

HOOD COLLEGE



An Empirical Investigation Into the Antecedents of the Perceptions of
Work-Life Balance of Professional Women

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the
George B. Delaplaine Jr. School of Business

In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree

Doctor of Business Administration

by

Shelia Shipmon-Friedli

Frederick, Maryland

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DOCTORAL COMMITTEE

The members of the committee appointed to examine the dissertation of Shelia Shipmon-Friedli find that this dissertation fulfills the requirements and meets the standards of the Doctoral Program in Business Administration at the George B. Delaplaine Jr. School of Business, Hood College, and recommend that it be approved.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to women, past, present, and future. Women who gave of themselves, unselfishly sacrificing for their families. Women who struggled tirelessly, who refused to give up against all odds. Women who broke the glass ceiling and sat alone at the table but never stopped fighting. To the women in my study who were transparent and honest, taking the time to share their stories. You made a difference.

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ABSTRACT

The entrance of women into the workforce in large numbers in the 20th century was one of the pivotal moments that changed the traditional family work roles of mom at home and dad in the workplace. Maintaining a balance in those roles between work and nonwork life has been the subject of much research (Ferguson et al., 2015; Goode, 1960; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Hogarth et al., 2001). Studies show that when employees feel support from the employer, they become more committed to the organization, and that work-life balance (WLB) policies increase organizational performance (Ferguson et al., 2015; Lazar et al., 2010). Furthermore, Ferguson et al. (2015) showed that the spillover effect enables supported employees to gain balance in both domains of work and personal life. There is a gap in this research, however, related to professional women and their role in balancing the changing dynamics of work and the diverse family. The COVID-19 pandemic brought the exceptional challenges faced by women professionals into sharp focus, as well as the significant mental and physical health consequences that can follow when adequate support is absent. Using a mixed-methods research design and a convenience sample of 184 participants, I examined how professional women maintained a balance between life and work. I also explored how work-family conflict and family-work conflict impact the perceived satisfaction of work-life balance (Voydanoff, 2004). Quantitative data were collected through a 109-question online survey, while qualitative data were derived from the analysis of six one-on-one in-depth interviews and narrative question responses provided by 133 survey respondents. Multiple regression analysis showed that four of six independent variables had a significant impact on WLB satisfaction: having WLB policies ($p < .01$) and team resources ($p < .001$) present in the workplace, and time for self ($p < .001$), were all positively related to WLB satisfaction, while work-family conflict was negatively related

($p < .001$). Using the same six constructs, an a priori analysis of responses to an open-ended survey question showed that 71% of responses aligned with two of the constructs: WLB policies and time for self. Three themes emerged from pattern coding of six interview transcripts, validating the importance of WLB, the difficulty in achieving it, and the need for support. Implications for practice were offered in three areas: organizations, government, and professional women. Collectively, they reinforce the importance of having WLB policies in the workplace and ensuring that employees know them; promoting practices such as the use of team resources, flexible schedules, advocacy, and mentoring; and having an independent government agency to rationalize and deconflict workplace policies and ensure that policy decision-making is based on data. Implications for future research include conducting the study using a random sample, conducting it solely with men, and conducting it outside the COVID-19 pandemic era.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Growing up in North Carolina was a blessing and a curse. The rural area was peaceful, full of traditions, and perfect for large families. However, due to limited employment opportunities and low economic growth, most families farmed. As one of ten children, I saw my mother work from the early hours before daybreak into the night. She seldom had time to rest and never took a vacation. Even as a child, I recognized the lack of balance in my mother's life. That work-life imbalance negatively impacted her health and led to her premature death. Sadly, two of my sisters also followed in her footsteps to their early deaths due to health issues made worse by work-life imbalance.

I became especially concerned with work-life balance after the birth of my husband's and my twins. Born with severe health problems, both babies were attached to monitors for three years and required constant attention and treatment from home nurses, therapists, and us. My husband was their principal caretaker, while I worked two-and-a-half jobs to support our family. At the time, there were very few policies or networks in place to help us, and we struggled through multiple crises without achieving any kind of balance. In an economy that requires dual household incomes, particularly for families with special needs, many women are facing similar issues of work-life balance today. The women who are the subject of this study work very hard for their careers and should have choices without conflict.

In today's fast-paced world, it is often difficult for people to balance work and life. As will be seen by the international research supporting this study, work-life balance (WLB) has become a significant area of concern for human resource managers around the world (McCarthy et al., 2010). Especially in the United States, there is a pattern of extreme working conditions that includes rapid work pace, extended working hours, pressing deadlines, outside work functions,

and the need to be accessible 24/7 (McCarthy et al., 2010). While earlier research focused separately on either families or caregivers, a more recent trend in the 21st century has been to investigate all factors affecting work and life holistically (Hogarth et al., 2001). Even so, research gaps exist. Therefore, to address one such gap, the central focus of this study is on how organizational policies and personal support systems affect the work-life balance of professional women.

The Rise of Professional Women in the U.S. Workforce

The work-life balance movement is believed to have originated when women entered the American workplace in large numbers in the early 1900s. Their entry, initially in lower-paying factory and manufacturing work, caused a shift in the workforce that evolved throughout the 20th century into the 21st. Today, with greater representation in the professional world, not all women are satisfied to be the boss's assistant. Instead, many are aspiring to be the boss, or are already there. This emergence of this expectation for professional equity has brought with it new considerations for both employers and families (Rincy & Panchanatham, 2010).

Economic pressures and personal ambition influenced women to move up in the workforce. As they advanced in their careers, women's job demands increased, further illuminating workplace conditions that challenged their work-life balance. One example is the paradigm that employees demonstrate organizational commitment by working longer hours, a commitment that is often rewarded with increased opportunity accompanied by greater responsibility. An unbalanced workload is another part of a stressful workplace; requiring fewer people to do more work over an extended period saves companies money but adds stress for workers (Jain & Jain, 2015a). Working longer hours is a problem for most women because, because while they strive to achieve their professional goals, most also are the primary caretaker

of the home and family (Seierstad & Kirton, 2015). The accumulated pressure results in fewer women being able to handle the rigors of their dual roles as a high-level professional at work, with one set of important responsibilities, and the primary caregiver at home, with another set of important responsibilities (Seierstad & Kirton, 2015).

This pressure exists because of expectations associated with gender roles. Even in the present day, most cultures are still shaped by the Parsonian gendered division of labor, which asserts that a woman's place is in the home taking care of the family, and a man's duty is to work to support the family's needs (Gatrell et al., 2013). Many women have overcome the Parsonian gender division of labor stigma but still face problems when returning home from work. According to the Parsonian belief, the unspoken expectation is that the woman will take over the household duties. Regardless of a woman's leadership status at work, she is often expected to take primary responsibility for domestic tasks at home. In this way, the demands of work and life become unbalanced and create stress.

Because many working women are also the main managers of their homes, they juggle schedules, appointments, children's needs, and household chores. Coordinating events at home after work can be overwhelming, and lead to stress and even depression as the woman's dual role teeters between two significant domains: work and life. Often life events seem to impact women more than men. One example is the question of when to start a family. A woman's biological clock mandates that a decision be made, or nature will take its course and decide for her. Jones et al. (2013), referencing Johnson and Climo (2000), state that in addition to starting a family, the responsibility for eldercare often falls on the female relative. Female employees are more likely to miss work due to an unexpected escalation of eldercare events, and experience increased difficulty in balancing work and home (Jones et al., 2013).

The presence of children in the home, particularly small children, significantly influences roles, possibilities, and choices regarding employment. A U.S. government report citing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on employment statistics stated the following:

In 2020, mothers of older children remained more likely to participate in the labor force than mothers with younger children. The participation rate for mothers with children under age 6, at 65.8 percent, was lower than that of mothers whose youngest child was age 6 to 17, at 75.4 percent. By comparison, fathers with children under age 6 were more likely to participate in the labor force than those whose youngest child was age 6 to 17 (93.4 percent versus 91.4 percent) (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2021).

This report highlights the fact that women with very young children were more likely to leave the workforce during the pandemic than men, whose labor force participation actually went up.

Women in Leadership Positions

Specific segments of the employee population suffer more than others from the work-related stress that decreases work-life balance. For example, women in leadership positions often face stigmas or biases that make it harder for them to achieve upward mobility. These challenges may also require the female professional to work longer hours than her male counterparts to achieve the same level of success. As a direct result, professional women in leadership positions frequently report having a lower work-life balance than nonprofessional non-leaders (Xiao & Cooke, 2012). Even though some companies have policies designed to help employees balance work and life, such specifically designated policies are not common. Balancing the demands of work and life can be overly complicated and has been linked to many health issues (Rincy & Panchanatham, 2010). For this reason, many researchers emphasize the importance of creating

policies to help employees maintain work-life balance, especially leaders. However, there is a gap in the research when discussing the perception of satisfaction within leadership positions.

Retaining Women in the U.S. Labor Force

The National Study of the Changing Workforce (NSCW), a project of the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), analyzed the work and nonwork lives of employees in the U.S. workforce (Society for Human Resource Management, 2017). The purpose of the NSCW, a major national investigator of U.S. workers, is to track trends and determine what is needed to attract and retain the top-level workers required for continued positive growth of the U.S. workforce. The NSCW comprehensive studies are compiled and organized in detailed papers based on intensive research, to make the recommended actions feasible and manageable (Society for Human Resource Management, 2017).

In addition to the NSCW report, the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) findings include significant workforce population changes. For example, women are an increasingly sizable portion of the workforce; as workforce dynamics change, women become more crucial. In addition, according to the DOL *Monthly Labor Review* in September 2021, there will only be a 7.7% growth in labor in the 2020–2030 decade, down from 8.2% in the previous decade. This slowing of the U.S. labor force growth is attributed to a decline in population growth, aging of the population, lower fertility rates, and lower legal immigration. It is essential to focus on this labor force as an indicator of projected national economic growth. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the total labor force can be described as the population of people working or looking for work (Toossi, 2015). While this population is growing, its rate of growth is decreasing over time.

Another major factor affecting the workforce is the aging of the baby boomer population, workers born between 1946 and 1964. Their eligibility to retire will cause a large shift as they exit the labor force (Toossi, 2015). Even though the number of women in the U.S. workforce grew more slowly than in the previous decade, women's growth was still higher than that of their male counterparts (Toossi, 2015). During the 2014–2024 projection period, women's growth will be 0.6%, while men's growth will be 0.4% (Toossi, 2015).

Another current concern is the new shift to a lower overall rate of participation in the U.S. labor force. This rate can be described as the percentage of people who are working or looking for work, compared to the total workforce-eligible population. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022, March 10), the labor participation rate for the civilian workforce was below 60% in the 1950s, rose steadily over the next half century, and peaked at 67.2% in March 2001, after which it began to decline. That decline was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which drove the labor participation rate down from 63.4% in February 2020 to 60.2% in April 2020 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022, March 10). The primary cause of the pre-pandemic decrease was that the percentage of the older, nonworking age group is increasing faster than the overall population growth rate.

The sharp decline in labor participation in April 2020 related to the pandemic showed the impact of taking working parents, particularly mothers, out of the workforce, as schools and businesses closed nationwide, erasing gains made over the preceding decades. According to Dubina (2020), while the women's growth rate had doubled in the labor force over the previous 30 years, that growth began to narrow early in the 21st century and has leveled out. By contrast, men's participation rate in the labor force steadily decreased from the last half of the 20th century through the beginning of the 21st century and is forecast to decrease continuously over the next

decade (Dubina, 2020). Thus, as women are an essential and more rapidly growing part of the workforce, it is crucial to implement organizational policies that support their ability to achieve work-life balance and remain in the workforce.

In many families, the income from working mothers is necessary to support their families (National Women's Law Center, 2017). Seven in ten (69.9%) mothers with children under age 18 are in the workforce. This includes more than three in four (76.2%) single mothers and seven in ten (68.4%) married women. In fact, more than half (57.6%) of married mothers with babies are also in the workforce. The report further noted that the percentage of mothers with children under 18 years old in the workforce increased significantly from 47.4% in 1975 to 70.3% in 2015, a strong indication that their employment was needed and wanted (National Women's Law Center, 2017).

This large increase of professional and nonprofessional working mothers in the labor force during the past 40 years (NWLC, 2017) highlights the need for family-friendly policies such as the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), a policy framework supporting women in the workforce. The purpose of the law is to help balance work and life needs by providing support to families. Public Law 103-3; U.S. Department of Labor, Sec.2, 1993 states the finding of Congress as:

1. It is important for the development of children and the family unit that fathers and mothers be able to participate in early childrearing and the care of family members who have serious health conditions.
2. The lack of employment policies to accommodate working parents can force individuals to choose between job security and parenting.

3. There is inadequate job security for employees who have serious health conditions that prevent them from working for temporary periods.
4. Due to the nature of the roles of men and women in our society, the primary responsibility for family caretaking often falls on women, and such responsibility affects the working lives of women more than it affects the working lives of men.
5. Employment standards that apply to one gender only have serious potential for encouraging employers to discriminate against employees and applicants for employment who are of that gender.

Development of Work-Life Balance Theory

As will be seen in Chapter 2, researchers in previous decades examined dual-earner families and single parents in the workforce and determined that work and family roles are interdependent. Although the topic of life and leisure conflicts was evident in the 1970s, Devaney (2015) reports that the history of published discussion on taking action to effect a balance began in November 1986 with an *Industry Week* article by Tom Brown asking whether we should think about balancing our work and leisure in the same way we balance our investment portfolios. In 1988, Brown changed the phrase to “work-life balance” (Devaney, 2015). In the ensuing decade, while some researchers continued to believe that achieving this balance was far from possible, Friedman and Greenhaus (2000) proclaimed that work and family roles are not enemies. Publishing closely together, Fisher (2001) examined the role of “work/personal life balance,” while Hodson et al. (2001), examined the role of “work/life balance” in achieving job satisfaction.

Contradicting the belief that family and work are always in conflict due to opposing duties and roles, Greenhaus and Powell (2006) proposed that the relationship between work and

family can also be explained through the theory of work-family enrichment. Even though conflict is expected, surprisingly, enrichment can also sometimes result. This enrichment, referred to as positive spillover (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), indicates that work and life are balanced.

Work-life balance is an important topic for organizations because, according to Jain and Jain (2015a), it is required for employees to have job satisfaction and well-being. This, in turn, has been shown to positively affect organizational outcomes (Fisher-McAuley et al., 2003). Therefore, WLB is an essential element for employees at all levels to have in order to maintain the health of the overall organization.

In research by Greenhaus et al. (2003), WLB was explained as:

an individual's orientation across different life roles, an inter-role phenomenon; it is the extent to which an individual is engaged in and equally satisfied with his or her work role and family role consisting of three components of work family-balance: time balance (whereby equal amounts of time are devoted to work and family), satisfaction balance (whereby an equal level of psychological involvement in work and family roles exists), and satisfaction balance (whereby an equal level of satisfaction is derived from work and family roles) (p. 510).

Work-life balance can also be described as how work, nonwork, and private life flow harmoniously, merge, and integrate (Kumer & Janakiram, 2017). The authors further explain that WLB is multidirectional, meaning that work can interfere with family and family can interfere with work. This interference can be positive or negative and is referred to as spillover. Other terms for work-life balance are work-life coordination, work-life interface, work-life integration, and work-life reconciliation (Kumer & Janakiram, 2017). Finally, Kumer and Janakiram (2017)

extend the meaning of work-life balance to the balance of the relationship of paid work and activities outside of work such as family, community, leisure, and personal interests.

Frequently, family activities can be interfered with by organizations that have conditions triggering work-life imbalance. As reported in the UK, some of these circumstances include excessive workload requiring extended hours, or operations that conflict with school holidays; these circumstances occur mostly in public sector jobs (Hogarth et al., 2001). The existence of WLB policies protecting the worker often depends on the size of the organization: The larger the organization, the more likely it is that it has policies favoring WLB (Hogarth et al., 2001). Also, in some larger organizations, unions play a role in representing employees, further ensuring that written policies support WLB practices.

Benefits of Work-Life Balance

Employees work best and productivity is higher when their lives are balanced; therefore, Hogarth et al. (2001) believe that employers should develop and implement policies supporting work-life balance, because doing so mutually benefits employees and employers. While employees understand that it is an organization's mission to be productive, they also believe it should play a role in supporting work-life balance, although employer/employee perceptions differ. Hogarth et al. (2001) reported that 43% of employers thought work-life balance policies were weighted in favor of employees; however, only 23% of employees agreed. Policies allowing employees the flexibility to work at home, obtain leave as needed, and receive workspace accommodation for disabilities are a few of the work-life balance practices that would be considered favorable and meet employee needs.

As shown by studies in the United States and internationally, employee well-being positively impacts the organization (Connerley & Wu, 2016; Fisher-McAuley et al., 2003). As

one example, according to a study by Murthy and Guthrie (2012), management in an Australian financial institution used work-life balance programs to support the employees' physical and emotional health, which also increased the organization's performance. Additionally, while examining work-life balance in a Jordanian pharmaceutical firm, employees' well-being, physical, and mental health were shown to positively affect organizational success (Bataineh, 2019). Organizations have difficulty in finding policies to meet all employee needs due to varying work and life situations. Work-life balance requirements for a single parent, elder caretaker, or a sick employee may be very different. Therefore, developing a universal policy addressing comprehensive employee needs while also maintaining organizational standards of operation can be problematic. To be effective problem solvers and decision makers in this regard, managers must develop and display emotional intelligence by understanding the emotions of their employees as well as themselves (Downey et al., 2006).

Statement of the Problem

The globalization of organizations and technological advances have both contributed significantly to the blurring of the work and life domain boundaries for women (Rincy & Panchanatham, 2010). For instance, due to advanced technology, job demands have pushed work boundaries beyond the office into the home, where work and family life place competing demands on finite quantities of time (Jones et al., 2013). Technology (cell phones, computers, email) increases a woman's expectation of having to be accessible to her employer and perform work at home beyond normal job hours.

This inability to segregate work from home exacts a toll, with research indicating that high levels of stress in the workplace increases the incidence of stress-related illnesses in employees. According to Jones et al. (2013), blurred boundaries between home and workplace

have created a need for organizations to develop flexible solutions to increase productivity while maintaining an environment promoting healthy relationships for their employees. Studies have demonstrated that companies with excellent work-life balance policies can more easily retain and recruit quality employees (Jones et al., 2013). For this reason, both interest in and research on work-life balance have increased in recent years in hopes of encouraging the development of effective policies that support employees while also benefitting the companies they work for.

Workplace demands create conditions for families leading to an imbalance in work and life due to a lack of organizational policies and personal support systems. Making accommodations such as those in the FMLA have helped to promote stability and security. Even though the federal government recognized the need and made an effort to support women and their families, a vast gap remains in our attempts to bridge the work and life domains. As NSCW reports indicate, the workforce rate of growth is declining in the United States and women's participation is crucial to sustaining the labor force. Therefore, supportive organizational policies and personal support systems are essential to maintaining the ability of women to remain in the workforce. Regardless of the workplace's multiple challenges, the nature of the work via technology, the leadership role of the woman, or her responsibilities at home, reality requires the female employee to manage her situation by pursuing accommodations to balance work and life. However, balancing work and home environments remains a tough challenge.

Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this mixed-methods study is to explore how organizational policies and support systems affect perceived satisfaction of work-life balance. Even though many factors affect perceived satisfaction of WLB, organizational policies and support are especially important. This study investigated how such policies, the presence or absence of team resources

at work, and adequate time for self-care influenced perceived satisfaction of WLB. This research is important because it addresses the full scope of issues facing employees, families, and employers. This research also provides a view into the research gap, adding to the base of present knowledge on WLB, and ultimately leading to new pathways with options for families and employers to offer resources to help balance work and life.

Research Question and Hypotheses

My research question and hypotheses for this study are as follows:

RQ How do WLB policies, workplace support systems, personal support systems, personal time, and interactional conflict influence the perceptions of work-life balance among professional women?

- H1:** WLB HR policies are positively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.
- H2:** Workplace support systems (team resources) are positively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.
- H3:** Personal support systems are positively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.
- H4:** Time for self (self-care) is positively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.
- H5:** Work-family conflict is negatively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.
- H6:** Family-work conflict is negatively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.

Overview of Methodology

I used a mixed methodology for this study, and collected and analyzed data using quantitative and qualitative methods. According to Shorten and Smith (2017), “mixed methods research draws on potential strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods, allowing researchers to explore diverse perspectives and uncover relationships that exist between the intricate layers of our multifaceted research questions” (Shorten & Smith, 2017, p. 74). Several studies in the field examining WLB used mixed methodology, including Sharkey and Caska (2020), Lee et al. (2016), Wheatley (2012), and Cooray et al. (2018).

Curry et al. (2009) describe mixed methodology as being beneficial in outcome-related research. Their research described mixed methods as valuable, providing the researcher the opportunity to take advantage of each type’s strengths. They further explained how combining quantitative and qualitative can produce more significant findings and more comprehensive results. For example, conclusions using one approach can be supported by results derived from the opposite approach. Also, as highlighted by Curry et al. (2009), I used a qualitative approach to help develop and test my questionnaire’s content and used the quantitative approach to better understand inconsistent findings.

My methodology was structured in two phases and used two different data collection methods: an online survey and six interviews. Phase 1 analysis was based on the survey and included quantitative analysis of the Likert-structured question responses and an a priori coding analysis of the survey’s open-ended questions, while Phase 2 included content analysis of the six interviews.

Using a convenience sample, I collected data from MBA and doctoral students attending Hood College, staff from the participating Mid-Atlantic school district and other regional school

districts, sorority sisters of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc., and my LinkedIn associates. Participants were invited by email to complete a survey questionnaire including open-ended questions for specific input into the study. I sent out more than 420 email invitations because the response rate for online surveys is known to be lower than other types of surveys (Fan & Yan, 2010). My goal was to receive at least 150 responses, making the response large enough to show a small effect (Cohen, 1988). The survey produced 184 responses, including 155 valid cases, exceeding my original goal. Study participants came from a wide variety of industries. The interview participants were chosen from volunteers in the survey. Multiple regression analysis, a priori content analysis, and pattern coding were my data analytical techniques. Specific details of my methodology are included in Chapter 3.

Theoretical Framework

Three theory areas informed my study: theories related to the relationship between work and life, Social Exchange Theory, and Motivation/Hygiene theory. Each of the three areas is described in detail in Chapter 2 and is summarized in the paragraphs that follow.

Work-Life Balance Theories

Work-life balance theories include research examining the balance between the two domains (Clark et al., 2004; Frone, 2003; Voydanoff et al., 2004); Spillover Theory (Greenhaus et al., 2003; Sok et al., 2014; Staines, 1980); Role Balance Theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996); and Role Strain (Goode, 1960). They also include theories relating to conflict and interference between the two domains, specifically Work-Family Conflict/Family-Work Conflict (Bakker and Geurts, 2003; Voydanoff et al., 2004; Williams & Alliger, 1994). I used this set of theories as a framework to understand the impact of work-life imbalance on professional women, as a source

of appropriate constructs and analytical measures, and also as baseline against which to evaluate the responses of my sample.

Social Exchange Theory

Homans (1958) described social behavior in terms of an exchange between individuals or institutions that includes what we are willing to give up in order to receive some gain. That exchange in the societal environment can include transactions such as working for wages or performing activities from which we receive recognition or prestige. This exchange represents the work performed by the professional women in this study, who must continuously balance what they are receiving from the workplace against what they are giving up in their personal lives in order to earn it. When the balance in that relationship is positive, both work and home benefit; if excessive demands of one domain cause an imbalance, negative impacts are likely to be felt in both.

