Jacobs & Cushnie, 1999). Individuals rated organization-related goals, such as improving their promotability and improving their current job performance the lowest. In addition, there was a positive relationship between years of education with the desire to develop ones skills to increase their opportunity for promotion as well as for personal development. Positive relationships for years with state and develop skills to prepare for a new career opportunity and develop skills to prepare for retirement, personal development, and earn a degree. Finally, participants appear to be achieving, or at least confident that they will achieve, their own intended goals. However, there appears to be limited impact on the career-related goals since it is too early to determine the effects.

The results of the this exploratory study suggest an apparent discrepancy between what the organization might expect from offering a TAP benefit and the reported intents of individuals who use the TAP benefit to attend training and education programs. Such information needs to be understood so that the expected program goals and outcomes can be made explicit and the program design can accommodate such outcomes. Clearly, when the TAP benefit is provided without any management input, there is a greater chance for individuals to reply upon their own information to make decisions on which training and educational programs to attend.

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