Motivation/Hygiene Theory

I have used Frederick Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory, also known as his two-factor theory, to explain the connection between nonmonetary benefits, motivation, job satisfaction, and loyalty to the organization (Herzberg et al., 1959). The Motivation-Hygiene Theory shows how motivation affects attitude. It determined that when people felt good about their jobs, they were more intrinsically motivated, which was a stronger motivation than external motivation (Herzberg, 2003; Herzberg et al., 1959). The intrinsic motivating factors include actual achievement, recognition, the value of the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and the possibility of personal growth (Herzberg, 2003; Herzberg et al., 1959). To develop effective organizational policies, employers need to understand employee behavior and how employees

respond to rewards. Sound organizational policies that align with organizational culture create an environment of success that is mutually beneficial for the employer and employee.

Researcher Positionality

As a professional leader, mother, and business owner, I know it is difficult to balance work and life. My job as a teacher and leader in the participating Mid-Atlantic school district is demanding and reaches into my nonwork life. The lack of flexibility with my schedule often makes it difficult for my family, which includes members who have experienced significant health issues before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. The constant interruptions from my life's demands spill over into work from home and from home into work, causing a work-life imbalance. However, supportive leaders have helped me cope with these struggles merely by listening, encouraging, and informing me of policies. Having policies in place is not helpful if employees are not aware of them. Therefore, the supervisor's role is not only to support employees in their assigned duties, but to go beyond and support them with knowledge.

Everyone's situation in the home environment is unique. Therefore, to get an accurate view of what influences individual work-life balance, I conducted, recorded, and transcribed personal interviews using Zoom technology. Interviews capture the emotional level of personal stories that only the individual can tell. This qualitative research added a meaningful dimension to the quantitative research, allowing me to shift my focus from a preestablished set of questions and explore unknown territory. This enhancement removed invisible boundaries and strengthened the study. Recording the interviews enabled me to focus on the unspoken aspects during the interviews. I was able to observe when participants grimaced or sighed, hesitated, were uncomfortable, or made minor gestures to questions or comments.

Significance of the Study

This study is important because it focuses on the importance of organizational policies and personal support systems that affect millions of women. Even though former studies have shown why organizations should implement family-friendly benefits, this study will attempt to fill the gap by showing specific components of a family-friendly policy package tailored to the new diverse family. Previous studies have also examined family-friendly policies in different sectors, but there is limited research addressing the diverse family and the unique problems.

According to Gretchen Livingston, a senior researcher at the Pew Research Center, the definition of family has been changed to reflect greater a diversity of family structure, and now includes families with same-gender parents, blended families, and families with cohabiting parents (Livingston et al., 2014). This family structure shift also was described as a transition from the traditional family from 1960, where 73% of families were married couples with children, to 2013, when only 46% of children lived in traditional families (Livingston et al., 2014). The study is crucial because the family structure and organizational policies affect the work-life balance of individuals and their families.

In addition to organization policies and personal support systems, I examined organizational culture and work-family culture. It was crucial to explore the two cultures because the research analyzing family culture provides specific information to guide the organization's creation of family-friendly policies. Once the elements of organizational culture and family-friendly culture are identified and align, the work and life balance of families should increase.

Federal policy impacts work-life balance in significant ways. Organizations benefit from policies such as the 1993 Family and Medical Leave Act, later amended to include various leaves such as military and eldercare (Labor Law Center, 2016). Recently, in 2020, the FMLA was

extended to cover people impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. In this most unusual time, pressure from both the Democratic Party and the Republican Party has increased access to testing and treatment for those who cannot afford it. New legislation was passed that paid for the cost of testing, treatment, and vaccines. Also, Congress passed bills that extended unemployment insurance coverage, provided low-interest forgivable loans to businesses and individuals, and extended disaster relief. However, a lot of uncertainty and stress remained during the period of this study, in part because government policies on testing, vaccination, masking, school and workplace closures, and travel restrictions were instituted, changed, reinstituted, and/or eliminated, and in some cases conflicted at the federal, state, county, and school district levels.

One major example of conflicting rules at multiple levels is the chaos in the public schools. Schools used websites and automated calls to inform parents of the constant changing rules. Parents became homeschoolers overnight while working in home offices. When it was safer to do so, the government allowed schools to reopen. However, due to the lack of vaccines for children, some parents continued to homeschool, while others masked their children and drove them to school. Schools became masters of creating their own unique schedules and safety plans. Parents were allowed input but the final plan was designed for everyone's safety. As a result, families with children in elementary school or with multiple children in the same school found it difficult to manage the A week/B week schedules. Due to the nature of students' and parents' schedules, the conflicts that occurred involving child care and the frequently changing rules were extensive and frustrating.

During this pandemic, organizational policy has become the focus of many workplace conversations. Companies offering paid leave and health care seldom offer it to hourly service

workers or minimum-wage jobholders. Thus, due to a lack of policies providing security for families, many employees were stressed and did not have balance in work or life.

My study showed other inequities caused by the lack of organizational policies and personal support systems and their influence on work-life balance. Shining a light on this issue brought the gap in research and the ineffectiveness of current policies into focus, which I hope will inspire momentum toward making the necessary change.

One of the most important aspects of my study was showing how stress caused by work-life imbalance impacts a person's health. For example, workplace stress can lead to depression and anxiety that spill over to the family and nonwork environments. A study by Kivimäki et al. (2006) demonstrates a direct link between stress and heart disease, showing how stress activates the hypothalamus and the brain stem, helping the body overcome short-term physical stressors. The authors stated that long-term stressors cause wear and tear and play a role in coronary heart disease, infection, and accelerated aging (Kivimäki et al., 2006). The devastating effects of stress include not only heart disease, but also the cost of health care due to stress-related illnesses and time lost from work, estimated to be between \$125 billion and \$190 billion annually in the United States (Kohll, 2018).

For these reasons—physical health, economic stability, and work-life balance—this study is important. It is beneficial to organizations, governments, and individuals. It also contributes to the developing literature on human resource management and organizational policies influencing work-life balance.

Definitions of Key Terms

Work-life balance—“satisfaction and good functioning at work and home, with a minimum of role conflict” (Clark, 2000, p. 751, as cited by Emslie et al., 2009; Clarke et al., 2004)

Role balance—when one becomes immersed in performing all roles within their role system with precision (Marks & MacDermid, 1996, as cited in Greenhaus et al., 2003).

Work-life integration—a pleasing life with the integration of health, work, play, and love. This integration includes personal and spiritual growth as well as activities and self-awareness, while focusing on personal wishes, interests, and values (Jones et al., 2013).

Work-family interface—connection between work and family and the effect of one on the other (Clarke et al., 2004).

Spillover theory—“a process whereby experiences in one role affect experiences in the other, rendering the roles more alike” (Kumer & Janakiram, 2017, p. 188)

Work-family enrichment—“the extent to which experiences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role” (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006, p. 72).

Spillover effect—proposes that engaging in one behavior affects the probability of engagement or disengaging in a second behavior (Nilsson et al., 2017).

Professional women—women who have attained a job status usually requiring a college degree or advanced certification. (For the purpose of this study I am addressing professional women in the United States.)

Personal support systems—a network of people or resources who provide practical or emotional support (Merriam-Webster, n.d.)

Limitations

Compiling data on perceptions using a survey administered to a convenience sample brought several limitations to my study, the first of which was the potential for social desirability bias, when participants will answer in a manner that they think is desirable. The survey was long, with 109 questions, using Likert-scale data, and remote administration made it impossible to monitor participants to ensure that they completed the survey with integrity. Furthermore, using data from respondents from different organizations may have limited my ability to draw a cohesive conclusion on organizational policies, as different work environments and job positions may have caused variations in the level of conflict or stress. My convenience sample demographics were weighted toward mature women with no children at home. This inability to standardize the circumstances of work-life balance experiences may have caused challenges to the results and generalizability. Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic created obstacles that limited my ability to access the study population, and also may have altered participant responses. Chapter 6 describes the limitations of this study in greater detail.

Organization of This Study

Chapter 1 has provided an introduction to this study, a measurement framework, the research question and hypotheses, and an overview of the methodology, along with a definition of terms and a discussion of limitations and significance. Key elements of this chapter are summarized in Table 1. Chapter 2, which will provide a literature review, ends with my conceptual framework. My research hypotheses are framed by the associated literature in this chapter as they emerge from the discussion of the relevant variables. Chapter 3 will present my methodology in greater detail. Chapters 4 and 5 will present the results of the two phases of my

study, survey and interview respectively, and Chapter 6 will provide discussion, implications, and conclusions.

Table 1

Chapter 1 Summary and Research Overview

Element	Summary
Purpose of the Study	To explore how organizational policies and personal and workplace support systems affect perceived satisfaction of work-life balance; To identify the perceptions of professional women regarding the balance in their lives between work and family/personal life.
Methodology	Mixed methodology, producing quantitative and qualitative results.
Scope	Examination of the perceptions of professional women through an online survey with 184 respondents, and six one-on-one follow-up interviews.
Theoretical Framework	The theoretical framework includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work-life balance theory (Clark et al., 2004; Frone, 2003; Voydanoff et al., 2004); spillover theory (Greenhaus et al, 2003); role balance theory (Marks & MacDermid, 1996); role strain (Goode, 1960), home-work interference theory (Bakker & Geurts, 2003; Voydanoff et al. 2004), and work-family conflict/family-work conflict (Bakker & Geurts, 2003; Voydanoff et al., 2004; Williams & Alliger, 1994) ▪ Social exchange theory (Emerson, 1976; Homans, 1958; Thomas & Iding, 2011) ▪ Motivation/hygiene theory (Herzberg et al., 1959)
Limitations	Limitations include the use of a convenience sample of U.S. professional women in the Mid-Atlantic states, social desirability bias, access limitations resulting from COVID-19 restrictions, and Likert scale data treated as interval rather than ordinal.
Contribution to Research	This paper contributes to prior research by adding a novel worker population that is both impactful and global. It also attempts to address gaps in the literature by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Examining the WLB perceptions of professional women within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic ▪ Determining the perceived role of organizational policies and organizational support structures in influencing the WLB satisfaction of professional women ▪ Examining the perceived role of personal support systems and time for self-care in achieving WLB satisfaction in professional women
Contribution to Practice	This study contributes to practice by identifying: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Detrimental effects of not having WLB policies in place ▪ Workplace policies and personal support practices that positively impact WLB ▪ Making recommendations in the organizational, personal, and governmental realms that can bring about greater WLB for professional women

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This study examines how organizational policies and personal support systems influence the perceived satisfaction of work-life balance. In this chapter, I will review literature on how family-friendly policies, personal support systems, and organizational policies impact on perceived satisfaction of work-life balance. Due to current events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, organizational policies and personal support systems were tested. Though we have not yet passed out of the pandemic phase, this pivotal moment requires changes to our foundation of organizational policies and personal support systems to help restructure our economy's base. It is no longer a choice, but a requirement.

In this chapter, I will present a review of literature from three major theories related to work-life balance: spillover, motivation and hygiene, and social exchange. After presenting a brief history, I will start with a review of the origin of work-life balance to show each philosophical meaning's alignment to the perceived satisfaction of work-life balance. I will specifically address organizational policies to show how they affect an employee's ability to provide and support a family, and how they often lead to an imbalance in work and life. Because organizational policies mandating equitable practices play a huge role in work-life balance, I will examine studies showing how employees are impacted by an organization's ability to enforce policies ethically and equitably.

It is also necessary to reflect on the major study by Herzberg et al. (1959), which led to the theory of motivation and hygiene factors and their impact on job satisfaction. In this historical study, Herzberg and his colleagues describe how the two factors influence employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the workplace. The factors are linked to psychological and

behavioral outcomes impacting the employee's actions that may have a positive or negative effect on work-life balance.

Next, I show the link between what happens at work and the transference of the impact of the policies on home or nonwork places using the spillover theory. In the literature, the spillover theory describes how policies and influences from work are directly connected to balancing work and home. Finally, I will show how the literature examines the influence of work-family conflict and family-work conflict between organizational policies and personal support systems. For many years, studies have examined the interference of work on family and family on work. This literature assessed how organizational policies either positively or negatively affect the relationship between work and home. More importantly, the literature explains explicitly how work-family conflict and family-work conflict impact the perceived satisfaction of work-life balance. This chapter ends with my conceptual framework that presents the constructs used in this study.

History

The evolution of work-life balance has a long history. According to Devaney (2015), work-life balance was initially known as a work-leisure balance and he traces this concept back to Plato and Aristotle. He explained that during the mid-1700s, the Industrial Revolution caused a spike in factory-based industrial production that required employees to work longer hours, with work hours peaking in the mid-nineteenth century and then beginning to fall. That fall was partly due to manufacturing laws enacted in the late 1800s. These laws restricted women and children from working extended hours in manufacturing companies (Raja & Stein, 2014). The Fair Labor Standards Act followed in 1938 by limiting the workweek to 44 hours (Devaney, 2015). However, unlike manufacturing, professions did not always follow this rule.

The concept of actively balancing work and nonwork life in the modern workplace originated in the 1970s and 1980s and evolved to include formal workplace policies such as employer-sponsored childcare and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) in the United States (Carmon et al., 2013). Program evolution took different paths depending on the focus of the organization. If an organization's focus was on the work-family perspective, it developed programs such as quality childcare for the working mother (Carmon et al., 2013). On the other hand, if the organization had an EAP perspective, the focus was more on creating programs that support the employee's health, such as measures to address stress and depression, in part because employee health problems contributed to lowering the company's productivity (Carmon et al., 2013).

The influx of women into the workforce in the 20th century, their rise into managerial ranks, economic factors, and societal changes demanding greater gender equality all represented a catalyst that mandated organizational change. Organizations listened and began to focus on the rise of professional working women and mothers who struggled to find quality childcare as they pursued their careers (Carmon et al., 2013). Organizations realized that if employees are less stressed and their needs are taken care of, they are more productive at work (Carmon et al., 2013).

Thus, in the 1980s, corporations began to fund studies on work and family. One nationally recognized organization, Catalyst, Inc., was funded by Exxon to promote women's advancement in business and professions. Other corporate-funded organizations such as the Families and Work Institute and Boston College Center for Work & Family also helped create a base of research on work and families. Although these developments were started to help working mothers, they quickly transitioned to support other populations (Carmon et al., 2013).

Organizations finally realized that when employees do not have a work-life balance, it is difficult for them to perform well at work. An employee's performance is an indicator of an organization's effectiveness and efficiency (Inuwa, 2016). In this way, comprehension of the effect of work-life balance on employee performance is crucial to understanding the organization. Also, work-life balance is especially important in organizations such as schools and universities, where an employee's proficiency is linked to student achievement and overall functioning (Gates et al., 2014).

Work-life balance directly affects employee performance by impacting the employee's behavior, character, and the organization's efficiency (Abdirahman et al., 2018). A better definition of WLB from Clark et al. (2004) fits here; they described work-life balance as an equilibrium or the feeling of balance in life. Greenhaus and Allen (2011) define it as an individual's assessment of how well one's multiple life roles are balanced. Abdirahman et al. (2018) rephrase the Greenhaus et al. (2003) categories for measuring work-life balance as: 1) balancing of time in regard to the quantity of time required to complete work and other activities; and 2) participation balance: psychological commitment to work and other activity roles.

Work-life balance has become one of the essential subjects in boardrooms and government offices, thereby increasing demand for quality research in this field to support policy development (Bird, 2006). Bird (2006) also believes that work-life balance will be an issue that human resource officers will be accountable to manage. The reality is that work-life imbalance can adversely affect a company's top-line and bottom-line growth by causing a decrease in productivity (Bird, 2006).

Work-Life Balance

The first publication specifically describing work and life balance was in a November 10, 1986, article in *Industry Week* entitled, “Time to Diversify Your ‘Life Portfolio’?” The author, Tom Brown, examined the idea of treating a balance between work and leisure as one would when balancing an investment portfolio. In 1988, Tom Brown changed the phrase from work and life balance to work-life balance (Devaney, 2015). Afterward, the topic of work-life balance seems to have almost disappeared until the 2000s, when it reemerged as a popular topic. This rise in popularity was explained in part by an increase in the national emphasis on the business’s value, with a new objective of focusing on the corporate landscape to maximize organizational goals (Devaney, 2015).

Today, the achievement of work-life balance policies is at the forefront of most organizations. It is recently getting the attention of employers and political leaders. According to Casper et al. (2018), everyone desires a work-life balance, but it is challenging to accomplish. One of the studies in the article stated that respondents from a SHRM survey found that men also desired balance, which was further supported by Ramsey (2014). This statement was made because the work-life balance movement initially focused on women. Work-life balance and support systems are now an essential part of job satisfaction for all employees.

However, factors such as skill shortages and the aging workforce require organizations to endorse work-life balance policies to retain their talent (McDonald & Bradley, 2005). Also, there are particular groups with a higher need for work-life balance policies within the diverse populations, for example, single parents, elderly workers, and at-risk groups (McDonald & Bradley, 2005). Based on their findings, McDonald & Bradley (2005) concluded that work-life balance policies are no longer a luxury, but should be part of an organization’s foundational

practices. They believed the practices meet the company's needs as well as the employees' needs. Also, employees were less productive in organizations that refused to provide WLB policies. McDonald and Bradley (2005) further stated that creating a WLB policy framework needs to be fostered and supported by the employer. Managers should be flexible in encouraging their employees to use the policies and not revert to traditional policies that limited flexibility.

Creating a Research Definition

In the research literature, various terms are used interchangeably to express a common idea: work-life balance, work-family balance, role balance, role strain, and spillover, to name just a few. Regardless of the study in each of these areas, the focus is consistent with balancing several roles while working (Casper et al., 2018). In this literature review, I will use the term work-life balance.

Researchers believe there are two broad interdependencies between work and family: one negative and one positive (Powell et al., 2018). Most of the focus of past research studies was the negative interaction of work and family, especially work-family conflict, and their incompatibility (Casper et al., 2018). The research on conflict found that both roles lead to stress and unwanted behaviors, decreasing the value of life (Powell et al., 2018). However, the literature in the early 2000s coined a newer term, work-family enrichment, meaning that activities in one role enhance or make life better in the other role (Casper et al., 2018). According to Greenhaus and Powell (2006), "work-family enrichment and work-family conflict are independent and unrelated constructs" (p. 657). Depending on the conditions, the relationship may be negative or positive based on the making or applying of the resource (Powell & Greenhaus, 2006). In fact, Casper et al. (2018) state that "conflict and enrichment are bidirectional constructs in which work influence family (i.e., family-to-work conflict or

enrichment) and family can influence work (i.e., family-to-work conflict or enrichment)” (Casper et al., 2018, p. 183).

Work-family fit is a new version of work-life balance. The similarities are that both define the interactions between work and family but are slightly different because fit comes before balance (Clarke et al., 2004). Also, fit can be predicted by work hours, age, family income, and household labor satisfaction. Simultaneously, the predictors of balance are the frequency of family activities, and the predictors of job satisfaction are fit and balance (Clarke et al., 2004). Analysis suggests that fit is grounded on the structural characteristics of work-family interactions, while balance’s characteristics are based on psychological factors Clark et al. (2004).

Similarly, work-family balance is defined as the “accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his or her role-related partners in the work and family domains” (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007, p. 455). When the family and work balance, it not only benefits the individual but ultimately helps everyone in society (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). Rojo (2016) established the measures of work-life balance described in Table 2.1.

McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org (2021) surveyed companies to measure women’s progress in the American workforce. They found that the percentage of men leaving the workforce has been higher than the percentage of women since 2015, consistent with findings by Jablonska (2021). This finding is supported by Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022, March 10) data. However, McKinsey (2021) also reported that the COVID-19 pandemic was particularly challenging for mothers of small children, minorities, and women in senior management positions. This difference may have been caused by the lack of support systems for women in these categories, causing them to struggle. For this group of women, the consideration for

Table 2.1*Categorization of Work-Life Balance Measures*

Flexible schedule and working day	Social benefits	Family support	Mobility measures
Continuous working day	Medical insurance	Nursery in the workplace	Videoconferencing
Extension or reduction of working day	Maintenance	Books and scholarships for children	Transfer to other locations with or without reserved position
Flexible schedule	Discounts on firm's products	Aid for special family situations	Telework/remote work
Controlled meeting schedules	Financial services and financial aid	Maternity/paternity support measures	Expat policy
Paid leave	Pension plan	Sporting, leisure, and cultural activities	
Flexible shifts	Promotion of health and well-being		
Leaves of absence	Help with transport/parking facilities		
Maternity/paternity measures			

Note: The four categories in the table represent work-life balance measures based on research in Spain by Pilar Rojo (2016). I used these measures to represent how people feel about work-life balance.

leaving the workforce was 10 percentage points higher than for men. In addition, *The New York Times* reported in an article by Alisha Haridasani Gupta that this crisis of exodus for women has not been seen since the Great Depression and is predominantly occurring among minority women (Gupta, 2020).

During the pandemic, coronavirus shutdowns heavily affected the workforce sectors mainly populated by women: leisure, hospitality, education, and traditional female health care

positions. Also, women are more likely to hold jobs that do not allow them to telecommute, creating a greater disadvantage for them than men. Americans lost 20.5 million jobs in April 2021; 55% were women (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). This increased the national unemployment rate for women to 15% in comparison to the 13% rate for men. More disturbing was the rate for minority women: the African-American rate was 16.4% while the Hispanic rate was 20.2% (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). Single parents faced huge challenges when schools and daycare facilities closed. Because the mother is most frequently the caretaker, the weight of the burden was disproportionately assumed by the mother. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2022), men performed 7.2 hours of childcare for every 10.3 hours that women performed. Even in two-parent families, women perform 60% of the childcare.

Workplace policies could help offset some of the crises caused by COVID. My study provides insight into how the implementation of these policies may help avert a potential future exodus of large numbers of women from the workforce. The COVID-19 pandemic's effect on the employment reversal for women had a greater effect on women of color, especially Black women, as reported in a study by McKinsey & Company and LeanIn.Org in 2021 involving 65,000 working women. In a CBS interview, Rachel Thomas, CEO of LeanIn.Org, and Lareina Yee, of McKinsey & Company, two of the study's authors, describe in detail how the COVID-19 pandemic affected working women (CBS This Morning, 2020). They explained that one of the biggest challenges for companies was the departure of senior-level women. Senior-level women are normally the advocates for equity and responsible for mentoring minority women, thereby improving corporate cultures. As described in the study, the domino effect of senior-level women leaving the workforce will not only impact the company, but in addition, the "chain of success" will be fractured (Thomas et al., 2021).

Today's society and economic pressures make it difficult for families to exist efficiently without dual incomes. When both parents work, it puts extra pressure on the family and requires a balancing of family issues and work. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) demographic data on employment, unemployment, and family participation, in 49.4% of married couples, both the husband and wife, worked. "In 2019, 33.4 million families, or two-fifths of all families, included children under 18 (children are sons, daughters, stepchildren, or adopted children living in the household who are under age 18)" (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020, p. 2). The BLS data on family employment show that among unmarried couples with children, 91.3% included at least one employed parent; 97.5% of married couples with children had at least one parent employed, while 64.2% had both parents working (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020, p. 3).

Furthermore, mothers with children under six years of age had a lower employment rate than the mothers of children between 6 and 17 years of age. The percentage of fathers to mothers working full time was 96.2% to 78.5%, respectively (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2020, p. 2). It was more common for the mother to stay home than the father and assume the caretaker's role. Still, due to the substantial number of parents working outside of the home, child-care support and role clarity are required to balance work and family. Thus, establishing family-friendly policies is crucial to ease the strain on families.

Role Balance

Role balance and role clarity are necessary to achieve work-life balance. Balance is a term that resurfaced in 2006 as role balance. Previously it was called positive or negative role balance by Marks and MacDermid (1996), who developed the role balance theory. Positive role balance is commonly referred to today as role balance, sometimes referred to as mindfulness, which is defined as "the tendency to become fully engaged in the performance of every role in

one's total role system, to approach every typical role and role partner with an attitude of attentiveness and care" (Marks & MacDermid, 1996, p. 421).

All roles are not the same, and people organize role hierarchy by assigning more importance to a variety of roles. A family may decide that the father, not the mother, would be a better caretaker and should stay at home with the children. In single-parent families, management of all roles falls on one parent. An overload of roles can cause imbalance, leading to role strain. A person feels role strain and has problems carrying out a role when their total role system is overly demanding (Marks & MacDermid, 1996). According to Marks and MacDermid (1996), people who were consistently more balanced "across their entire systems of roles and activities would score lower on measures of role strain and depression and higher on measures of self-esteem, role ease, and other indicators of well-being" (Marks & MacDermid, 1996, p. 417).

Role Strain

Society is made up of role relationships composed of role transactions (Goode, 1960). According to Goode (1960), people usually desire to do what they are expected to do and what is best for society. Unfortunately, sometimes circumstances prohibit the normal flow of actions, creating role strain. Goode (1960) explains, in the development of his role theory, that an individual has many roles and obligations to various people and that, "In general, the individual's total role obligations are overdemanding" (p. 485). When a person cannot meet all the requirements of the obligations satisfactorily, role strain becomes that person's normal.

To reduce role strain, one must first determine the level of commitment to different role obligations and actions that impact society (Goode, 1960). Individuals are continuously seeking to reduce role strain by demanding more from others and producing less. Goode (1960) states that "the role performances which the individual can exact from others are what he gets in

exchange” (p. 495). Thus, role performance that leads to an exchange can be a pathway to balance.

As can be seen, the variation in defining balance makes it difficult to have an accurate measurement of balance (Sorcinelli & Near, 1989). Therefore, the term work-life balance is difficult to define, causing problems for human resource interventions (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Work-life balance is defined by Kalliath and Brough (2008) using six conceptualizations found within the literature they reviewed. These six conceptualizations express their similarities in meaning as follows:

1. Work-life balance defined as **multiple roles**—“The view that work-life balance is drawn from an individual’s multiple life roles derives from the early recognition that nonwork (family or personal) demands may carry over into the working day and adversely influence individual health and performance at work” (Kalliath & Brough, 2008, p. 324).
2. Work-life balance defined as **equity across multiple roles**—Greenhaus et al. (2003) believe that balance can be achieved if one can provide equal attention, time, involvement, or commitment to each domain of work and family.
3. Work-life balance defined as **satisfaction between multiple roles**—Hill et al., (2001) defined work-life balance as “Work-family balance may be defined as the degree to which an individual is able to simultaneously balance the temporal, emotional, and behavioral demands of both paid work and family responsibilities” (p. 49).
4. Work-life balance defined as the **fulfillment of role salience between multiple roles**—Greenhaus and Allen (2011) defined work-life balance as the level of an individual’s satisfaction and effectiveness in the domains of work and family roles according to their priorities at a particular time.

5. Work-life balance defined as a **relationship between conflict and facilitation**—

According to Frone (2003), the definition is a representation of work-family balance, meaning that conflict is absence but facilitation is present. He believes this occurs when the level of inter-role conflict is low and level of inter-role facilitation is elevated.

6. Work-life balance defined as **perceived control between multiple roles**—Fleetwood

(2007) describe work-life balance as the degree of autonomy an individual perceives themselves to have over their multiple role demands and having flexibility of where, when, and how in the domain of work (Fleetwood, 2007).

According to Kalliath and Brough (2008), the best definition of work-life balance is “the individual perception that work and nonwork activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s current life priorities” (p. 326). This is the definition I use and reference throughout this study.

Herzberg’s Motivation/Hygiene Theory

After analyzing more than 2,000 job satisfaction studies, Herzberg et al. (1959) concluded that the variables for job satisfaction and job dissatisfaction were not the same, and were also, in fact, not opposites: Some factors were the primary cause of satisfaction, while others, called “hygiene,” while not causing primary satisfaction, were necessary to reduce dissatisfaction. In other words, Herzberg believed that motivation factors created satisfaction, while the absence of hygiene factors created dissatisfaction (Sachau, 2007). Motivating factors included experiencing achievement, receiving recognition, having significant work to do, having responsibility, being able to advance, and having the possibility to achieve personal growth. These factors were considered primary motivators and causes of job satisfaction. On the other hand, hygiene factors included relationship with supervisor, interpersonal relationships at work,

working conditions and salary, and company policies and procedures. In each of these cases, the hygiene factor was not thought to be a primary cause of job satisfaction, but without it, job dissatisfaction would follow.

Herzberg et al.'s (1959) definition of satisfaction was similar to that of Locke, who described work satisfaction as the positive emotional feeling resulting from the successful achievement of the job responsibilities (Judge et al., 2005). As a result, Sachau (2007) believed that managers should separate motivating factors from hygiene factors. Employers should assume that employees will be motivated by offering them an increase in pay or benefits. Instead, employers should look at the motivation factors, and offer quality work, recognition, possibility of advancement, training, and more responsibility (Sachau, 2007).

While initially controversial, Herzberg et al. (1959) received support decades later from researchers in the field of positive psychology, who supported their theory by focusing on human strengths and well-being rather than human weakness and depression (Sachau, 2007). Like Herzberg, positive psychologists also believed that happiness is not merely the absence of unhappiness, and that motivation is internal (intrinsic) (Sachau, 2007). These researchers included Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman, as well as Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Edward Deci, Barbara Frederickson, Edward Diener, Martin Seligman, David Myers, Richard Ryan, and C. R. Snyder (Sachau, 2007). These researchers concluded that organizations that provided the employees with psychological growth opportunities rather than financial incentives increased employees' intrinsic motivation leading to long-term satisfaction. In addition, a supporting study by Judge et al. (2005) concluded that psychologists believed that people who set personal goals and are positive are more satisfied with their lives and jobs than those who do not.

However, not all employees will use intrinsic measures to attain life satisfaction and balance. Some require assistance from the organization. In the new diverse family model, the traditional married couple with children represents only 20% of all households in the United States (Powell et al., 2018). Thus, organizations must create policies to fit a range of new model families, like single parents and double-income couples with no children. Organizations are required to develop policies to fit diverse employee backgrounds. Single parents are often ignored. For example, both Powell and Greenhaus recognized biases in their work with organizations regarding the family needs of single people and believe that organizations need to focus on diverse family models because family-friendly policies can play a role in attracting and retaining a broader range of employees (Powell et al., 2018).

Social Exchange Theory

Homans (1958) described social behavior of exchange between individuals or between an individual and institutions as the “the oldest of theories of social behavior” (p. 606). This exchange represents what employees give and give up in return for wages. As Homans (1958) further described, our trading behavior in society is:

an exchange of goods, material goods but also nonmaterial ones, such as the symbols of approval or prestige. Persons that give much to others try to get much from them, and persons that get much from others are under pressure to give much to them. This process of influence tends to work out at equilibrium to a balance in the exchanges. . . . Of all our many “approaches” to social behavior, the one that sees it as an economy is the most neglected, and yet it is the one we use every moment of our lives. (p. 606)

Emerson (1976) later described social exchange as “not a theory, but a frame of reference that takes the movement of valuable things (resources) through the social process as its focus”

(p. 359). The exchange is based on charge and value. According to Emerson, the replenishment of the resource is based on a wanted or valued return, which is called reinforcement (by a psychologist) or exchange (by an economist) (Emerson, 1976). The social-exchange relationship mimics the employee/employer relationship.

The social-exchange theory is “an analytical scheme for revealing the underlying dynamics of social transactions between individuals as they grow from infancy into early adulthood and beyond. . . . Such a theory seeks to explain (a) why people act as they do during social encounters and (b) why such behavior changes with the passing years” (Thomas & Idling, 2011, p. 18). The four components of the evolution of social exchange skills as developed by Thomas and Idling (2011) are shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2

Four Components of the Evolution of Social Exchange Skills

Component	Related Question
Human Needs	What are the sources of people’s motivation to engage in social exchanges?
Culture	What are the principal sources of the rules people adopt to guide how they will act during social exchanges?
Stairways of Development	What sort of stairways or ladders of social-exchange skill development do people ascend from birth through adulthood?
Issues and Beliefs	What beliefs about appropriate social-exchange practices result from the development process and affect people’s behavior during exchanges?

According to Thomas & Idling (2011), there are three instigators of all human behavior: needs, drives, or goals. The need is seen as a void to fill to have equilibrium. The force pushing a person into action is called a driver. Finally, an object or action known as the goal satisfies the need or driver (Thomas & Idling, 2011). Maslow (1943) described human needs in a hierarchy

based on a five-level pyramid. The base represents the physiological need for survival, followed by safety and security, then belongingness and love, the need for esteem, and the top is personal fulfillment. Maslow believed that one must meet the basic survival needs before moving up to higher levels of need. Once the needs at one level are met, then movement to higher levels can occur (Maslow, 1943). Meeting the needs at the survival level ensures survival but reaching fulfillment requires going beyond satisfaction to prosperity (Thomas & Iding, 2011). Thus, the needs that drive social exchange are impelled by behavior seeking to fulfill a need. Overall, the major focus is on the importance of psychological benefits as well as survival.

The final focus is the basic human needs, which includes mental health and emotional well-being (Thomas & Iding, 2011). They include: “a) give and receive attention, b) attend to the mind/body connection, c) pursue goals, d) adopt a meaningful mission beyond oneself, e) be creative, f) feel understood and valued, and g) feel in control” (Thomas & Iding, 2011, p. 40). Even though our fundamental need is for survival, humans will still sacrifice their own survival and safety for the safety of others.

In summary, according to the literature in this category, everyone has needs that must be met, which requires some type of personal support system to assist them with achieving greater balance between work and life. Social exchange interactions are used to describe employee motivation and positive behavior toward the organization (Settoon et al., 1996). According to Settoon et al. (1996), if an organization has quality relationships with employees, the employees will be obligated to the organization, thereby meeting each other’s needs.

Organizational Policies, Personal Support Systems, and Work-Life Balance

Using the literature, I will review the evolution of organizational policies and personal support systems and the impact on perceived satisfaction of work-life balance. This progression

will show how the origin and development of organizational policies and personal support systems is influenced by ongoing research. I will also review the constructs of organizational policies and personal support systems. Finally, I will trace the origin of the organizational policies to their evolutionary position today.

Organizational Policies

There is a relationship between organizational support and work-life balance. In the literature, policies helping families balance their work and life are called family-friendly or family-responsive policies (Lazar et al., 2010). Organizations with family-friendly policies tend to benefit from the employee having a more significant commitment to the company. A family-friendly organization develops policies supporting the family, promoting physical and emotional well-being. In an organization with family-friendly policies, an employee is more likely to have a higher work-life balance. The most common organizational policies fit into three broad types: flexible work options, specific leave policies, and dependent care benefits (McDonald & Bradley, 2005). The purpose of the three areas is to minimize the conflict between work and nonwork duties and responsibilities. These policies represent the greatest need and would meet most individuals' requirements providing them with a work-family balance.

When employees are emotionally connected to an organization, they are more willing to align their goals with the organization's goals, and in so doing, become more devoted and loyal, increasing organizational commitment (Rhoades et al., 2001). The following theories will help explain this relationship, including organizational support theory, which examines the employees' emotional commitment to the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). A study of perceived organizational support by Eisenberger et al. (1986) shows evidence that if employees believe the organization values them and cares about their well-being, there is a reduction in

absenteeism and turnover. The Social Exchange Theory also supports this result. The Social Exchange Theory unravels the complexity of the relationship in work and family while explaining the relationship between the employees and organizations. As discussed earlier, it supports “the social exchange view that employees’ commitment to the organization is strongly influenced by their perception of the organization’s commitment to them” (Eisenberger et al., 1986, p. 500). Therefore, it allows us to understand how organizational policies and team resources can lead to positive organizational benefits and improve work-family conflicts. This literature leads to my first two hypotheses, which are as follows:

H1: WLB HR policies are positively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.

H2: Workplace support systems (team resources) are positively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.

Organizational Culture

After the Civil War, industrial production in America began to flourish. John Green (2013) describes economic growth through the railroad’s industrial development, which increased efficiency and productivity. However, the invisible partners—the workers—were often not treated with the best of care. Thus, he continues, unions were developed in the 1870s to protect workers’ interests. During this time, America was becoming more economically prosperous but not more equitable. The new industries developed organizational cultures that became toxic. As a result, unions were one of the first organized structures to require organizational policies for the workers.

Today, as a result of legislation, organizations must be equitable, allowing employees to work in an equal opportunity environment (McDonald & Bradley, 2005). Researchers have

evaluated whether “work-life balance initiatives and practices can be considered as strategic human resource management decisions that can translate into improved individual and organization performance” (Lazar et al., 2010, p. 201). The results demonstrate that “organizations that offered more extensive bundles of work-life balance practices had higher ratings on a measure of organizational performance obtained from senior HR directors on such dimensions as being able to attract essential employees, the quality of relations between management and employees, and product quality” (Lazar et al., p. 209). Furthermore, work-life conflict leads to hazards to the organization by increasing loss due to absenteeism, turnover rates, low productivity, and poor retention (Lazar et al., 2010). Work-life balance practices must be established to change the organizational culture to reduce the related hazards. However, despite evidence to the contrary, organizations still see work-life policies as benefiting the employee, not organizational performance.

Another factor affecting organizational commitment is workload. The workload is defined as measuring the difficulty of an individual’s work while focusing on its quantity and quality (Bowling et al., 2015). I used a meta-analysis by Bowling et al. (2015) to describe workload. Due to the time of the meta-analysis by Bowling et al. (2015), there were no primary studies to give usable variables. Thus, the concepts are based on correlations and consequences of workload. They addressed social support from supervisors and coworkers, role conflict, and work-family conflict as three of the six potential workload correlations. The study hypothesized that social support from supervisors and coworkers would create less workload (Bowling et al., 2015). Employees expected their workload to be less if the supervisor and coworkers supported them. Social support may be in the form of emotional, informational, and tangible instruments leading to a reduced workload (Bowling et al., 2015).

Workload directly impacts the work-family and family-work conflict. This study will examine the work-family and family-work conflict and their direct supporting systems: organization-employee, employee-coworkers, and family. Using the theoretical approach, I will examine employees' interactions with managers and coworkers as well as investigate the impact of work-family conflict and family-work conflict. I will also use the spillover theory to analyze how the organizational policies spill over, causing an impact on work-family conflict and family-work conflict.

Many organizational theories are used to help managers create family-friendly work environments. However, one of the most crucial factors in addition to theory is organizational culture. Culture is not tangible but is visible in the interactions between managers and employees, and stems from the organization's core values. Organizational culture can influence how policies are developed and enforced and whether or not they apply equally to all segments of the workforce. Leaders should be aware of their organizational culture and be ready to provide support in areas where it is negative or weak. Having beneficial policies is important because they can affect work-family conflict and influence behaviors such as absenteeism, turnover, and organization commitment (Adams & Jex, 1999). Thus, leaders must model the company's core values for the organizational culture to be formalized and maintained throughout the organization.

Spillover Theory

In the 1980s, Graham Staines (1980) was one of the first researchers to report findings leading to the spillover theory. Staines (1980) concluded that experiences at work could spill over to the home environment. The activities engaged in at work create positive correlations between work and nonwork life activities. Later research by Sok et al. (2014) described spillover

as “transcending the physical and temporal boundaries of the workplace and the home domain” (p. 458). Sanz-Vergel and Rodríguez-Muñoz (2013) described spillover as a carryover of positive or negative attributes, such as attitudes or experiences, from work to home. Using the spillover theory in this study has helped me explain family interactions and behaviors that contribute to work-life balance and job satisfaction.

Spillover happens when an impact from the work environment is transferred to the family, and also works in the opposite direction. Psychological spillover impedes performance in one domain due to actions in another, as in the case of family responsibilities conflicting with work (Voydanoff, 2004). The spillover theory is frequently used to analyze work-family balance and job satisfaction. The theory implies that employees with favorable, satisfying jobs will have higher satisfaction due to the spillover effect. According to Williams and Alliger (1994), spillover can also have an emotional impact on the family. For example, if the job is stressful, it can cause the employee’s family to be deprived of positive interactions; conversely, dull jobs can cause the employee to be listless. Sanz-Vergel and Rodríguez-Muñoz (2013) state that there is a daily crossover of physical strength, emotional energy, and cognitive liveliness between work and family life caused by spillover. Conversely, negative spillover can have distressing effects on employees and can also have a detrimental impact on the organization’s bottom line (Lazar et al., 2010). Types of negative transfer can include interpersonal withdrawal, emotional arousal, and tiredness (Voydanoff, 2004).

Spillover can also be positive. Positive spillover occurs when resources generated in one domain are transferred to another, causing improvement in the domain. Examples would be when improvements in home life enable greater contributions at work, or when improved workplace compensation generates resources that relieve economic stress at home. The resource allows

improvement in skills or activities, providing support for everyone associated with the domain (Voydanoff, 2004). This improves both work-life balance and job satisfaction by “increasing the competence and capacities of individuals to perform in other domains” (Voydanoff, 2004, p. 4). Another example of enhancement can be seen when interpersonal communication skills developed and refined at work are used at home or outside of work to create positive interchanges. This example of capacity building demonstrates the intrinsic rewards carried over from work to home through positive spillover, which may be accompanied by psychological benefits such as personality enrichment, motivation, and self-esteem (Voydanoff, 2004).

Work-family interface. The spillover theory aligns with work-family interface, which Jeff Greenhaus defines as “interdependencies between the work and family domains” (Powell et al., 2018, p. 99). Examining work-family interface gives us a view into how family lives are enriched or constrained by work (Powell et al., 2018). In this case, enriching means that resources from family involvement may help others function better and create positive emotions at work. Thus, organizational support will influence perceived job satisfaction, which, through the spillover effect, will affect the satisfaction of the family (Ferguson et al., 2015). On the other hand, the family’s demands and stressors may interrupt a person’s ability to function at work or inhibit positive emotions at work (Powell et al., 2018).

Time for self-care. Powell et al. (2018) believe the interface between work and life can be shaped to provide and balance time for personal needs and self-care. The process for shaping depends on the focus; meeting the needs of one’s family requires individual shaping while shaping from an organizational perspective is more complex, requiring consideration of “the policies, practices, organizational culture and forms of support that help employees have a satisfactory work-family interface and can help employees who are interested in having such an

interface” (Powell et al., 2018, p. 99). Workplace shaping will spill over to the home or nonwork environment, entering the personal domain, where it is met by the personal support systems that help meet the nonwork needs of the employee. These support systems can include the presence of family, friends, or others who can help meet personal needs. Self-care also includes the ability to devote the time needed for personal interests, rest, and health.

Recent research on the importance of self-care for professionals includes studies by Goodman (2012), focusing on physicians; Dorociak et al. (2017), studying psychologists; and Chittenden and Ritchie (2011), who studied professionals in general. Each of these studies concluded that self-care was an essential component of work-life balance and had a demonstrably positive impact on the working professional. Of special interest is the study by Picton (2021) that reached the same conclusion, but focused on medical students who, like many of the professional women in this study’s sample, work in a culture of self-sacrifice.

This literature led to my next two hypotheses:

H3: Personal support systems are positively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.

H4: Time for self (self-care) is positively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.

Work-Home Interference

Spillover theory is closely related to the work-home interference approach researched by Voydanoff (2004). It is described as a dual-process model by Bakker and Geurts (2003). They found that job demands such as workload and emotional investment added to employee fatigue and led to negative work-home interference (Voydanoff, 2004). On the other hand, the presence of job resources (autonomy, possibilities for development, and performance feedback) resulted in positive work-home interaction (Demerouti & Geurts, 2004).

According to Voydanoff (2004), family support policies and work-family organizational support are negatively related to work-family conflict. Their results found that the policies supported enablement, not family conflict (Voydanoff, 2004). Additionally, Dilworth (2004) reported that married women were more likely to report negative family-to-work spillover, as Sandberg et al. (2012) cited. The increase in negative spillover can be attributed to women being the primary caretaker of small children. However, Sandberg et al. (2012) concluded that there were very few gender differences when comparing marital distress and spillover.

Work-Family Conflict/Family-Work Conflict

Similar to work-home interference, work-family conflict comes from the imbalance between work and family demands (Williams & Alliger, 1994). It is defined as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect” (Amstad et al., 2011, p. 151). Work-family conflict can be bidirectional; work can conflict with the family, and the family can conflict with work. This conflict goes beyond interference and has been cited as a cause of mental strain on individuals and married couples.

A study by Wortman et al. (1991) on the levels of attention required by young children confirms that they place high demands on the time of professional woman (the moms). Early studies in the 1990s reported that women were delaying having children until they had reached their educational goals (Wortman et al., 1991). Because women with young children are one of the largest growing segments of the workforce, it is essential to develop policies to support their work-life balance to enable women with young children to balance work and family. A frequent problem for couples with children is their inability or unwillingness to share caretaking roles equally, which can lead to conflict (Wortman et al., 1991).

In addition to home care problems, role strain created by job pressure or conflict from work is commonly experienced by families (Wortman et al., 1991). Williams and Alliger (1994) reported that role strain could lead to psychological distress. However, one limitation of their research was their difficulty aggregating their measurements of stress, which is present daily but could not be collected daily (Williams & Alliger, 1994). Another limitation was the lack of research on the day-to-day handling of multiple roles (Williams & Alliger, 1994). This research is important because the evidence in the study on role stressors and immediate mood reported that the employed parents who juggled multiple roles were subject to role strain, which influenced their mood state in all roles (Williams & Alliger, 1994). As a result, conflict arises when the attempt to balance one role is interrupted by another role's demands. The disruption is often due to limited psychological, physical, and temporal resources, causing family and work goals to be compromised (William & Alliger, 1994).

A study by Hill et al. (2001) shows the positive influence of perceived job flexibility on work and family life. Their study suggested that because flexibility in family processes reduced potential family stress, flexibility in work processes can also reduce stress in work and family (Hill et al., 2001). The study's data and conclusions were supported by Rojo et al. (2016) who, together with Hill et al. (2001) concluded that organizational practices giving more flexibility to the employee would have minimum cost but provide considerable benefits to both the employee and organization.

Given the foregoing literature on work-family conflict, I have developed the following two hypotheses:

- H5:** Work-family conflict is negatively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.
- H6:** Family-work conflict is negatively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.

Literature Synthesis

The purpose of this literature review has been to examine the common themes evident in the literature on organizational policies and workplace support system, personal support systems and time for self, work-family conflict, family-work conflict, and the perceived satisfaction of work-life balance. The review included a reflection of past and current literature focusing on developing theories and policies supporting work-life balance concepts. As a result of the analysis of the literature, my hypotheses evolved and became clearer.

As can be seen from the literature presented in this chapter, families are dependent on organizations to be responsive and accountable for making family-friendly policies meeting their diverse needs. According to Powell and Greenhaus (2017), an ideal employee is not a person who is identified by their work alone. Families are diverse, and the paradigm of an ideal employee is outdated. Thus, organizational policies must conform to changing times for employees to meet the needs of their families. If employees are aware of organizational policies through supervisor support, there will be an increase in work-life balance. The organization needs to understand the segment of the population for which the policies are being developed and, as mentioned before, the employee population is becoming more diverse. This variety in the workforce means that policies may need to be specifically tailored to fit the needs of multiple subgroups to create more balance in work and life. For example, the aging workforce's needs are vastly different from those of younger employees, demonstrating the need for variety and precision in the development and articulation of each policy.

One consistent theme in the literature was balance, which is the foundation of the work-life balance concept. Without it, the workforce may experience overload or stress, with negative outcomes for both employee and employer. In this literature review, I used the theoretical

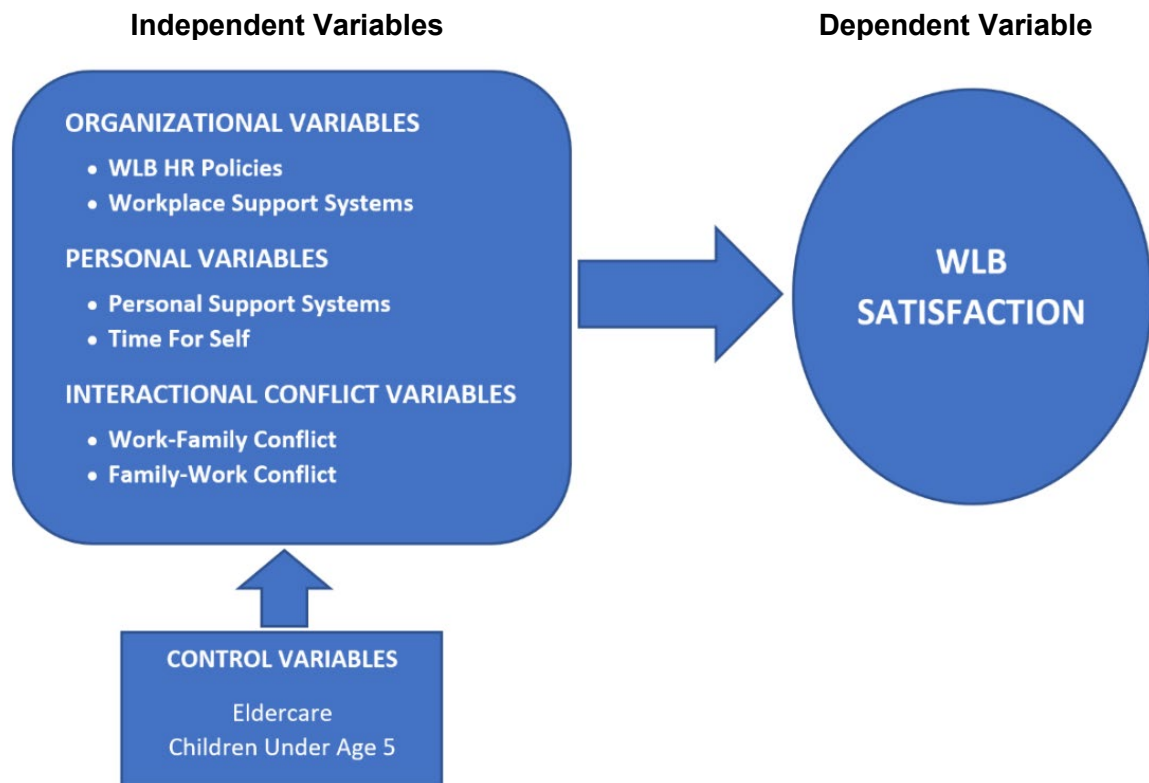
framework to evaluate the concepts of organizational policies and support systems as well as the influence of work-family conflict and family work-conflict. Employees are not islands. Their life outside of work is affected positively or negatively by work and organizational policies. This was shown by the spillover theory as well as the Social Exchange Theory. Thus, employees must have organizational support for their families to be balanced. Employees can perceive satisfaction with work and life if their roles are balanced. If employees work in an environment with an effective organizational culture, they will have a higher work-life balance and a positive spillover. Organizations play a crucial role in providing support and creating family-friendly policies that meet the needs of their diverse workforce. Blanket policies are no longer acceptable because families no longer fit the traditional employee model.

Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework of my study, showing satisfaction with work-life balance as my dependent variable. As the evidence from the literature shows, there are three significant areas that affect work-life balance satisfaction: organizational policies, personal support systems, and interactional conflict, such as work-family conflict and family-work conflict. These three categories contain the six independent variables in my study. Demographic variables, such as family responsibilities, also affect the balance. Demographic variables, which act as control variables in this research, are eldercare, and the presence in the home of children under the age of 5, because these factors can generate high dependency, possibly causing stress. In addition, the control variables can be multidirectional in that they can enhance or reduce perceived satisfaction (Greenhaus et al., 2003).

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework With Variables Used in This Study



Organizational policies, especially flexible scheduling and teleworking, impact the perceived satisfaction of work-life balance of employees positively by providing them the flexibility to manage multiple priorities. Policies allowing a parent or eldercare giver to work from home or change their schedule as needed would lead to higher satisfaction of work-life balance (Liechty & Anderson, 2007). Strong workplace support systems and culture also enable work-life balance for employees (Clarke et al., 2004; Kalliath & Brough, 2008). Research shows that personal variables, such as support systems and time for self are important in achieving work-life balance (Chittenden & Ritchie, 2011; Goodman, 2012; Seierstad & Kirton, 2015). Interactional conflict variables, such as work-family conflict (Casper et al., 2018) and family-work conflict (Casper et al., 2018) are predicted to negatively affect WLB satisfaction.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have reviewed literature that explained how the changes in the family structure, the movement of women into the workforce, and the unfair treatment of workers were major catalysts for focusing on work-life balance. This literature review also examined how important organizational policies and support systems are for families to balance work and life, and introduced the six hypotheses of my study. Chapter 3 will present the methodology I used to examine the hypotheses developed based on the literature in this review. Chapters 4 and 5 will present my quantitative and qualitative analysis, and Chapter 6 will provide conclusions and implications for practice and future research.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter begins with an overview of the study's two-phased research design to provide a clear understanding of the study's organization, structure, and purpose. I then provide a brief description of the participants and why they were chosen; discuss my variables and measurement model; describe the data collection methods, tools, and analytical procedures used; and methods to ensure validity and reliability, set boundaries, and ensure trustworthiness.

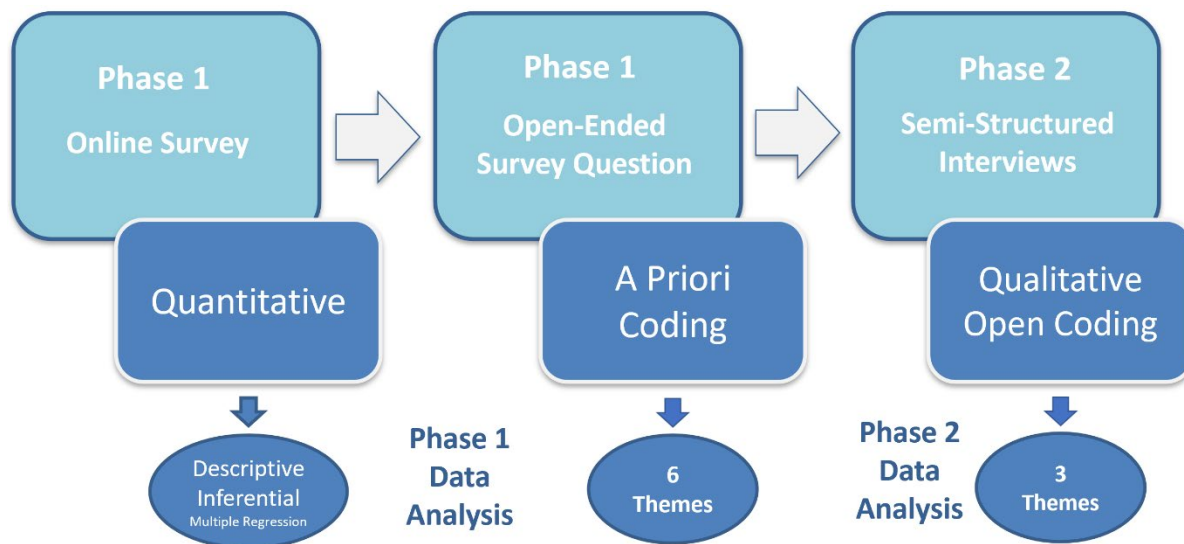
Research Design

My study uses a mixed-methods design in two phases. As shown in Figure 2, Phase 1 consisted of a cross-sectional online survey with closed and open-ended questions. I chose this method because an online survey allows a broader sample size and helps collect data in a brief period in a manageable way. Another benefit was that it made organizing and analyzing the data faster and more precise by collecting and processing it using proven online survey technology. The survey was sent electronically to participating Mid-Atlantic school districts, Hood College faculty and staff, and my Delta Sigma Sorority sisters and LinkedIn contacts. Respondents were given a three-week period to respond. Using this instrument, I gathered data from employees working in professional settings. The demographic questions asked at the beginning of the questionnaire helped disaggregate the data for analytic purposes. I used the survey to determine how professional women perceive their work-life balance as influenced by organizational policies and personal support systems, and how they perceived the interactional conflict between the work and home life domains.

Phase 2 of my study was qualitative, using semi-structured interviews. The information from each interview was transcribed, coded, and analyzed to find underlying themes in the data. The interview process allowed the participants to share their experiences openly beyond the

Figure 2

Research Design: Two Phases



questionnaire and to explore issues and ideas adjacent to the topic. According to Weiss (1994), the qualitative researcher's concern is the participant's perception of what happened and how it made them feel instead of the event's reality. In light of Weiss's (1994) view, using qualitative analysis in Phase 2, I was able to obtain these perceptions and beliefs directly from participants, analyze them, and derive key themes from their contributions.

Participants

My sampling method used a non-probability, convenience sample. Participants were invited via an online invitation. Using my professional and personal networks, I randomly selected approximately 420 participants to receive email online surveys for the quantitative section. Using my various networks, I was able to gain access to a broad range of individuals who represented great diversity of industries and walks of life. For example, my sample included participants who were in professions that ranged from education, banking, medicine, and marketing, and included small business owners, a minister, and consultants. In the survey,

participants could volunteer for the interview. As a result, eight professional women who had taken the survey volunteered to be interviewed and six interviews were conducted. One was eliminated because of schedule conflicts, and another because of a death in the family.

Questions in the survey helped me determine the participants' demographic status. The participants were employed as professionals and nonprofessionals. I collected data from males as well as females. However, my specific focus was on professional women and, therefore, male respondents were ultimately excluded from analysis. Using the online system made it easier to send out the 420 requests for participation. Because the return rate for surveys is frequently low, my goal was to get a high enough participation rate to produce an acceptable effect size in my quantitative analysis.

Ethics Principles Guiding This Research

The National Commission codified principles and guidelines for the protection of human subjects in research for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research, which produced the Belmont Report in 1979 (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1979). Those principles guide government-funded institutional research today and include values such as respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. All parties involved in this research project at Hood College adhered to these values as guiding principles.

Respect for Persons

Respect for persons is a principle of research ethics involving human subjects and is intended to ensure their ability to act independently and in their own interests during the research effort. The online survey methodology was designed to ensure that respondents could provide autonomous, non-coerced responses. The invitational email and the survey's opening page discussed informed consent, and respondents were required to provide their agreement by

clicking an OK button to indicate consent before beginning the survey. There was no intentional deception in the survey. The research purposes were made clear on the opening page of the questionnaire. The closing page included my contact information as the researcher at Hood College to answer questions before, during, or after the survey. Respondents were also able to express opinions by email if they chose.

Beneficence

Issues of potential harm to respondents were analyzed during the survey construction period. As the survey developer and a frequent survey respondent, I believe that there was an extremely low potential for harm from this survey. I developed the survey questions with sensitivity to race, age, gender, and potential for causing emotional discomfort, and included opt-out options.

The survey's invitational email to potential respondents provided information about the study's institutional review board process and gave information relating to informed consent. The survey's opening page explained these protections, including anonymity. It stated that by clicking the "OK" button on that page, the respondent consented to participate in the study. Respondents were not able to proceed to the first page of questions without clicking the OK button and giving their consent. Respondents were able to exit the survey at any point without completing it.

Justice

This survey was designed not to overburden any already overburdened or disadvantaged group. The language was easy to understand, and examples were drawn from familiar workplace scenarios. In addition, questions could be skipped, or "no response" could be checked if discomfort was felt. SurveyMonkey allowed respondents to translate the survey into multiple languages, should that be beneficial.

Confidentiality

The survey instrument was anonymous. I did not collect any personally identifiable information, such as the respondent's name or email address, so there was no possibility of associating an individual with the survey data unless the individual self-disclosed to others or me that he or she participated. Respondents had the option to indicate that they would be willing to participate in follow-on interviews and provide their email address if they so elected. The confidentiality of the study's data was maintained and not disclosed beyond the researcher and the researcher's doctoral committee.

Risks and Benefits to Survey Respondents

My survey was designed and reviewed to ensure that respondents experienced minimal risk as they completed the questionnaire. General risks of completing a computer survey may include having responses viewed on-screen or electronically by a third party. Because some organizations monitor and collect employees' emails, respondents were encouraged to complete the survey at home using a personal email account.

In the invitational email, I encouraged respondents to forward the survey link to their home email address and take the survey on their home computer to prevent physical or electronic observation in the workplace. Because the survey was distributed during the COVID-19 pandemic, participants were most likely working from home during school and workplace shutdowns. These protections were put in place so that respondents felt greater freedom to reveal actual perceptions without fear of workplace consequences.

Regarding benefits of the survey to participants, some respondents may have considered it beneficial to have an opportunity to express their views on professional topics such as workplace conditions and issues of work-life balance that they had not had an opportunity to

comment on before. Some may have considered it beneficial to contribute to a greater awareness of the work-life balance issue and help to establish more protective workplace policies. I offered to provide access to the completed survey results to participants.

As an inducement to take the survey, I provided an opportunity for respondents to participate in a raffle for a Starbucks gift card. If they chose to participate, respondents provided an email address to enter the drawing and received notification if they won.

Variables and Measurement Model

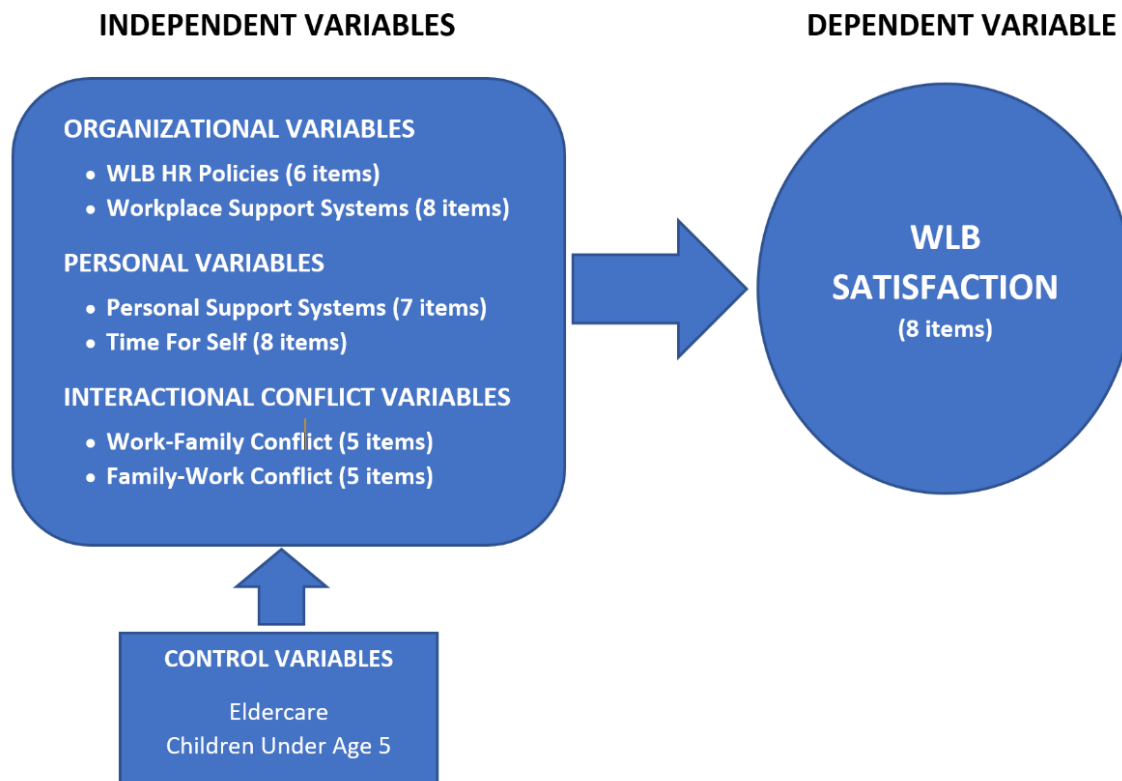
Figure 3 shows my measurement model, including my independent, dependent, and control variables used to test my six hypotheses, and the number of measurement items associated with each variable. My dependent variable (DV) is the perceived satisfaction of work-life balance, measured using an 8-item scale.

The independent variables (IV) are: WLB HR policies (6 items); workplace support systems (8 items); personal support systems (7 items); time for self (8 items); work-family conflict (5 items); and family-work conflict (5 items).

The two control variables are eldercare responsibilities, including the presence in the home of elderly parents or the need to provide for their care, and the presence in the home of small children under the age of 5 years.

Figure 3

Measurement Model



Scale Development

To test my six hypotheses, I began with a WLB satisfaction scale that has been verified and used in multiple studies. Rincy and Panchanatham (2010) developed a “42 items four factor instrument for measuring the WLB of employees working in the service sector. The data needed for the development of the scale was collected from 375 employees working in the various categories of service sector. Kaiser-Meyer Olkin test and Bartlett’s test were conducted to check the sampling adequacy and sphericity of the data and the dimensions (factors) were resolved through factor analysis. The WLB measurement scale was found to be having high reliability and validity with dependable Cronbach alpha values” (p. 50). Items from this instrument became my dependent variable. I then developed six IV scales designed to measure direction and magnitude

of different dimensions in the WLB scale. Table 3.1 provides my variables, the number of items in each scale, and the associated statistical tests.

To develop these six IV scales, I used a questionnaire from Rincy and Panchanatham (2010) that consisted of 47 items and used a seven-point Likert-type scale. The first 10 items of their study measured intrusion of personal life into work have a Cronbach's alpha of 0.97. Questions 11 to 28 measured intrusion of work into personal life and had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.98. These two scales correlate directly with the family-work conflict and work-family conflict scales in my study, which used a 5-point Likert scale structure. The K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan Institute on Employment and Disability at Cornell University used a survey instrument measuring the work-life balance satisfaction and sustainable employment by asking questions

Table 3.1

Study Variables, Measures, and Statistical Tests

Variable	Data	Items	Units of measure	Statistical tests
Demographic	(see Note)		Nominal, ordinal, continuous	Descriptive
Perceived Satisfaction of WLB	Scale	8	Ordinal	Descriptive, correlation, regression
WLB HR Policies,	Scale	6	Ordinal	
Workplace Support Systems	Scale	8	Ordinal	
Personal Support Systems	Scale	7	Ordinal	
Time for Self	Scale	8	Ordinal	
Work–Family Conflict	Scale	5	Ordinal	Descriptive, correlation, regression
Family–Work Conflict	Scale	5	Ordinal	

Note: Demographic measurement items are age, sex, relationship status, education, years of employment, position at job.

about policies, benefits, and self-care as well as how an employees dealt with life and work demands (Cook, 2014). I supplemented the Rincy and Panchanatham (2010) questionnaire with questions from the Cornell work-life balance survey, modified for use in this study.

Data Collection Instrument Development and Review

Data Collection Instruments

As shown in Figure 4, data collection was conducted using two tools and processes: a survey and interviews. The primary data collection instrument was an online survey questionnaire designed to capture data measuring perceptions related to each of my variables. I used SurveyMonkey™ to create the questionnaire, a copy of which is located in Appendix A. The survey was conducted anonymously, collecting no IP addresses or personal identifying information that could link responses to specific individuals. As shown in Table 3.2, the survey instrument contained an opening letter, five sections of Likert-type questions, two open-ended narrative questions, a section on demographics, and an opportunity to volunteer for a follow-up interview. The survey distribution email also included instructions and a letter of appreciation.

Figure 4

Data Collection Instruments and Processes

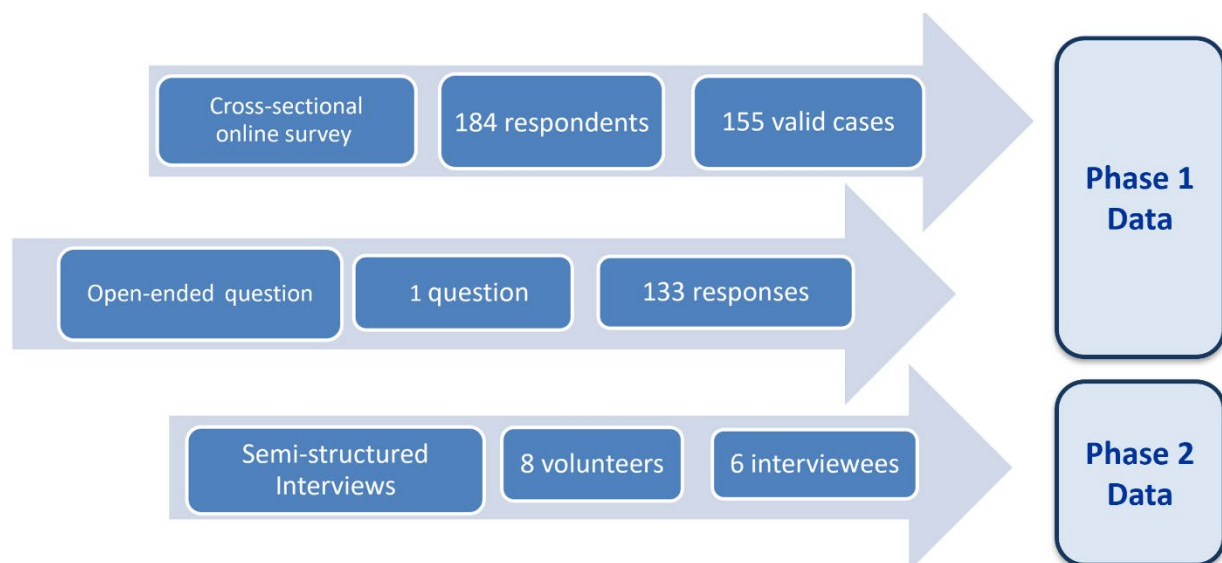


Table 3.2*WLB Satisfaction Survey Questionnaire Structure and Content Areas*

Questionnaire Section	Number of Questions <i>n</i> = 109
Welcome Letter	
1. Workplace Benefits, Policies, and Programs	
Flexible Schedule and Working Day Policies	7 + 3
Social Benefit Policies	10 + 3
Family Support Policies	5 + 3
Mobility Policies	4 + 3
Which benefit, policy, or program is most helpful to you?	1
Dissemination of WLB Policies	6
Workplace Support	11
2. Personal Support Systems	7
3. Conflict Between Work and Family Obligations	10
4. Workplace Experiences and Satisfaction	13
5. Self-Care	8
6. Demographics	14
Open-ended Question on COVID-19 (Q. 15)	1
Invitation to Participate in Interview	–

The questions in Section 1 were structured to determine whether specific workplace benefits, policies, and programs were available to the respondent and also if she had used them. The four policy subsections on flexible schedules (flexible days, shifts, hours), social benefits (medical/dental insurance, maternity leave, well-being programs), family support (daycare, adoption assistance, family cultural events), and mobility (teleworking), were each followed by three questions asking whether the workplace policies enabled the respondent to work better and find work-life balance, and whether the respondent was satisfied with the policies. Sections 2 through 6 were structured with 5-point Likert scale questions including the following response options: Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

I used questions from published questionnaires as a basis for my survey to ensure that questions were worded and sequenced in a way that had been professionally vetted and tested (Andres, 2012). As shown in Table 3.3, sources included questionnaires developed and vetted by Cook (2014), Matthews and Natarajan (2010, 2011), Rojo (2016), and the Society for Human Resource Management (2017). This approach added to internal validity because the questions had been proven to measure the desired constructs effectively. It also added to external validity by ensuring that my study results can be compared to results in the published sources.

Table 3.3

Published Sources of Survey Questions

Questionnaire Section	Published Sources
1. Workplace Benefits, Policies, and Programs	Cook (2014), Rojo (2016)
Flexible Schedule and Working Day Policies	Rojo (2016)
Social Benefit Policies	Rojo (2016)
Family Support Policies	Rojo (2016)
Mobility Policies	Rojo (2016)
Dissemination of WLB Policies	Rojo (2016)
2. Personal Support Systems	R. Matthews and P. Natarajan (2010 & 2011)
3. Conflict Between Work and Family Obligations	Boles, McMurrian, Netemeyer (1996)
4. Workplace Experiences and Satisfaction	Cook (2014)
5. Self-Care	Agha, Khan (2017)
6. Demographics	Society for Human Resource Management (2017)

Phase 2 data collection was conducted during six one-on-one interviews with participants who had taken the survey and volunteered to be interviewed. I used a set of guiding questions included in Appendix B. The questions for the interview came from the literature in Chapter 2 and were based on the same studies used for the survey shown in Table 3.3.

Pilot/Field Test

Before administering the survey, I conducted a pilot test to determine how well the survey questionnaire could be understood and to determine if there was any difficulty with language or length. I also field tested the questions I planned to use for the in-person interviews. The pilot/field test subjects were graduate business school students at Hood College and my colleagues in my doctoral program. The participants had no difficulty understanding the questions or completing the survey. I incorporated their feedback to improve the survey and interview questions.

Institutional Review Board

Because my research study involves human subjects, the pilot-tested questionnaire was submitted for approval to the Hood College Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB application included a copy of the survey questions, interview questions, confidentiality protections, and informed consent permission forms (Appendix C). Once approval was secured from the Hood College IRB and the Office of Shared Accountability in the participating Mid-Atlantic school district, I proceeded with the invitation process.

Data Collection Procedures

I distributed the survey to Mid-Atlantic school district administrators and non-administrators, Hood College faculty and staff, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority sisters, and LinkedIn contacts. The email contained an invitation, instructions, and a link to the SurveyMonkey questionnaire. My original sampling plan included canvassing the entire professional population in one Mid-Atlantic school district, but COVID restrictions and administrative delays resulted in my decision to sample a smaller segment of the district's personnel supplemented by individuals contacted through my personal networks.

Setting and Context

I anticipated that participants would take the survey in a professional setting such as school offices, classrooms, businesses, or at home via the Internet due to COVID-19. The one-on-one interview sessions were conducted in a manner permitted by the coronavirus epidemic, specifically via Internet meeting technology such as Zoom. I allowed the six interview participants to choose the interview meeting technology to ensure that they were comfortable with it. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participant confidentiality was maintained.

Data Analysis

Results of data analysis are presented in Chapters 4 and 5. This section describes the methodology used to prepare the data set, conduct data eligibility tests, run preliminary analysis, and conduct quantitative and qualitative testing. The data set was prepared for analysis by eliminating cases with incomplete responses (e.g., large sections of missing data), and cases that did not conform to the intended study population of professional women (e.g., respondents who were men). Next, I determined whether the data set conformed to minimum required characteristics by including one continuous dependent variable (DV) and more than two independent variables (IV) that are continuous or categorical. For this study, I am using 20 as the minimum number of cases per IV, as recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2019) when measuring a normally distributed DV. With six continuous IVs and one continuous DV, my sample size of 184 was large enough to meet these criteria.

Data Eligibility for Regression Analysis

Because I planned to analyze my data using standard multiple regression, I conducted tests to determine whether the data met the assumptions of eligibility for regression analysis. This process included conducting tests for multivariate normality (using a probability plot,

histogram, Q-Q plot, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov goodness of fit test); linearity (scatterplot); autocorrelation (Durbin-Watson test), homoscedasticity (scatterplot), absence of multicollinearity (correlation matrix, tolerance calculations and a variance inflation factor (VIF)), and independence of residuals (residual plot and Durbin-Watson test). These tests were performed to ensure that the data set was free of defects or internal conflicts that would prevent valid analysis. All tests were run prior to analysis to confirm that the required characteristics were present.

Preliminary Analysis

Preliminary data analysis was conducted using Pearson's correlation matrix. This test examined the relationship between the variables. The IVs were evaluated to ensure that there was no correlation of Pearson's r coefficient exceeding .7, which would indicate that two IVs may be measuring the same construct (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). Results are presented in Table 4.22 in Chapter 4.

Phase 1 Quantitative Tests Conducted

I conducted statistical analysis on my quantitative data using SPSS version 27. After the data were collected, I began by calculating the central tendency for continuous variables. The central tendency was analyzed by calculating the mean, with the standard deviation representing the average deviation from the mean (Salkind, 2017). To create descriptive statistics, I computed the mean, median, and standard deviations of the demographic information and individual question responses. Those results are presented in Chapter 4, Tables 4.1 through 4.11, and 4.15 through 4.21.

Inferential Statistics

For inferential statistics, the primary analytical tool was multiple regression. According to Pallant (2016), multiple regression is used to “explore the predictive ability of a set of

independent variables on the continuous dependent measures” (p. 108). In this way, I compared the predictive ability of my independent variables to determine their impact on my dependent variable, perceived satisfaction of work-life balance, and determined which IVs had the most significant impact. Quantitative results, including descriptive and inferential statistics, are presented in Chapter 4.

A Priori Content Analysis

Phase 1 included an a priori analysis of statements made in response to the survey’s open-ended Question 15: “How has the COVID-19 pandemic effected your work-life balance?” This question had a 500-word response limit. The narrative responses were downloaded from SurveyMonkey to SPSS and transferred to a Word document. Next, they were reviewed and coded for the presence of terms or content related to the same seven variables used in quantitative analysis. The results were then analyzed to determine if there was any alignment between the quantitative results and the results of the a priori analysis. Those results are presented in Chapter 4.

Phase 2 Qualitative Analysis

In Phase 2, my analysis examined the qualitative output produced by six participant interviews. Each of the six had taken the survey and volunteered to be interviewed. Interviews were recorded and transcriptions were produced using Rev.com and Otter.ai. Those transcripts were then pattern-coded for key words (Miles et al., 2014) that led to the identification of major themes. The interview protocol is included in Sok , and the process for conducting the analysis, along with the results, is provided in Chapter 5.

Validity and Reliability

Validity

The goal of this research was to provide construct validity, by ensuring that I measured the attitudes and perceptions I intended; internal validity, so that causality could be firmly linked to results; external validity, so that the findings of this study could be generalized to a larger population; and conclusion validity, by demonstrating a level of data and method quality that affirm the reasonableness of our conclusions. These aspects of validity were examined to ensure increased statistical power during analysis.

Construct Validity. To ensure construct validity, I used questions and scales from published articles, rewording them as needed to apply to organizational environments. I also used this approach for participant demographics, using the Society for Human Resource Management (2017) job satisfaction survey questions, used with thousands of respondents over many years. This approach has the advantage of using materials that have been well researched and adjusted over time while also providing a firm basis for comparison with articles in peer-reviewed literature.

Face Validity. As the survey developer, I was aware that the survey would be taken by individuals whose primary language is English. Therefore, I felt comfortable that most, if not all, should be able to respond to this survey if the questions were asked in clear, direct language that was easy to understand. This approach was further supported by including several questions from vetted, tested surveys such as the work-life balance survey, the personal support system survey from Cook (2014) and Rojo (2016) and the SHRM job satisfaction survey (2017), which were intended for broad population use. Also, because I had pilot-tested the survey, I had an accurate estimate of the time it took to complete and was able to present that length accurately, not

making it sound shorter than it was. In this way, when participant experiences matched what I had told them to expect, face validity was enhanced.

Content Validity. One potential threat to content validity was the compressed time frame of my study within my doctoral program. I ensured that there was adequate time to review, validate, and pilot test the survey questions so that they accurately measured the hypotheses.

Internal Validity. Random assignment to different versions of the survey was not possible with this study. However, to maximize internal validity, I constructed questions that asked for the same information in diverse ways in different areas in the survey. Opportunities were also provided for narrative responses, which were then coded. In this way, it was possible to compare paired question results to determine the level of consistency and whether the narrative responses provided any evidence of inconsistency with the quantitative responses. This approach was further supported by conducting one-on-one interviews with a non-random volunteer sample of participants to determine if any alignment existed between the quantitative and qualitative responses.

External Validity. Nonrandomization potentially limits external validity. By necessity, my study used a convenience sample; therefore, I developed measures to counter this external validity threat. Because replication counters threats to external validity, I included similar material in the online survey and one-on-one interviews.

Conclusion Validity. This validity aspect is important because, based on my study's outcomes, I recommended that future investments be made to develop and change public and private sector policies and design employee training programs to improve work-life balance. Therefore, I ensured that the study was well crafted by using reliable question sources, pilot-testing the survey, field-testing the interview questions, and by following the procedures outlined

by the Hood College IRB and the Office of Shared Accountability in the participating Mid-Atlantic school district. By designing and running a well-crafted study, I ensured that my results and conclusions carried the maximum conclusion validity and weight.

Reliability Challenges

I used Cronbach's alpha to determine data reliability (Cronbach, 1951; Peterson, 1994). I have established the desired minimum value for Cronbach's alpha as 0.7 for my study (DeVellis, 2016). With a focus on studies measuring employee satisfaction relevant to my study, Van Saane et al. (2003) offer several reliability challenges, which are listed here along with the steps I took to counter them.

Language. I constructed the survey using published questions that have proven to be easy to understand in prior surveys so that language was not a barrier.

Length. The survey was 15 minutes long and contained 109 questions. Participants could have given up and decided not to complete the survey or chosen to skip through the questions and not provide their most thoughtful responses. Because I could not use a random sample, I asked some questions in diverse ways throughout the survey to increase internal validity. To encourage participants to keep going, SurveyMonkey let the respondents know how close they were to the end.

Social Desirability Bias. Because my survey included questions on personal life situations and challenges, some respondents may have chosen to answer them in a less than truthful way, trying to give a "correct" answer rather than one that expresses their true beliefs (Fisher, 1993). As a result, survey outcomes may not have accurately reflected their opinions. To correct for this possibility, key questions were asked more than once in different sections of the

survey, using alternate and indirect phrasing (Fisher, 1993). I used reverse coding where appropriate during analysis to account for question format differences.

Confirmation Bias. The potential for this type of bias is always present, where the researcher experiences “unwitting selectivity in the acquisition and use of evidence” (Nickerson, 1998, p. 175), meaning that he or she asks questions in a way that confirms their preconceived ideas. Nickerson (1998) further notes that “confirmation connotes evidence that is perceived to support—to increase the credibility of—a hypothesis” (p. 176). The risk of confirmation bias existed in my study because I experienced work-life balance challenges. Measures taken to counter confirmation bias in this study were similar to those taken to counter researcher bias, namely, building the survey using questions selected from previously published sources rather than ones I developed which could contain my bias; conducting multiple reviews and pilot testing by individuals familiar with the field and unfamiliar with it; and addressing all validity and reliability concerns by using previously published questionnaires (Cohen, 1988; Rossi, 1990).

Nonresponse bias. According to Glen (2015), nonresponse bias can be described as a significant difference caused by a lack of completion of the respondents’ survey. When responses are incomplete or low, there is a possible threat to the quality of the data interpretation. Brad Fulton (2014) of Duke University identified variables most likely to generate nonresponse bias, including the informant’s race, nativity, educational level, and employment status. The study describes nonrespondents as most likely to be participants without a college education and with part-time employment who might not have the resources to complete the survey. The study concluded by describing strategies to enhance responses rate, such as using respondents who are stakeholders and using customized response strategies (Fulton, 2014).

To be able to draw conclusions about my target population and generalize my results, it was necessary to have a proper representation of all parts of the target population. Therefore, I countered the potential for nonresponse bias by aiming for a high response rate. Fulton (2014) blames an over-saturation of surveys today as another cause of the poor response. He said this could be decreased by using technological advances and incentives. Therefore, I used multiple enhancing strategies such as follow-up email reminders and incentives.

Researcher Positionality

As a professional woman who has experienced work-life balance challenges, I inevitably approached my research with preconceived ideas and biases. To counter those biases, I used well-tested tools and processes to collect my data and also used recognized statistical tests to analyze my data. This approach included using vetted questions that were well-rounded and had been tested for biased wording, as well as using SPSS to analyze the data and using multiple regression analysis as part of a robust inferential statistics analysis approach.

Boundaries

Understanding the work-life balance of everyone is important. However, women's roles and the treatment of women in the workplace have created an environment where factors causing an imbalance of work and life tend to, and often do, escalate. Therefore, this study includes only women, and is further bounded by focusing on professional women. My boundaries also include the time frame for my study, the number of people in my convenience sample, and my ability to find a diverse group in the convenience sample in terms of age, life experience, work-life balance, home life situations and responsibilities, and education level.

Trustworthiness

According to Maruyama et al. (2014), triangulation increases the credibility of the findings when multiple methods are used that produce the same results. My qualitative study consisted of six interviews. Trustworthiness was enhanced by recording and taking notes during the interviews. When complex questions are asked, or vague answers are given, I followed up with a more probing and descriptive question.

Conclusion

Using quantitative and qualitative methods to collect data on the perceived satisfaction of WLB created a view from multiple perspectives and ensured the availability of high quality data for analysis. The instrument I used was valid and reliable in order to determine the multilevel influencers of WLB. The information gained can help organizations develop effective programs to limit the negative crossover between the work and life domains.

In this chapter, I have reviewed the methodology I used to collect and analyze data for this study and the steps I took to ensure that the data were collected fairly, securely, and responsibly. I also discussed the methodology for analysis, including the tests I used to produce descriptive and inferential statistics and to code and analyze qualitative data. Chapter 4 will present the results of the first phase of the study, which was the survey. It generated quantitative results as well as an open-ended response, which was analyzed using an a priori content analysis. Chapter 5 will present the results of the second phase of my study—the interviews with six participants. Chapter 6 will present my conclusions, recommendations, implications, and limitations of the study. Chapter 6 will also propose workplace policy changes and topics for further study.

CHAPTER 4: SURVEY RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

This chapter is divided into eight sections. The first section presents information related to data preparation and case validation. Characteristics of the participants are presented in the second section. Descriptive statistics of the variables used in this study are given in the third section. This is followed by a section on preliminary statistical analysis and results of the assumptions of data eligibility testing for multiple regression. Results of the inferential statistics are presented next, which is followed by a summary of the hypotheses tests. The last section presents the responses to Question 15, which was the open-ended query on COVID-19.

Data Preparation and Case Validation

As a result of these solicitations, 184 people took the survey. SurveyMonkey reported a 91% completion rate. After examining the results, incomplete cases or cases with influential outliers were eliminated, resulting in 155 valid cases (84.2%). The first elimination from the data set were the three men, $184 - 3 = 181$. Then, 15 cases were eliminated due to extensive missing information, which included six or more questions with no responses. Finally, cases were eliminated after running Cook's Distance, which determined that they contained influential outliers. These steps reduced 184 responses to the 155 valid cases used for analysis.

Characteristics of Participants

Profile of a Typical Respondent

The typical respondent to my survey is a female working professional who is between 45 and 54 years old, is married, and currently has no small children at home or elder care responsibilities. She is well educated, having completed a master's degree. Our typical respondent works in the field of education in a government-funded public school in a district with more than 1,000 employees. She considers herself to be in intermediate or middle

management, meaning that she has some supervisory or management responsibilities for others in her organization. She typically has no time to devote to community service during the month.

Demographic Data

Demographic data on 155 survey responses are presented in this section.

Gender—Of 151 respondents answering this question, 148 (95.5%) reported their sex as female, 2 (1.3%) reported as male, 1 (0.6%) selected “Other.” Four study participants (2.6%) chose not to answer the question. Men were excluded from the study.

Age (155 responses)—responded to the survey, as illustrated in Table 4.1. Ages were calculated at the time of the survey in 2021. Respondents between 45 and 54 years old in 2021 comprised the largest group at 32.3%.

Table 4.1

Respondent Age

Age in 2021 (years)	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
18–24	3	1.9
25–34	15	9.7
35–44	25	16.1
45–54	50	32.3
55–64	39	25.2
65 and older	19	12.3
Answered	151	97.4
No answer	4	2.6
Total:	155	100.0

Education (151 responses)—As shown in Table 4.2, the survey respondents are a well-educated professional group. Eighty-four percent (83.8%) of respondents hold college degrees, including three (1.9%) associate degree (or technical school equivalent) recipients, 24 (15.5%) bachelor’s degree recipients, 87 (56.1%) master’s degree recipients, and 16 (10.3%) doctoral degree recipients. Twenty-one respondents (13.6%) reported education levels below college.

Table 4.2*Highest Education Level Achieved*

Education level	<i>n</i>	Percentage %
High school graduate	4	2.6
Attended college, no degree	17	11.0
Associate degree	3	1.9
Bachelor's degree	24	15.5
Master's degree or Juris Doctor	87	56.1
Doctoral degree	16	10.3
Answered	151	97.4
Not answered	4	2.6
Total:	155	100.0

Years of employment with current organization (151 responses)—When respondents were asked how many years, they had been employed in their organization these were the responses. Over 55% of the respondents worked more than a decade for their organization. Sixty-five (41.9%) of the respondents worked more than 15 years for their organization. Twenty-one (13.5%) of the respondents worked 10 to 15 years for their organizations. Thirty-six (23.2%) worked 4 to 10 years. The second lowest, 29 (18.7%), worked less than 4 years. Table 4.3 reflects the years of employment with their organization.

Table 4.3*Years of Employment With Current Organization*

Years	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Less than 4 years	29	18.7
4–10 years	36	23.2
10–15 years	21	13.5
More than 15 years	65	41.9
Answered	151	97.4
No answer	4	2.6
Total:	155	100.0

Number of young children at home (152 responses)—Table 4.4 reflects the number of children under 12 in the home. As reflected in this table, the majority of my respondents, 106 (68.4%), had zero children at home. Eighteen (11.6%) reported having one child at home. Twenty-four (15.5%) reported two children at home. The high number of respondents, 124 (80%), with one or zero children under the age of 12 may be due to the stage of life of the respondents.

Table 4.4

Children Under 12 at Home

Number of Children	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
0	106	68.4
1	18	11.6
2	24	15.5
3	2	1.3
4 or more	2	1.3
Answered	152	98.1
No answer	3	1.9
Total:	155	100.0

Caring for parents and/or In-laws at home (151 responses)—Thirteen (8.4%) of the respondents had parents or in-laws at home. The majority of the respondents (89%) did not have eldercare responsibilities. Table 4.5 reflects the presence of parents and/or in-laws in the home.

Table 4.5

Parents and/or In-Laws at Home

Response	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Yes	13	8.4
No	138	89.0
Answered	151	97.4
No answer	4	2.6
Total:	155	100.0

Relationship status of respondents (151 responses)—The relationship status in Table 4.6 revealed that most of the respondents, 98 (63.2%), were married, followed by 21 (13.5%) who were divorced, and 20 (12.9%) who were single, and had never married. There were seven (4.5%) unmarried respondents with a partner, and five (3.2%) respondents who preferred not to answer. More than half of the respondents (67%) were married or with a partner.

Table 4.6

Relationship Status

Status	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Single, never married	20	12.9
Married	98	63.2
Unmarried, with partner	7	4.5
Divorced	21	13.5
Prefer not to answer	5	3.2
Answered	151	97.4
No answer	4	2.6
Total:	155	100.0

Current job level (151 responses)—In the largest response category, 46 respondents (29.7%) self-identified as middle management, indicating that they were managers, supervisors, or directors, presumably with prominent levels of responsibilities. The next highest category (27.7%) was intermediate, indicating a lower level of autonomy. When aligned with responses to other questions, the information in Table 4.7 was useful in determining how much authority respondents have in establishing their work hours or otherwise controlling their work-life balance.

Table 4.7*Current Job Level*

Level	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Entry level	7	4.5
Intermediate	43	27.7
Middle management (e.g., manager, supervisor, director)	46	29.7
Senior management	21	13.5
Owner/executive/C-suite level	8	5.2
Other	26	16.8
Answered	151	97.4
No answer	4	2.6
Total:	155	100.0

Employment sector (150 responses)—The employment sector Table 4.8 reveals that the majority of the respondents 71 (49.7%) worked for a sector of the government. Private organization was the second largest sector with 36 (23.3%) respondents. Twenty (12.9%) worked for publicly traded corporations. Seventeen (11.0%) respondents worked for nonprofits. As can be seen, the largest sector of employment was the federal, state, county, and local government.

Table 4.8*Employment Sector*

Sector	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Private organization	36	23.2
Publicly traded corporation	20	12.9
Nonprofit	17	11.0
Government (federal, state, county, local)	71	49.7
Answered	150	96.8
No answer	5	3.2
Total:	155	100.0

Employment industries (152 responses)—Half of the survey respondents (78 respondents, 50.3%) were from the education industry. The education industry comprised primarily locations in Maryland, including two participating Mid-Atlantic school districts and

Hood College. Eighteen respondents (11.6%) worked in healthcare. Professional services and government were tied at 15 (9.7 %). Table 4.9 reflects the employment sector totals.

Table 4.9

Industry of Employment

Industry	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
Education	78	50.3
High technology	5	3.2
Manufacturing	2	1.3
Healthcare	18	11.6
Professional services	15	9.7
Government	15	9.7
Telecommunications	2	1.3
Other	17	11.0
Answered	152	98.1
No answer	3	1.9
Total:	155	100.0

Organizational size (152 responses)—The largest number of respondents (97, 62.6%) worked in organizations with 1,000 or more employees. The next highest category was organizations with 1 to 99 employees, with 27 respondents (17.4%), followed by the 100 to 499 category, with 32 respondents (13.5%). The organizations with 500 to 1,000 employees only received seven responses (4.5%). The information in Table 4.10 helped us understand that the size of the organization may have influenced how policies were established, leading to respondents' ability to control their work-life balance.

Table 4.10*Size of Organization*

Number of employees	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
1–99	27	17.4
100–499	21	13.5
500–1,000	7	4.5
1,000 or more	97	62.6
Answered	152	98.1
No answer	3	1.9
Total:	155	100.0

Monthly community service hours (152 responses)—Most of the respondents, 79 (50.9%), spent 1 to 20 hours in community service per month. However, 69 (44.5%) respondents spent zero hours in community service per month. Even more surprisingly, four respondents (2.6%) contributed 21 to more than 30 hours per month. Table 4.11 helped establish the level of commitment to the community via the number of hours donated beyond the workday.

Table 4.11*Number of Community Service Hours Contributed per Month*

Community Service Hours	<i>n</i>	Percentage (%)
None	69	44.5
1–10	63	40.6
11–20	16	10.3
21–30	2	1.3
More than 30	2	1.3
Answered	152	98.1
No answer	3	1.9
Total:	155	100.0

Descriptive Statistics: Variables Used in This Study

Variables used in this study are summarized in Table 4.12, indicating their relationship to my hypotheses, their function in inferential statistical analysis, and their location in my survey

questionnaire (Appendix A). The six independent variables can be grouped under three headings according to their impact on WLB satisfaction: organizational, personal, and interactional conflict. Descriptive statistics on each of this study's seven scale variables is presented later in this chapter.

Table 4.12

Variables Used in Statistical Analysis

Variable Name	Hypotheses	Variable Function	No. of Items	Survey Section ^a
WLB Satisfaction	H1–H6	Dependent	8	Sections 1, 4, and 7
Organizational				
WLB HR policies	H1	Independent	6	Section 6
Workplace support systems	H2	Independent	8	Section 7
Personal				
Personal support systems	H3	Independent	7	Section 2
Time for self	H4	Independent	8	Section 5
Interactional Conflict				
Work-family conflict	H5	Independent	5	Section 3A
Family-work conflict	H6	Independent	5	Section 3B

Note: ^aSpecific questions included in each variable are listed in Tables 4.16 through 4.21. Survey questionnaire is provided in Appendix A.

Please note that the control variables were not used in the regression model as the demographics of the participants were not what I had expected. My respondents were mostly older women who did not have significant childcare or eldercare responsibilities. After ruling out the effects of these controls, they were not used in the regression analysis.

The literature in Chapter 2 helped me create seven multi-item scales to measure the perceptions of professional women related to various aspects of work-life balance. This section presents the contents, descriptive statistics, and rationale for each of those seven scales, which functioned as six IVs and one DV during testing. Each of these variables was constructed using

Likert scale survey questions with ordinal response options (answers ranging from 1 to 5) treated as interval during analysis. The use of Likert scales follows standard practice in social science research (Creswell, 2012). In selecting questions to formulate scale items, I used vetted, published sources wherever possible to create scale items, to minimize researcher bias.

Tables 4.13 summarizes the descriptive statistics for scales used in this study. Table 4.13 presents the scales' Cronbach's alpha scores, which ranged from a low of .762 to a high of .949. All scale variables exceeded $\alpha = .701$, suggesting that they are internally consistent, adequately measure the variable constructs (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), and are considered sufficiently reliable for social science research (Gall et al., 2014). All scales were below .950, indicating general acceptability (DeVellis, 2016; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Table 4.13

Scale Variables: Reliability and Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Cronbach's alpha	Scale Items	Valid Frequency	Valid Percentage	Mean	Median	SD
WLB satisfaction	.813	8	137	88.4	3.44	3.38	.720
WLB HR policies	.912	6	149	96.1	2.50	2.50	.943
Workplace support systems	.835	8	148	95.5	3.59	3.63	.722
Personal support systems	.762	7	152	98.1	4.15	4.29	.840
Time for self	.941	8	148	95.5	3.06	3.00	.970
Work-life conflict	.949	5	153	98.7	3.06	3.20	1.092
Family-work conflict	.889	5	153	98.7	2.23	2.00	.823

Skewness and kurtosis values of the seven scales used in this study are presented in Table 4.14. Normal response distribution would produce skewness and kurtosis values of zero, with positive skewness indicating an accumulation of cases on the left (low values), and negative

skewness indicating a larger number of cases on the right (high values) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019, p. 68). In this sample, kurtosis statistic values range from -.414 (personal support systems) to +.641 (family-work conflict). Kurtosis values above zero indicate peaked distribution; values less than zero indicate flat curves. In this sample, kurtosis values range from -.996 (work-family conflict) to +.226 (family-work conflict). However, the impact of both skewness and kurtosis is “not as important as its actual size . . . and visual appearance of the distribution” (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019, p. 70).

Table 4.14

Scale Variables: Skewness and Kurtosis Values

Scale Name	Skewness Statistic	Skewness Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Kurtosis Std. Error
WLB satisfaction	-.116	.207	-.629	.411
WLB HR policies	.297	.199	-.629	.395
Workplace support systems	-.178	.199	.054	.396
Personal support systems	-.414	.197	-.182	.391
Time for self	.072	.199	-.817	.396
Work-family conflict	-.047	.196	-.996	.390
Family-work conflict	.641	.196	.226	.390

Scale Question Responses

Tables 4.15 through 4.21 provide results for each survey question within this study’s seven scales, beginning with the WLB satisfaction scale, which functions as my dependent variable in inferential statistical analysis. Within each scale table, the number of respondents (*n*) is identified for the question and in each Likert response category. Response percentages are provided, calculated on the number of respondents (*n*) answering each question. Response percentages are rounded and may not sum to 100%. The mean, median, and standard deviation are also provided for each question.

We asked the participants to refer to the policies and programs in the previous question and indicate their agreement about the availability of the policies in their organization. The underlying conditions of the WLB policies such as family support policies, social benefit policies, and flexible schedule and working day policies are represented in three tables in Appendix F, which indicate whether or not participants believed the policies were available in their workplaces. The tables show which policies were available and provide a strong indication of areas where policies can be improved.

Table 4.15 reveals patterns of satisfaction and dissatisfaction in the sample. Respondents felt most strongly that they were able to give immediate attention to personal or family needs, recording an 87.7% positive (somewhat agree/strongly agree) response. Similarly, they provided the second highest response, 61.5% positive, describing their satisfaction with being able to separate their personal and family lives. To the important question about their satisfaction with their work-life balance, the responses were more mixed: 45% positive, 35.8% negative, and 19.2% neutral.

Regarding workplace policies, 44.3% felt that their organization's flexible schedule policies helped them find WLB, but 27.4% were negative and 28.3% were neutral. A slightly lower percentage of those who answered the question on social benefit policies, 42.1%, felt that they were helpful, although a higher percentage, 15.7%, disagreed and were neutral. Responses to the helpfulness of family support policies were interesting because 25.2% found them useful, 22.4% disagreed, and more than half, 52.3%, were neutral.

Table 4.15 also shows that 48% of those answering the question agreed that they had time to take care of routine family and personal needs; however, the 52% responding otherwise may be an indication that there was not enough time for routine, nonemergency care. On the question

of satisfaction with work hours, 49.7% of respondents said they were satisfied, while 32.7% responded negatively.

Table 4.15

WLB Satisfaction Scale Questions and Response Data

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Somewhat Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Mean	Med.	SD
My organization's flexible schedules policies enable me to find work-life balance. <i>n</i> =145	20	20	41	25	39	3.29	3.00	1.365
93.5%	13.7%	13.7%	28.3%	17.4%	26.9%			
My organization's social benefit policies enable me to find work-life balance. <i>n</i> =153	3	21	64	43	22	3.39	3.00	.961
98.7%	2.0%	13.7%	41.8%	28.1%	14.4%			
My organization's family support policies enable me to find work-life balance. <i>n</i> =147	13	20	77	26	11	3.01	3.00	.986
94.8%	8.8%	13.6%	52.3%	17.7%	7.5%			
I am able to give immediate attention to urgent family or personal issues if needed. <i>n</i> =155	3	7	9	75	61	4.19	4.00	.881
100%	1.9%	4.6%	5.8%	48.4%	39.4%			
I have enough time away from work to take care of my personal and family needs. <i>n</i> =150	5	44	29	53	19	3.25	3.00	1.111
96.8%	3.3%	29.3%	19.3%	35.3%	12.6%			
I feel satisfied with my working hours. <i>n</i> =151	7	42	27	56	19	3.25	3.00	1.132
97.4%	4.6%	27.8%	17.8%	37.1%	12.6%			
I am satisfied with the separation of my professional and personal life without any serious conflicts. <i>n</i> =151	5	28	25	73	20	3.50	4.00	1.045
97.4%	3.3%	18.5%	16.6%	48.3%	13.2%			
I am satisfied with my work-life balance. <i>n</i> =151	14	40	29	52	16	3.11	3.00	1.184
97.4%	9.3%	26.5%	19.2%	34.4%	10.6%			

Note: *n* indicates the number of question responses out of 155 valid cases. Response % is based on *n*.

The following two scales represented in Tables 4.16 and 4.17 show respondent perceptions related to organizational policies (HR policies affecting WLB), and workplace support systems, respectively.

In Table 4.16, more than half of respondents, 55%, stated that specific WLB policies had not been established or documented in their organizations, while only 24.8% said that such

policies were in place. Most respondents, 60.5%, stated that their organizations did not expect them to sign or adhere to their WLB policies, in contrast to the 10.5% who did. Responses on whether or not the companies provided family-friendly policies were close: 36.7% agreed, while slightly more, 39.9%, disagreed. Another interesting response dealt with employee perceptions of whether their organizations offered programs supporting WLB: 70% disagreed, strongly disagreed, or were neutral that their organization offered them. Also two-thirds, 65.2%, of employees said they were not expected to attend training programs to increase their understanding of their organization's WLB policies. In one of the most telling observations, 70.5% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed that employees were even aware of the organization's WLB policies.

Table 4.16

WLB HR Policies Scale Questions and Response Data

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Somewhat Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Mean	Med.	SD
In my organization, specific WLB policy has been established and documented. <i>n</i> =153	36	49	30	30	8	2.52	2.00	1.198
98.7%	23.5%	32.0%	19.6%	19.6%	5.2%			
The employees are expected to adhere to and sign the WLB policy. <i>n</i> =152	39	53	44	14	2	2.26	2.0	.987
98.0%	26.7 %	34.9%	28.9%	9.2%	1.3%			
The organization provides family-friendly policies that help me to fulfill my family commitments. <i>n</i> =153	20	41	36	42	14	2.93	3.00	1.198
98.7%	13.1%	26.8%	23.5%	27.5%	9.2%			
Various unique programs are offered by the organization to employees for maintaining work-life balance. <i>n</i> =150	24	44	37	33	12	2.77	3.00	1.195
96.8%	16.0%	29.3%	24.7%	22.0%	8.0%			
Employees are expected to attend training programs for understanding the organization's WLB policies. <i>n</i> =152	41	58	25	22	6	2.30	2.00	1.133
98.0%	27.0%	38.2%	16.4%	15.5%	3.9%			
All employees are aware of the WLB policies provided by the organization. <i>n</i> =151	43	51	30	22	5	2.30	2.00	1.131
97.4%	28.5%	33.8%	19.9%	14.6%	3.3%			

Note: *n* indicates the number of question responses out of 155 valid cases. Response % is based on *n*.

In Table 4.17, with one exception, the responses are generally positive, with means over 3.1, and four questions having median scores of 4.0. Questions that had more than 60% positive responses (agree/strongly agree) stated that the organization's expectations were clear (65.2%), employees' colleagues were understanding and supportive (61.9%), supervisors gave importance to employee well-being (66.5%), and employees felt free to discuss WLB issues with their supervisors (65.8%). The final question in this set, which asks about overall satisfaction with the WLB benefits, registered the lowest scores, with only 33.8% agreeing, 40.2% disagreeing, and 26% neutral.

Table 4.17

Workplace Support System Scale Questions and Response Data

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Somewhat Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Mean	Med.	SD
All employees are treated equally if they request assistance with work- and family-related matters.								
<i>n</i> =155	13	39	35	47	21	3.15	3.00	1.19
100%	8.4%	25.2%	22.6%	30.3%	13.5%			
The organization makes it very clear to employees about the expectations to be fulfilled.								
<i>n</i> =155	4	18	32	74	27	3.66	4.00	.983
100%	2.6%	11.6%	20.6%	47.7%	17.4%			
My supervisor gives importance toward the well-being of employees.								
<i>n</i> =155	5	16	31	64	39	3.75	4.00	1.048
100%	3.2%	10.3%	20%	41.3%	25.2%			
My organization supports the employees in terms of combining professional life with family life.								
<i>n</i> =155	7	28	48	47	25	3.35	3.00	1.092
100%	4.5%	18.1%	31.0%	30.3%	16.1%			
I can openly discuss issues relating to work-life balance with my supervisor.								
<i>n</i> =155	9	16	28	57	45	3.73	4.00	1.158
100%	5.8%	10.3%	18.1%	36.8%	29.0%			
My colleagues understand my nonwork situation and assist, if needed.								
<i>n</i> =155	3	21	35	59	37	3.68	4.00	1.043
100%	1.9%	13.5%	22.6%	38.0%	23.9%			
I feel comfortable using the WLB policies at my organization.								
<i>n</i> =149	7	26	57	37	22	3.28	3.00	1.065
96.1%	4.7%	17.4%	38.3%	24.8%	14.8%			

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Somewhat Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Mean	Med.	SD
I am satisfied with my organization's work-life benefits, policies, and/or programs.								
<i>n</i> =154	11	50	40	36	16	2.99	3.00	1.137
99.4%	7.8%	32.5%	26.0%	23.4%	10.4%			

Note: *n* indicates the number of question responses out of 155 valid cases. Response % is based on *n*.

The next two scales occupy the “personal” category described earlier in Table 4.1. Table 4.18 presents responses relating to the availability of personal support systems. This was the only table with N/A responses, indicating that the question does not apply to the respondent. Of note is the substantial number of N/A responses, 59, to the question about sharing responsibility for children with one's partner. These 59 responses (38.5%) correlate with demographic responses indicating that a large number of respondents either did not have small children at home, had no responsibilities for eldercare, and/or were single. I also noticed that all responses for each question in this scale had high means and medians, indicating “agree” or “somewhat agree” responses. In the lowest among them, “I have enough time away from work to take care of my personal and family needs,” more than half of the respondents, 52%, strongly or somewhat disagreed or were neutral, while only 48% somewhat or strongly agreed. The average for this question was 3.25, which, while positive, was the lowest response in this scale. On the upper end, having a good social network (81.7%) and being able to give immediate attention to urgent family needs by using family support (78.4%) rated strongly positive responses. Friends played a significant role in personal support systems. Friends helped respondents “find greater balance in my life” (71.8%), and also helped them take care of urgent family needs (77%). Overall, the responses showed the presence of strong personal support systems among the majority of the respondents, especially among their social networks and friends, and also produced higher N/A scores for support from partners and extended family, potentially linked to sample demographics.

Table 4.18*Personal Support System Scale Questions and Response Data*

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Somewhat Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Strongly Agree	N/A	Mean	Med.	SD
My partner equally shares in household activities. <i>n</i> =153	9	30	6	45	26	37	4.05	4.00	1.583
98.7%	5.8%	19.6%	3.9%	29.4%	17.0%	24.2%			
My partner equally shares in responsibilities for children. <i>n</i> =153	6	21	15	28	24	59	4.48	5.00	1.589
98.7%	3.9%	13.7%	9.8%	18.3%	15.7%	38.5%			
I have support from extended family to balance my life obligations, such as caring for elderly parents and young children. <i>n</i> =153	20	13	14	44	31	31	3.95	4.00	1.624
98.7%	13.1%	8.5%	9.2%	28.7%	20.3%	20.3%			
I have a good social support system that I can count on to help with any emergency situations in my personal life. <i>n</i> =153	3	13	6	66	59	6	4.20	4.00	1.033
98.7%	2.0%	8.5%	3.9%	43.1%	38.6%	3.9%			
I can give my attention to urgent family or personal issues immediately with the help of my family members. <i>n</i> =153	6	6	18	65	55	3	4.11	4.00	1.107
98.7%	3.9%	3.9%	11.8%	42.5%	35.9%	2.0%			
I can give my attention to urgent family or personal issues immediately with the help of my friends. <i>n</i> =152	4	15	11	57	60	5	4.09	4.00	1.032
98.0%	2.6%	9.9%	7.2%	37.5%	39.5%	3.3%			
My friends enable me to find greater balance in my life. <i>n</i> =153	2	5	27	55	55	9	4.20	4.00	.994
98.7%	1.3%	3.3%	17.6%	35.9%	35.9%	5.9%			

Note: *n* indicates the number of question responses out of 155 valid cases. Response % is based on *n*.

Table 4.19 represents the time for self responses. In this scale, a positive response (somewhat agree/strongly agree) indicates that the respondent believes she has adequate time in her life to accomplish the stated objective, while a negative response indicates the presence of time conflicts that limit her self-care. Time conflicts were not specified in the question and could be either family- or work-related. Respondents had clear opinions, with neutral responses ranging from 14% to 20%, lower than some other scales. Affirmatively, respondents stated that they had enough time to take care of their spiritual needs (53.9%), think and plan their daily

activities (52.7%), exercise (47.6%), engage in self-development (46.6%) and “take care of myself” (45%). However, on the negative side with response means below 3.0, respondents felt that they lacked sufficient time for leisure activities (49.4%), to engage in as many community service activities as they would like (48.7%), or just to relax (43.2%).

Table 4.19

Time for Self Scale Questions and Response Data

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Somewhat Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Mean	Med.	SD
I can spend the time I want on my self-development.								
<i>n</i> =152	11	47	22	56	16	3.13	3.00	1.175
98.0%	7.2%	30.9%	14.5%	36.8%	10.5%			
I have enough time to think, plan, and schedule my day-to-day activities.								
<i>n</i> =152	7	44	21	67	13	3.23	4.00	1.101
98.0%	4.6%	28.9%	13.8%	44.1%	8.6%			
I have enough time to take care of myself.								
<i>n</i> =151	15	43	25	53	15	3.07	3.00	1.198
97.4%	9.9%	28.5%	16.6%	35.1%	9.9%			
I have enough time and energy to engage in any leisure activities that I want to do.								
<i>n</i> =152	17	58	26	37	14	2.82	3.00	1.191
98.0%	11.2%	38.2%	17.1%	24.3%	9.2%			
I have enough time to take care of my religious/spiritual needs.								
<i>n</i> =150	5	34	32	56	25	3.41	4.00	1.106
%	3.3%	22.6%	21.3%	37.3%	16.6%			
I have enough time to relax.								
<i>n</i> =152	14	52	27	46	13	2.95	3.00	1.167
98.0%	9.2%	34.2%	17.7%	30.3%	8.6%			
I have enough time to exercise if I want to do so.								
<i>n</i> =149	11	35	32	54	17	3.21	3.00	1.465
96.7%	7.4%	23.5%	21.5%	36.2%	11.4%			
I have enough time to engage in as many community service activities as I want to.								
<i>n</i> =152	17	57	31	38	9	2.77	3.00	1.245
98.0%	11.2%	37.5%	20.4%	25.0%	5.9%			

Note: *n* indicates the number of question responses out of 155 valid cases. Response % is based on *n*.

Table 4.20 presents responses to questions dealing with conflicts that arise when the demands of work interfere with life at home (i.e., work-family conflict). In this set of questions, a positive response (somewhat agree/strongly agree) indicated a negative relationship between work and home. Overall, the weighting of responses tended to be almost evenly balanced

between positive and negative responses, indicating that the sample was divided on these issues. As one example, to the statement that the amount of work time made it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities, an equal number, 41.2%, agreed and disagreed. The demands of work interfering with home life received the strongest response, with 50.3% in agreement that they did. Similarly, 49.1% said that there were things they wanted to do at home that did not get done because of work. However, the question of job-related strain making it difficult to fulfill family duties received the most disagreement, 45.1%, while 42.5% agreed.

Table 4.20

Work-Family Conflict Scale Questions and Response Data

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Somewhat Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Mean	Med.	SD
The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.								
<i>n</i> =153	14	44	18	58	19	3.16	4.00	1.230
98.7%	9.2%	28.8%	11.8%	37.9%	12.4%			
The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.								
<i>n</i> =153	14	49	27	45	18	3.03	3.00	1.208
98.7%	9.2%	32.0%	17.6%	29.4%	11.8%			
Things I want to do at home do not get done because of my job demands.								
<i>n</i> =153	10	49	19	57	18	3.16	3.00	1.187
98.7%	6.5%	32.0%	12.4%	37.3%	11.8%			
My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.								
<i>n</i> =153	14	55	19	52	13	2.97	3.00	1.188
98.7%	9.2%	35.9%	12.4%	34.0%	8.5%			
Due to work-related duties, I must make changes to my plans for family activities.								
<i>n</i> =153	12	54	19	55	13	3.02	3.00	1.172
98.7%	7.8%	35.3%	12.4%	35.9%	8.5%			

Note: *n* indicates the number of question responses out of 155 valid cases. Response % is based on *n*.

Table 4.21 presents the last of the scale item responses. This set of questions deals with whether or not responsibilities of home, family, or spouse interfered with work. A negative response (somewhat disagree/strongly disagree) indicates a positive home-work relationship. The median response for all questions was 2.0 and the means were all below 2.4. There were very few neutral responses to this set of questions, between 8% and 13%.

As shown in Table 4.21, most respondents very decisively disagreed with all the questions, producing the strongest group of responses among survey questions. Specifically, respondents felt that family demands did not prevent them from doing things they wanted to do (78.5%), their home life did not interfere with work responsibilities (75.2%), and any family strains they may have had did not interfere with their job performance (74.5%). The sample demographics, with more mature and empty-nester respondents, may have influenced these outcomes, making it easier for there to be less interference from family into work.

Table 4.21

Family-Work Conflict Scale Questions and Response Data

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Somewhat Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Somewhat Agree	5 Strongly Agree	Mean	Med.	SD
The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities. <i>n</i> =153	24	80	20	24	5	2.39	2.00	1.033
98.7%	15.7%	52.3%	13.1%	15.7%	3.3%			
I must put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home. <i>n</i> =153	27	86	15	21	4	2.27	2.00	.995
98.7%	17.6%	56.2%	9.8%	13.7%	2.6%			
Things I want to do at work don't get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner. <i>n</i> =153	33	87	17	13	3	2.12	2.00	.913
98.7%	21.6%	56.9%	11.1%	8.5%	2.0%			
My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work, such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime. <i>n</i> =153	35	80	13	21	4	2.21	2.00	1.030
98.7%	22.9%	52.3%	8.5%	13.7%	2.6%			
Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties. <i>n</i> =153	35	79	20	16	3	2.17	2.00	.965
98.7%	22.9%	51.6%	13.1%	10.5%	2.0%			

Note: *n* indicates the number of question responses out of 155 valid cases. Response % is based on *n*.

Preliminary Statistical Analysis

The relationship between six IVs and the DV WLB satisfaction was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient testing. There is no evidence of multicollinearity among the independent variables. The resulting correlation matrix, shown in Table 4.22, revealed

a range of relationships in both size and direction. For the two organizational variables, there were moderate positive correlations between WLB satisfaction and WLB HR policies, $r(135) = .555, p < .001$, and workplace support systems, $r(131) = .664, p < .001$. Among the personal support variables, there was a small positive correlation between personal support systems and WLB satisfaction, $r(134) = .295, p < .001$, and a moderately large positive correlation between time for self and WLB satisfaction, $r(130) = .687, p < .001$. Finally, for the interactional variables, there was a small negative correlation between family-work conflict and WLB satisfaction that was slightly less significant than all other results, $r(135) = -.276, p < .01$, and a large negative correlation between work-family conflict and WLB satisfaction, $r(135) = -.764, p < .001$. Of all predictor variables, time for self had the strongest positive correlation and work-family conflict had the strongest negative correlation.

Table 4.22

Pearson Correlation Matrix

	WLB Satisfaction	WLB HR Policies	Workplace Support Systems	Personal Support Systems	Time for Self	Work- Family Conflict	Family- Work Conflict
WLB satisfaction	—						
WLB HR policies	.555***	—					
Workplace support systems	.664***	.504***	—				
Personal support systems	.295***	.191*	.382***	—			
Time for self	.687***	.360***	.399***	.387***	—		
Work-family conflict	-.764***	-.422***	-.503***	-.296***	-.698***	—	
Family-work conflict	-.276**	-.054	-.206**	-.288***	-.427***	.341***	—

Note: ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (2-tailed)

Assumptions of Data Eligibility for Multiple Regression

The assumptions of data eligibility for multiple regression were tested using common information about the population.

Variables. Variables included in this regression analysis meet the first two assumptions of regression by comprising one continuous DV (WLB satisfaction) and more than two continuous or categorical IVs (this study has six). Additional assumptions of regression are presented in the paragraphs that follow. Descriptive statistics, reliability, and skewness and kurtosis of scale items are presented earlier in this chapter in Tables 4.13 and 4.14.

Response validity. The study had 184 responses that produced 155 valid cases used for this analysis. This response was adequate according to formulae provided by Green (1991):

$$50 + 8m = 98, \text{ where } m \text{ is the number of IVs (6),} \quad (1)$$

and VanVoorhis & Morgan (2007, p. 48):

$$N > 104 + m = 110, \text{ for testing individual predictors.} \quad (2)$$

Using either of these formulas, this study's sample of 155 valid cases meets the criteria for regression analysis.

Multivariate normality. Tests for multivariate normality were conducted using histograms and normal probability plots (Q-Q plot) of regression standardized residual and predicted values, as well as Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) and Shapiro-Wilk tests (Table 4.23). The histograms presented a reasonably normally shaped distributions and the Q-Q plots displayed points aligned to the center diagonal. Both tests indicate no major deviations from normality.

Given the sample size of 155 the violation of normality is not perceived to negatively affect inferential testing since the central limit theorem applies here (Frost, 2021). As shown in Table 4.23, the K-S and Shapiro-Wilk tests determined that with two exceptions, the results are significant, indicating that the null hypothesis of normal distribution should be rejected for those variables. The single IV that appears to be normally distributed on both tests is workplace support systems, with a K-S statistic of .066 ($p = .200$) and a Shapiro-Wilk statistic of .984 ($p = .08$). Although K-S test is widely used (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012), it is limited by its high sensitivity to extreme values, even when corrected by the Lilliefors procedure (Peat & Barton, 2005), and the Shapiro-Wilk test is considered to deliver greater power (Ghasemi & Zahediasl, 2012). The DV achieved a significant score on K-S (.090, $p < .01$), indicating normal distribution, but its Shapiro-Wilk result was not significant (.983, $p = .079$).

Table 4.23

Multivariate Normality: Results of Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk Tests

Regression	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
Variables	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df.	Sig.
WLB satisfaction	.090	137	.008	.983	137	.079
WLB HR policies	.092	149	.003	.972	149	.004
Workplace support systems	.066	148	.200 ^b	.984	148	.080
Personal support systems	.082	152	.014	.980	152	.029
Time for self	.083	148	.015	.978	148	.016
Work-family conflict	.118	153	.000	.953	153	.000
Family-work conflict	.116	153	.000	.936	153	.000

Note: ^aLilliefors Significance Correction ^bRepresents lower boundary of true significance

Absence of multicollinearity. The Pearson correlation matrix (Table 4.22) indicated a range of correlation relationships between the six IVs and the DV without evidence of multicollinearity. In addition, tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) were examined using

coefficients to determine if multicollinearity was present. As shown in Table 4.24, all tolerance levels were between .440 and .778 and were above the 0.1 level most commonly cited as lower limit (Pallant, 2016, p. 159). VIF levels were between 1.286 and 2.271; all were below 10, a frequently cited upper limit (Pallant, 2016, p. 159). Using these tests, no evidence of multicollinearity was found between the variables.

Table 4.24

Tolerance and VIF

Model 1 ^a	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)		
WLB HR policies	.685	1.459
Workplace support systems	.594	1.684
Personal support systems	.769	1.301
Time for self	.442	2.262
Work-family conflict	.440	2.271
Family-work conflict	.778	1.286

Note: ^aDependent variable: WLB satisfaction

Homoscedasticity. To satisfy this assumption, the variance of error must be similar across IV values. Scatterplot output showed distribution of residuals in a horizontal line relationship with predicted WLB Satisfaction scores. Randomly scattered residuals were displayed around the zero value with most scores concentrated near the center. A “pileup of residuals in the center of the plot . . . and a normal distribution of residuals trailing off symmetrically from the center” suggests the presence of homoscedasticity, indicating that the distribution of error (residuals) is relatively similar across values of the IV (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019, p. 107).

Three additional tests were run to determine how uniform the variance of the residuals was over the range of values measured. The null hypothesis for these tests was that the variance of error was unrelated to the values of the independent variables. Table 4.25 reports the results

from the White Test, Modified Breusch-Pagan Test, and the F Test. The results indicated that heteroscedasticity was not present.

Table 4.25

Tests for Heteroskedasticity^{a, b}

	Chi-Square	df	Df2	Sig.
White Test	27.310	27		.447
Modified Breusch-Pagan Test	2.208	1		.137
F-Test	2.211	1	124	.140

Note: ^aDependent variable: WLB satisfaction

^bPredicted values from design: Intercept + WLB HR policies + workplace support + personal support systems + time for self + work-family conflict + family-work conflict

Linearity. I assessed linearity using the scatterplot of regression standardized residual and predicted values. The presence of randomly distributed points along a center line with no curvilinear distribution around the center line indicated the presence of an acceptably linear relationship between the predictor variables and the outcome variable, WLB satisfaction. This linear outcome confirms that the data are eligible for regression and that the results present a minimal risk of Type II error (Osborne & Waters, 2002). To assess the presence of a linear relationship between the DV and the IVs, I used the Pearson correlations table, which showed all bivariate correlations were below .7 except for work-family conflict, which was -.764 (Table 4.23).

Absence of influential outliers. Box plots identified the presence of outliers. To determine how influential these outliers were, I used Fox's (2016, p. 267) principle:

$$\text{Influence on coefficients} = \text{discrepancy} \times \text{leverage} \quad (3)$$

I used Mahalanobis distance calculations to measure the location of all points (values) in relation to the data set centroid, the intersection of the means of all variables. The critical value (χ^2) for Mahalanobis distance with six IVs is 22.46 (Pallant, 2016, p. 161; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019, p. 804), indicating the upper limit of acceptability for this measurement. One case in my dataset was determined to have values exceeding the critical Mahalanobis value of 22.46 (Case 47 = 23.78).

Next, I used Cook's distance calculations to determine whether these two cases exerted leverage that could impact the regression model, applying the conservative significance criterion of $p < .001$ established for multivariate outliers by Tabachnick & Fidell (2019, p. 84). All Cook's distance influence values were found to be below 1.0 limit established for acceptability (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019, p. 65), indicating that these cases were not influential and could be retained in the study without distorting its findings. In summary, the particular case having a high Mahalanobis distance value (23.78) was found to have low leverage and influence (.033).

Independence of residuals. To meet the test for independence of residuals (errors of prediction), the final assumption of regression, the Durbin-Watson statistic was calculated as part of the SPSS regression model summary. Durbin-Watson tests for autocorrelation, which indicates that the errors are not independent of each other. Tabachnick & Fidell (2019) advise that positive autocorrelation underestimates the error variance and increases the possibility of a Type I error, while negative autocorrelation overestimates this variance, resulting in loss of statistical power (p. 109). Durbin-Watson test results range from 0.0 to 4.0, with 2.0 indicating perfect residual independence (Field, 2017; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). The test result for the full regression model ($D = 1.992$) indicated that autocorrelation was not present, the residuals were sufficiently independent, and the data were eligible for regression.

Results of This Study: Inferential Statistics

I ran a multiple regression to assess the ability of six independent variables to predict WLB satisfaction among the working professionals in this sample. Two of the IVs represented organizational policies (WLB HR policies, workplace support systems); two represented personal support measures (personal support systems, time for self); and two represented interactional conflict (work-family conflict, family-work conflict).

Preliminary analyses found no violations of the assumptions of multiple regression. There was linearity as assessed by partial regression plots and a plot of studentized residuals against the predicted values. Residuals were independent, as assessed by a Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.992. Homoscedasticity was present, as assessed by visual inspection of a plot of residuals versus predicted values as well as confirmatory White's Test, Modified Breusch-Pagan Test, and F Test results. The assumption of normality was met, as assessed by Q-Q Plot.

There was no evidence of multicollinearity, as assessed by Pearson's correlation matrix and by tolerance values greater than 0.1 (.440 to .778) and VIF values less than 10 (1.301 to 2.286) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019). There were no studentized deleted residuals greater than ± 3 standard deviations, no leverage values greater than 0.2, and no values for Cook's distance above 1.0. The assumption of normality was met, as assessed by a Q-Q Plot. Results of the regression model summary are presented in Table 4.26

The R^2 value for the overall model was .746 with an adjusted R^2 of .734, representing a large effect size (Cohen, 1988). The adjusted R^2 value indicates that the combined six independent variables explain 73.4% of the variance in the dependent variable, WLB satisfaction.

Table 4.26*Multiple Regression Model Summary*

Model ^a	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	Std Error of Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.864 ^a	.746	.734***	.37142	1.992

Note: N = 155. ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$.

^a Dependent variable: WLB satisfaction

^b Predictors: (Constant), WLB HR policies, workplace support systems, personal support systems, time for self, work-family conflict, family-work conflict

Table 4.27 provides the ANOVA results for this regression. The full model of six independent variables as predictors of WLB satisfaction (Model 1) was statistically significant, $R^2 = .746$, $F(6, 125) = 61.208$, $p < .001$, adjusted $R^2 = .734$. Effect size for the full model was large ($f^2 = 2.937$).

Table 4.27*ANOVA Results for WLB Satisfaction*

Model 1 ^a	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	50.662	6	8.444	61.208	.000 ^b
Residual	17.244	125	.138		
Total	67.906	131			

Note: N = 155.

^a Predictors: (Constant), WLB HR policies, workplace support systems, personal support systems, time for self, work-family conflict, family-work conflict

^b Dependent variable: WLB satisfaction

As can be seen in Table 4.28, four of the six variables added statistically significantly to the prediction at significance levels above $p < .05$. The contributing variables were: WLB HR policies, workplace support systems, time for self, and work-family conflict. In contrast, personal support systems and family-work conflict were not significant contributors. Table 4.28 presents the unstandardized coefficients (B), standard errors, standardized coefficients (Beta), t values, and significance levels associate with the different variables, calculated at 95% confidence intervals.

Table 4.28

Multiple Regression Results for WLB Satisfaction: Coefficient Table

WLB Satisfaction	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	$SE B$	β		
Constant	2.300	.377		6.104	< .001
WLB HR policies	.114	.042	.149	2.737	.007
Workplace support systems	.320	.058	.321	5.481	< .001
Personal support systems	-.058	.044	-.068	-1.323	.188
Time for self	.212	.050	.285	4.210	< .001
Work-family conflict	-.244	.045	-.369	-5.439	< .001
Family-work conflict	.024	.045	.027	.527	.599

Summary of the Hypothesis Testing

This chapter has presented the results of quantitative analysis. The respondents indicated four of the variables played a significant role in their ability to maintain work life balance. Even though some organizations had policies in place, most employees were not trained in the policies nor sign documentation binding them to the policies. Family policies were seldom found in organizations.

This study examined the role of organizational, personal, and interactional influences on perceptions of work-life balance among professional women. Data were collected through an anonymous, online survey to which 184 individuals responded. Data were examined to eliminate incomplete or nonresponsive cases, leaving a sample containing 155 valid cases used in inferential statistics to study the study's research question and six hypotheses.

Descriptive statistics were provided in this chapter on participant demographics, variables used in inferential statistics, and on all survey question responses. Preliminary statistical analysis was performed using Pearson's Product Moment correlation analysis. Data eligibility for multiple regression testing was run and determined to be satisfactory.

All variables were statistically significant except personal support systems and family-life conflict. Work-life balance was found to be significantly affected by organizational policies, workplace support, personal support systems, workplace support and work-life conflict.

This chapter reported the quantitative results of this study. Summary results of hypothesis testing are provided in Table 4.29. They show that both organizational hypotheses were supported, indicating that both HR policies and workplace support systems (team resources) positively and significantly influence WLB satisfaction. Within the personal category, time devoted to self-care was a strongly statistically significant influencer of WLB satisfaction, while personal support systems were not shown to be influential. Finally, in the interactional category, work-family conflict was shown to detract from WLB satisfaction at a statistically significant level, while the negative influence family-work conflict was not significant.

Table 4.29*Summary of Hypothesis Testing: Results of Multiple Regression Analysis*

	Hypothesis ^a	Result
<i>Organizational</i>		
H1	WLB HR policies are positively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.	Supported $p < .01$
H2	Team resources (workplace support systems) are positively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.	Supported $p < .001$
<i>Personal</i>		
H3	Personal support systems are positively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.	Not supported $p = .118$
H4	Time for self (self-care) is positively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.	Supported $p < .001$
<i>Interactional</i>		
H5	Work-family conflict is negatively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.	Supported $p < .001$
H6	Family-work conflict is negatively related to perceived work-life balance satisfaction.	Not supported $p = .599$

Note: ^a Dependent variable is WLB satisfaction

Analysis of Open-Ended Responses to Question 15

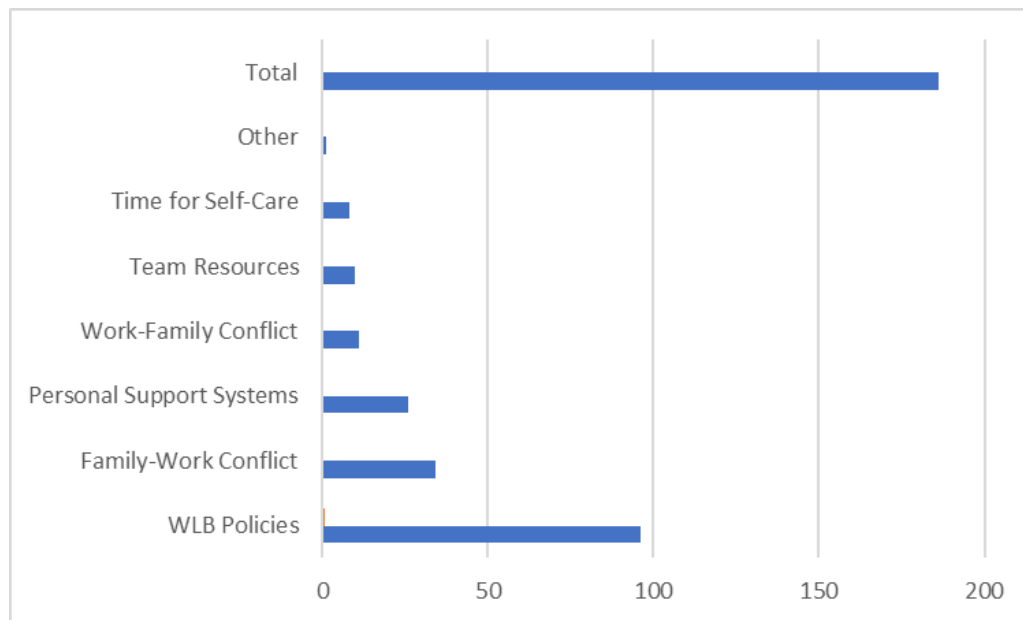
In addition to the Likert-scale questions that generated data for the inferential testing described above, I also collected qualitative data from an open-ended narrative question included in Section 5 of the survey. This question asked: “How has the COVID-19 pandemic effected your work-life balance?” Responses were limited to 500 words. There were 186 responses to this question. Some responses were very detailed and emotional as they described this unusual time and the extraordinary circumstances that emerged.

As shown in Table 4.30 and Figure 5, an a priori content analysis provided valuable information that confirmed some of the quantitative findings. Most of the comments pertained to WLB policies (52%), family-work conflict (18%), personal support systems (14%), work-family conflict (11%), team resources (5%), time for self (4%), and other (0.5%).

Table 4.30*Distribution of Open-Ended Responses Aligned With Quantitative Variables*

Variable Name	Responses	Percent
WLB policies	96	51.6%
Family-work conflict	34	18.3%
Personal support systems	26	14.0%
Work-family conflict	11	5.9%
Team resources	10	5.4%
Time for self-care	8	4.3%
Other	1	0.5%
Total	186	100%

Note: The number of responses exceeds the number of participants because some participants provided responses in more than one category.

Figure 5*Open-Ended Responses to the COVID-19 Question*

Based on the analysis of the comments, clear themes emerged. The paragraphs that follow describe six themes that surfaced from the complex interplay between the six main variables of the study. I have provided some respondent comments to illustrate each theme.

Theme 1: Balancing Work and Life Is Challenging

Fifty-two percent of the 186 responses highlighted the challenges of balancing work and life during the COVID-19 pandemic. In other words, balancing work and life was one of the pandemic's most challenging issues. Rules at work and life have changed tremendously during the pandemic. The shifting of rules compounded by fear of the unknown. Respondents commented on how working from home blurred the lines between work and family and that having an office in the home meant they could never leave work or have a clear sense of when their workday ended. Some reported that teleworking resulted in excessive overtime, more than in decades of a professional career. The ability to separate from work implies a measure of control and influences perceived work-life balance. As one respondent noted, working from home during the pandemic made her balance harder to achieve: "There is no place to go to escape all the responsibility."

Descriptions of the respondents' work-life balance varied but carried a similar theme of suffering and fear. The most common reason given for this imbalance was the lack of boundaries. Boundaries, or the lack of them, was a major issue. Respondent comments related to this subject included the following:

- "Worked longer hours. Did not always step away from work."
- "There's no separation between work and home!"
- "Working from home made that line very blurry. I used to be very firm about my work hours, and about leaving work at work. Having a home office often meant that I had no sense of when my work hours ended. I often worked weekends and felt as though I was on call most of the time, since we were all in crisis mode."

- “Telework due to COVID has caused me to work an excessive amount of hours, more than I ever have in 25 years of my professional career.”
- “I work from home 100%. This tends to lengthen my workday because I have no commute. It is often difficult to separate work time from personal time.”

Theme 2: Mental Health Is Affected and Lack of Personal Support Made It Worse

The lack of boundaries and the constantly shifting environment created an environment of anxiety and fear, increasing mental health concerns. The mental health crisis became a grave concern and compounded the effects of negative WLB. One respondent said:

The pandemic affected my mental health. I was previously managing my anxiety and depression with therapy and family support. During the pandemic, I had to seek additional therapy and medication to control my mental health. I became despondent and had suicidal ideation. I’m in a better place now, but still struggling to figure out a better work-life balance. Working from home makes separating work life and home life challenging.

Personal care is essential to achieve a work-life balance; in its absence mental health suffers. Focusing on tasks by prioritizing, delegating, and using resources were some of the strategies used by the respondents. However, when none were available, it was problematic. One respondent commented: “My eyesight has deteriorated, I have back pain from endless screen hours. I used to travel internationally every month and now do my job remotely. My workload and hours have significantly increased, and I don’t take care of myself.”

Personal support systems are important in mitigating the lack of work-life balance. Obtaining work-life balance partially rests on the availability of support systems such as family, friends, and team and organizational resources. According to the spillover theory, a positive work

experience can spill over, causing a positive home experience. The work environment improves with flexibility leading to positive work experience. Respondents expressed their support in these areas in similar ways. The lack of support was evident and led to feelings of despair.

In tough times it is easier to cope if you have the comfort of friends and family around you. During the pandemic, gathering was restricted and when people were allowed to gather, the fear of getting the highly contagious virus overshadowed the benefit. The shared responses convey the concerns and benefits. The following comments explain some of the ways the pandemic impacted the survey respondents' work-life balance:

- “I am not able to interact with my students the way I used to in person. Staying at home was challenging.”
- “Not working but unable to spend time with friends or social activities with friends, former classmates, etc.”
- “The sports team I coach is limited to certain activities and shuts down seasons.”
- “Not being able to get out of the house has been somewhat difficult. I miss traveling, going to the movies, going to the gym and museums. Which are activities that help me relax and enjoy time with my family.”
- “It has totally limited in-person gatherings and the informal, impromptu conversations that are energizing in high-pressure social work. The necessary collaboration continued as usual, but the comradery was missing.”
- “I have lost many social connections as well as a few social hobbies (playing music) that I used to participate in.”

One participant described the effect that the pandemic had on her family and work, and her awareness of her personal care needs:

The inability to see and be with family has affected my balance. I find that I spend more time worrying about family and their health, including mine. Work has been flipped on its head so something new occurs every day and that makes it difficult to settle down and get the job that I know done. I have been able to resume some activities that I do to take care of myself and I'm very conscious of what I need to help me stay healthy and support my mental health (monthly massage, time away with my husband, ending my workday at a reasonable time).

One participant profoundly described her circumstances by saying one word: *"Isolated."* That word summed up all the responses around which all benefits or concerns centered. The major problem for these women was not having a choice. The most tragic part of this unforgettable time for a few is the absence of time to properly grieve the loss of loved ones or properly deal with other tragedies. In normal times the gathering of family and friends helps the bereaved family by caring for their needs and comforting them. However, due to the rules and guidelines of COVID-19, the landscape of our existence changed.

Theme 3: There Were Special Challenges Based on Occupation

Both educators and healthcare workers commented on the special challenges they experienced due to their professions. The following comments highlight some of the special concerns of teachers:

- "I am a special education teacher with [my school district]. We have been through school closures, virtual instruction, and now hybrid teaching. It is the hardest I have ever worked, and I still feel like I am not doing enough."

- “Teaching from home has created a very difficult life/work balance situation because of needing to essentially guide my own children through virtual learning while fulfilling my own virtual teaching responsibilities to my students.”
- “The worldwide pandemic impacted everyone. As an educator, it was very demanding—planning, presenting lessons and the technology portion was overwhelming.”
- “Put more strain on teaching due to online teaching instead of in-person. Students’ participation and new and innovative method of teaching had to be learned and implemented on the go.”
- “Online teaching has been exhausting and unhealthy for all to sit in front of a computer for 10+ hours a day. We are created to interact with other people, yet we were forced to interact only through a computer. As an extrovert, it has been draining on me and I feel less motivated to do things.”

The spillover effect for educators was mainly negative. They were exhausted, frustrated and their families impacted.

Healthcare workers faced a similar burnout situation, which can be illustrated by this comment: “I work for a healthcare corporation and COVID work-wise has affected us all. The workload has increased being [that] we test and give out vaccines. My husband and I have worked through this pandemic. So, we have to be extra careful to not get sick.”

Healthcare workers had additional challenges due to the pandemic. Their work-family conflict was at multiple levels, including fear of bringing home COVID and the emotional stress of the job. One of the most tragic comments on the survey feedback was about the death of a spouse. The follow-up interview with the respondent revealed her tragic situation. The interview

was with a physician who brought COVID home from work and gave it to her husband and son. While she and her son recovered, her husband died. This example illustrates the enormous burden some healthcare workers faced as a result of their jobs during the pandemic times.

Theme 4: Interactional Conflict Was a Concern

Interactional conflict involved the variables of work intruding into family life (work-life conflict) and family intruding into work-life (family-work conflict). It is exceedingly difficult to balance family roles and job responsibilities. Negative spillover is inevitable. The respondents described how the effects flowed from work to family and from family to work. The following comments throughout this section illustrate this situation.

- “I’m a single mom and have the children 100% of the time. This pandemic has been incredibly hard to balance the stresses of coping through a pandemic, helping my children navigate, and dealing with difficult people at work. I had a hard time leaving work at the office as I have been working full time at home. Tough!!”

Negative spillover from COVID-19 is further exemplified by the experiences of this respondent and her family:

It’s affected my husband and adult children living at home more than me. I work 100% at home since March 2020. . . . We have many family disputes. My husband is unemployed and young adult children do university studies from home while working part-time. I increased my cigarette intake. My sleep habits are poor. Despite this, I prefer being at home rather than going back to the office.

Another participant described the duality of costs and benefits involved in her work-life balance challenges during this time:

Trying to balance working with everyone working at home has been challenging at times and also beneficial. I was able to save money on gas last year when we were not permitted in the building. I like having the option of working from home sometimes. It's been challenging maintaining my health at home. I move more at work. My family has been distracting at home a few times. I am distracted at work too, so having the option to do both balances things out. I wish we could maintain the option of working from home on Wednesday next year; however, that's not the plan.

As was the case with this respondent, several study participants discussed the result of having poor boundaries between work and home life, and the resultant impact on the family. They said that telework made it harder at times to say no or turn off work and be present with their children. Also, helping young children with virtual learning while fulfilling job responsibilities was difficult. Respondents also commented on the negative effects of spending too much time on work at the expense of family. The lack of childcare made the situation worse for some respondents who have young children.

Financial strain due to COVID-related job losses acted as a factor in family burden and interactional conflict. The following comment illustrates it further:

My husband temporarily lost his job. . . . Furloughed then laid off a total of 7.5 months. Provided more time with my children but at the expense of my career and an income. Back to work now at the same company, with a 4-day work week as opposed to a 5-day—therefore bringing in less money. Removal of our bonus program due to COVID, removing the possibility of making a monthly bonus potential.

Theme 5: Telework Was a Positive Experience for Some

Several respondents commented that telecommuting was a positive experience due to the ability to spend more time with family, time savings that resulted from the lack of commuting, and financial savings in gas and childcare expenses. The following comment is representative of those citing the advantages of teleworking:

It's dramatically improved my WLB because the nature of my work is either very busy or very slow, so when it is slow, I can be productive with house chores while still being fully available to work. Also, I don't mind working late or weekends when I must because I'm in the comfort of my home, so I find myself feeling happier about working extra hours. It feels like a fair trade. Also, no commute = a lot more time back to spend on chores, leisure, and relationships.

Additional comments related to teleworking included the following:

- "My work life balance has improved during the pandemic due to working from home."
- "My work-life balance hasn't been affected by COVID. Being able to work from home has made things so much easier, especially after having a baby."
- "COVID has given me more work/life balance due to not commuting to and from work." "In some ways, it has allowed for a more flexible schedule, however it is also difficult to sometimes separate work life from home life due to working from home."

Another respondent described the benefits of being able to use time differently during the day:

- "Being at home made it easier to get home chores done more easily during the day instead of in the evening. Also, it made it easier to schedule doctor and dentist appointments for the afternoon."

No one was excited about COVID-19, however, some of the side effects were positive. Most of the positive responses were aligned with the pandemic allowing them to have a flexible schedule, work at home and pay attention to family matters. The same benefits could be achieved through family-friendly organizational policies.

Theme 6: Organizational Policies and Systems Matter

Telework created interesting dynamics with respect to work-life balance. For some it was a positive experience, however, for many the lack of boundaries created fear, anxiety, and the perception of a work-life imbalance. When an organization provides a support network and team resources, it can help ensure employees feel valued and increase their ability to balance their work requirements. Therefore, a supportive environment is conducive to increasing productivity, but it is essential for employees to have a balance in their personal and work lives.

The effects of inefficient organization networking and support were evident from many responses. The lack of boundaries between work and home impacted not only the perceptions of work-life balance, but also the perceptions of how effectively individuals were supported. If organizations had good work-life balance policies and team resources, then employees perceived greater work-life balance satisfaction.

Table 4.31 presents additional comments regarding how COVID has impacted the WLB satisfaction of the respondents. Please see Appendix D for the raw responses to Question 15.

Table 4.31

A Priori Coding Summary of COVID-19 Question Responses

Variables	Characteristic Excerpted Responses
WLB policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> COVID has given me more work/life balance due to not commuting to and from work. COVID has allowed me to work from home for his time, so that has helped with the work life balance as there is no commute. However, I do

Variables	Characteristic Excerpted Responses
	<p>work more since I work from home and it is easier to end up missing lunches/breaks [or] work beyond my schedule.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More time to manage aspects of my elderly mother's care. • No there is NO balance—work, life, family, it's all blended together. • I feel like I live at work. COVID has made my job more demanding. Social distancing has keeps me from doing activities I enjoy. My life has become my job during COVID. • Teaching from home has impacted my work-life balance because I am always working. • It has provided me with an opportunity to create a flexible schedule when there was no opportunity before.
Team resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased demands and workload, carrying others stress. • Increased overlap. Having to work from home while managing my children as students was tough. Also, because of people's concerns of COVID, I had less access to help. • The sports team I coach is limited to certain activities and shuts down seasons.
Time for self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All my work takes longer leaving me little time to engage in meaningful discourse and activities with family, friends and self-care. • I am somehow working more hours for my salary position job. • I have learned that my personal/nonwork time is important and that I need to do a better job balancing my work and home life. I cannot keep working 50+ weeks. • COVID caused me to work full time remotely. This increased remote work has given me a) more time for self-care (exercise). • I am now being told that I have high blood pressure. The recommendation is medication. I am not happy about this. As a result, I am trying to exercise 4 days a week.
Personal support system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I work from home so it does get lonely. • However, it has also caused me to feel more isolated and depressed. • I don't go out to eat with my friends for a year. • It has halted my availability to time spent working, attending church in-person. However, I have experienced some virtual work/social activities. • not working but unable to spend time with friends or social activities with friends, former classmates, etc.
Family-work conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working from home has been an amazing opportunity to take better care of my elderly parents and young adult children and to maintain my home and spiritual lives. • COVID has allowed me to work from home and focus more time with my family.

Variables	Characteristic Excerpted Responses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has changed it to where the lines were blurred. Working from home while taking care of a toddler has been a challenge. We have transitioned back into the building and daycare and now I miss the time with my toddler.
Work-family conflict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My children, husband and I are now all “working” from home. I have had to balance my children’s education and my own work as a teacher. The COVID pandemic has taken away the time limits on my own work. I spend more time at night on lessons/grading/paperwork than before because I am busy during my “school day” with teaching, helping my own children with their work, making meals, etc. My husband works later now because the work day hours don't see to exist, so often my children only see me during the day because my husband is working in our basement until after their bed time. This has been difficult for us, however, I am enjoying seeing my children and husband for more hours in the day than ever before. • Increased overlap. Having to work from home while managing my children as students was tough. Also, because of people’s concerns of COVID I had less access to help. • It’s been a blessing to keep my job and be with my kids but extremely stressful in terms of a constant ‘involuntary stay at home mom’ lifestyle combined with an intense, mentally demanding and beyond 40-hour a week job. • Nights and weekends were more impacted than they needed to be because I couldn’t switch it off. Plus, students needed desperate support. • All my work takes longer leaving me little time to engage in meaningful discourse and activities with family, friends and self-care.
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased stress and anxiety. • Minimally; making arrangements for employees’ safety. • Being in healthcare working has not stopped much.

Relationship of Findings to Literature

The findings in my study support the literature in several ways. The themes from the interviews were: the perception of work-life balance, support, and personal care. The themes from the interviews were similar but had several subthemes, including work life balance: work from home, mental health, educators, health care workers and boundaries; support systems:

mental health, support network, boundaries, family-work conflict/work-family conflict, mixed blessings, and personal care: death/illness and in person contact.

My study's qualitative findings also support the results of my quantitative analysis. As one example, I used multiple regression analysis to determine whether work hours were negatively related to perceived satisfaction of work-life balance, as reported in the research (Valcour, 2007). According to Valcour (2007), a flexible work schedule should be positively associated with a satisfying work-family balance. Workers with high control over their schedule experienced a higher satisfaction with work-family balance than workers with lower control over their schedule. Valcour (2007) suggested that more research should be done to fill the gap on work characteristics such as control over work time due to its impact on work and family demands.

The interviewees and many narrative respondents agreed that work-life balance is important and commonly described as the ability to prioritize work and life roles to achieve a level of satisfaction. This aligns with the literature of WLB (Fisher, 2001; Greenhaus et al., 2003; Hobson et al., 2001), formally known as work-family balance, which is divided into three components: time, involvement, and satisfaction. The spillover effect (Sok et al.; 2014, Stein, 1980) had many implications and multiple effects extending to general life domains as well as work performance. In order to be satisfied in the dual domains of work and personal life, there should be a degree of balance observed in each.

This study's qualitative findings are generally consistent with this literature, and present interesting insights relative to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on work-life balance. Women, no matter their position at work, normally became the caretakers of the home. They reported being in charge of managing schedules, monitoring children in the virtual school,

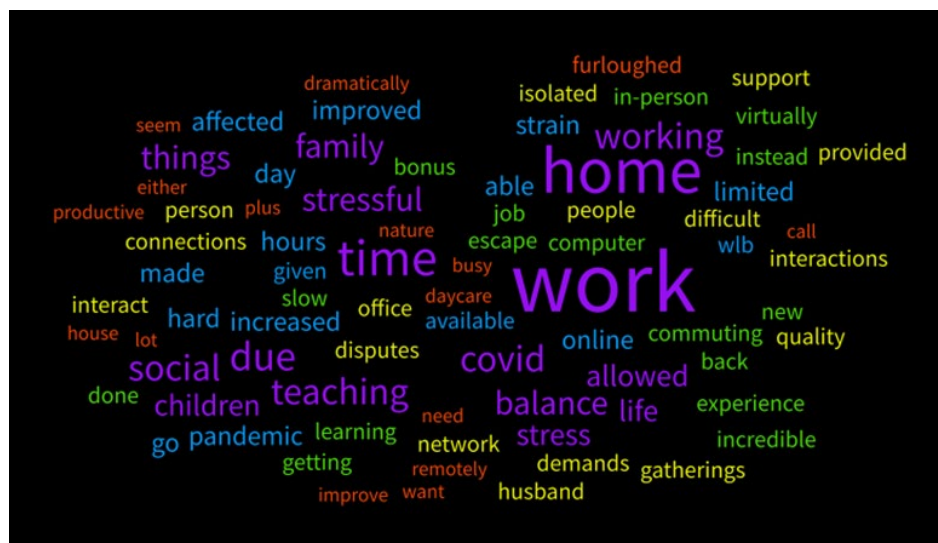
sanitizing the home, and even being the referee when needed. Balancing seemed to take a back seat to management. It was the nature of the women to take care of everyone first then if any time was left over, they would try to find guiltless self-care.

Many respondents apologized for their lack of self-care and made a promise to change. As a result of the lack of balance and self-care, there seemed to be many who described feelings of anxiety and stress. Here again, these findings align with the literature, which says that when there is a lack of work-life balance, health issues can arise (Sandoiu, 2016).

Figure 6 presents participant responses regarding the effects of COVID-19 on their work-life balance in a word cloud. This is a confirmation of everything we have seen before. As can be seen, the three dominant words in the cloud are work, home, and time.

Figure 6

COVID and Work-Life Balance: Survey Participant Responses in a Word Cloud



This chapter has presented the results of the survey, which was the first phase of my study. Chapter 5 will present the qualitative analysis of narrative responses, which was the

second phase of the study. It is followed by discussion, implications, and conclusions in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 5: CONTENT ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

My study used a cross-sectional survey using a convenience sample of 184 professionals to examine work-life balance (WLB) and its impact on professional women. The source of data for the qualitative analysis described in this chapter was a set of six one-on-one interviews conducted with survey respondents who self-identified as interview volunteers. I used open coding with substantive categories (Maxwell, 2013) to analyze this data, which led to the development of underlying themes.

Organization of This Chapter

In this chapter, I will present a summary of the interview participant characteristics, the methodology I used to structure data collection, and the procedures I used to conduct interviews first. Next, I will discuss my approach to analysis, including methods for coding the data and identifying emergent patterns. After that, I will present the results of the interview analysis, followed by the responses. Finally, I will conclude this chapter by presenting a synthesis of my qualitative findings.

Interview Participant Characteristics

I conducted full interviews with six participants for this study. The typical interview participant is a professional woman, ~45 years old, has 0 to 3 children at home, and is working at home during COVID-19, as is her husband. She works 40-plus hours a week, is responsible for childcare, house chores, family scheduling, managing children's online learning, managing family's health, social activity coordinator, shopping, caring for pets, and in some cases eldercare. In most cases her husband seldom shares those responsibilities. The overwhelming burden of childcare responsibility was evident when the mother was frequently interrupted by

her son during the interview. By her kind redirection each time, it was clear that the interruption was normal. She was incredibly patient and extended a wealth of love to her son.

These six interview participants are representative of the typical respondent in the larger population of 184 survey participants, 99.97% of whom were women whose median age was 35 to 44, and all of whom were working professionals. Like the survey respondents, the interview subjects had experienced moderate to extensive work-life imbalance. To preserve their anonymity, I have assigned the six interviewees' aliases in the brief descriptions that follow:

Betty is a 57-year-old general practitioner. She has one child who is autistic and has been recently widowed. She works approximately 58 hours a week, 42 miles from her home. She also manages residents and teaches an anatomy course at a nearby college. She is a Christian who is very active in her church. Betty plays the piano, which requires her to frequently attend choir practice at church and also practice at home. Due to autism, her son requires constant supervision and more extensive parental involvement.

Susan is a 38-year-old loan officer and supervisor at a family-owned bank in North Carolina. She is single, has no children, and lives alone in a town house. Most of her spare time is spent taking graduate classes to improve her career and increase her professional status. Her family lives two hours away, except for a cousin who lives less than 30 minutes away. Susan has a 40-hour work week but recently has been required to work overtime four days a week. The government shutdown caused an influx of loan applications related to the Paycheck Protection loan program. Susan takes yoga and music courses in her spare time but does not participate in many other social activities.

Lucy is a 56-year-old working mother of two adult children and grandmother of one. She is a small business owner of a highly successful restaurant and one of the two "first ladies" (wife

of one of the pastors) at a thriving church. She was also featured on the *Guy's Grocery Games* television show several times and actually won multiple times. She works 70-plus hours a week. As the owner and chief operating officer, Lucy is responsible for ordering, maintaining accounts, communicating with vendors and clients, catering, employee relations, and keeping records. Her restaurant has several employees, including family members. Lucy's restaurant is open 6 days a week and holidays are her busiest time. She is also responsible for the care of her elderly mother-in-law. She is active in the community and sponsors several charitable events benefiting homeless shelters and underprivileged community members.

Sally lives in a rural town with her two sons and a husband. She is the mother of three with a daughter away at college, and a full-time out-of-the-home employee. She is also a graduate student. She is very busy. In her late forties, Sally is the English language learner coordinator of a public school in a medium-sized town. Her job is her passion and extends beyond the walls of the school to her family setting. She loves gardening and nature. Living on a seven-acre farm with animals and crops allows her to occasionally escape from the digital world for a peaceful retreat. Sally said it centers her and gives her time to rebuild from chaotic days. She has no extended family in the area but has adopted friends and coworkers as active substitutes.

Jackie is a 73-year-old grandmother of two and mother of one adult. She works part-time as a reading specialist in a large suburban school district. She has a single-family home and has an active personal life. She is also a minister and Bible study leader at her church. Her interpersonal skills have allowed her to broaden her family structure from the natural to the adoptive one. She is originally from a northern state but has settled 8 hours away from her family. She is single and actively involved in the community and outreach for Christ.

Jane is a 49-year-old elementary school principal. She is a single African American with a strong nuclear family in the area. She has no children but a host of friends and close coworkers. She works with several organizations and charities. She is an advocate for the underprivileged. Jane grew up in the area and believes in giving back to the community. Also, she has created organizations to support African American educators. She has a strong passion for people and works tirelessly to extend a hand to everyone in need. Therefore, saying no is often a struggle for her, but she is learning to put up boundaries.

Table 1 provides a demographic profile of the six interview participants and compares them to the valid cases ($n = 155$ of 184) in the full survey sample. There are multiple similarities between the interviewees and the survey participants. For example, the majority of both the survey valid cases (66.4%) and the interviewees (83.3%) held masters or doctoral degrees. Secondly, most of the interviewees and the survey participants were empty nesters. Only two interviewees had children at home under the age of two. Both groups had a majority of members with 10 or more years of employment with their organization. The only outlier was one interviewee who did not have a higher education degree but was more economically successful than most of the interviewees. Overall, the selection of interviewees was a good representation of professional women in the surveyed population.

Table 5.1

Demographic Profile of Interview Participants vs. Total Survey Valid Cases

Category	Interview Participants	Total Survey: Valid Cases
Number of participants	6	155
Age		
18–24		1.9% ($n = 3$)
25–34		9.7% ($n = 15$)
35–44	16.7% ($n = 1$)	16.1% ($n = 25$)
45–54	33.3% ($n = 2$)	32.3% ($n = 50$)
55–64	33.3% ($n = 2$)	25.2% ($n = 39$)
65 and older	16.7% ($n = 1$)	12.3% ($n = 19$)

Category	Interview Participants	Total Survey: Valid Cases
Education		
4-year degree or above	83.3% (<i>n</i> = 5)	81.9% (<i>n</i> = 127)
Master's degree or above	83.3% (<i>n</i> = 5)	66.4% (<i>n</i> = 103)
Doctoral degree	66.7% (<i>n</i> = 4)	10.3% (<i>n</i> = 16)
Relationship status		
Single, never married	33.3% (<i>n</i> = 2)	12.9% (<i>n</i> = 20)
Married	66.7% (<i>n</i> = 4)	63.2% (<i>n</i> = 98)
Unmarried, with partner	0% (<i>n</i> = 0)	4.5% (<i>n</i> = 7)
Divorced	16.7% (<i>n</i> = 1)	13.5% (<i>n</i> = 21)
Children under 12 at home		
0	66.7% (<i>n</i> = 4)	68.4% (<i>n</i> = 106)
1	16.7% (<i>n</i> = 1)	11.6% (<i>n</i> = 18)
2	16.7% (<i>n</i> = 1)	15.5% (<i>n</i> = 24)
3	0% (<i>n</i> = 0)	1.3% (<i>n</i> = 2)
4 or more	0% (<i>n</i> = 0)	1.3% (<i>n</i> = 2)
Elderly parents/in-laws at home		
Yes	16.7% (<i>n</i> = 1)	8.4% (<i>n</i> = 13)
No	83.3% (<i>n</i> = 5)	89.0% (<i>n</i> = 138)
Job category		
Work for an organization	83.3% (<i>n</i> = 5)	89.1% (<i>n</i> = 147)
Independent	16.7% (<i>n</i> = 1)	10.9% (<i>n</i> = 18)
Years in current organization		
Less than 4 years	0% (<i>n</i> = 0)	18.7% (<i>n</i> = 29)
4 to 10 years	16.7% (<i>n</i> = 1)	23.2% (<i>n</i> = 36)
10 to 15 years	33.3% (<i>n</i> = 2)	13.5% (<i>n</i> = 21)
More than 15 years	50% (<i>n</i> = 3)	41.9% (<i>n</i> = 65)

Data Collection Context and Tools

The context for the interview part of this study is one of voluntary individual participation through an online interview using Zoom™. Face-to-face interviews were not possible during the study because of COVID-19 restrictions. However, after a year of conducting work using Zoom and similar technologies, participants had a high comfort level with the remote interview format. Some interviews had the cameras off but were recorded and professionally transcribed by two commercial services, Rev.com and Otter.ai, for accuracy.

Recruitment of Interview Subjects

My selection process included all the people who volunteered to be interviewed. None were excluded. I originally planned to obtain in-person interview subjects from volunteers from

the survey sample, supplemented by recruits from different organizations. However, the pandemic forced the governor of my state to close most businesses and organizations. In addition, most people suffered from COVID-19 phobia, the fear of getting COVID by meeting face to face. Prior to widespread vaccine availability, it was almost impossible to meet safely. During this time there were multiple other stressors causing tension and resistance to take on another task. People were strained from having to learn new technologies, shifting to at-home workspaces, and maintaining an awareness of ever-changing safety measures. Nevertheless, the interviews were very productive and revealing and participants were happy to share their experiences. They did not seem rushed or bothered by the extended time or technology.

Data Collection Tools

My interview questions were structured based on the literature from multiple sound studies. The six sections were taken from the following studies: Rojo (2016), Cornell (2014), and work-life balance scale studies (Rincy & Panchanatham, 2010). Each of the studies looked at detailed aspects of work-life balance and their impact on the employee, the family, and satisfaction. For example, the study in India (Rincy & Panchanatham, 2010) looked at 318 public, private, and foreign bank managers to assess their perceived work-life balance to determine a work-life balance scale. Rojo's (2016) Italian study developed a list of categories for work-life balance measures. The Cornell University study (2014) researched the need for a balance between work and other personal life domains to effectively manage work and life domains in order to have a positive balance. Using these studies in conjunction with literature allowed me to develop a list of questions for the interviews.

The interview questions were approved by the Hood College IRB. Also, the structure of the questions was reviewed and approved by Dr. Beverly Stanford, Professor Emerita of

Education at Azusa College, and Dr. Anita Jose, Professor of Management at Hood College's George B. Delaplaine Jr. School of Business and my doctoral committee chair.

Interview Questions

I developed a set of questions that was used in all interviews, following the same sequence with each participant. The interview questions were structured based on the key issues in the literature. For example, Rojo's (2016) study, using employees from 800 companies, stated that when work-life balance measures were given to employees there was a positive impact on the company's productivity. Their findings included that when employees were given work-life balance benefits they were more committed to the company. This was one of the studies I used to help format the categories for survey and the questionnaire. The interview questions, like the survey questions, were approved by the Hood College IRB. The questions were pilot tested during a class session and changes were made as needed. Interview questions are included in Appendix B.

Interview Procedures, Context, and Environment

During the pandemic, the rules from the federal, state, district, and local authorities were constantly changing. As the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) developed new guidelines, governing bodies met and issued boundaries and mandates. Some of the common mandates were social distancing at 6 feet, wearing masks indoors and outdoors, and limiting the size of indoor gatherings. Because using technology to conduct business became the norm, I used Zoom, a video conferencing tool that allowed us to meet safely remotely. I used an interview protocol (Appendix E) that combined steps and activities described by Weiss (1994) designed to put interviewees at ease and learn about their "interior experiences," and "what people perceived and how they interpreted their perceptions" (p. 1).

At the beginning of the interview, I greeted the interviewee and described my study. I explained that I would use an alias and immediately asked permission to record. Each participant was given a copy of the questions and asked about their environment.

All interviewees participated from home except for Jane, who was in her office at school. Their environments were mostly clear of interference and seemed peaceful. Two interviewees, Jane and Betty, were interrupted during the interview. Jane stopped to give directions to a staff member and quickly returned to the interview process. On the other hand, Betty was interrupted frequently by her autistic son. It was impressive how patient she was and how she seamlessly corrected him, at times reminding him of routines in place. He was very respectful and always complied. The interruptions made me feel as if I were intruding, but she did not seem to be bothered and continued in a normal pattern of speech and seemed contented. Some interviewees had their webcams off but all spoken responses were recorded and professionally transcribed using commercial services provided by Rev.com and otter.ai for accuracy.

All the interviews were conducted the same way. I followed a script asking the participants the same questions in the same order. I listened for their pauses, grunts, and even the way some of them rephrased the questions. The gasps, pauses, and inflection in their responses created a nonverbal visual. When necessary, during the interviews I was able to ask participants clarifying or follow-up questions. All participants were fluent in English. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

Data Analysis Process

The source material for my analysis was the transcripts of six interviews conducted in March and April 2021. I used open coding (Maxwell, 2013) to identify key words and phrases that led to the identification of substantive categories and key themes. Maxwell (2013) states

that, “Substantive categories are primarily descriptive, in a broad sense that includes description of participants’ concepts and beliefs; they stay close to the data categorized, and don’t inherently imply a more abstract theory” (p. 108). Maxwell (2013) further states that this process involves using the “participants’ own words and concepts” (p. 108). Using this approach, I was able to accurately capture the participants’ voices. I did this electronically as well as in hard copy, highlighting different themes in different colors, annotating the transcript margins, and recording the results in summary tables as described in Maxwell (2013). An example of this process and output is included in Appendix G.

I then determined if there was any alignment between participant interviews and the three primary theoretical areas described in Chapter 2. These major theme areas included the work-life balance general framework (Fisher, 2001; Greenhaus et al., 2003; Hobson et al., 2001), spillover theory (Sok et al.; 2014, Stein, 1980), work-home interference (Voydanoff et al., 2004), motivation/hygiene theory (Herzberg, 2003; Herzberg et al., 1959), and social exchange theory (Homans, 1958). This type of coding was done, in part, to identify any relationship between the quantitative analysis reported in Chapter 4 and the qualitative results presented in this chapter, and also to see if the issues reported by my interview participants were similar and similarly prioritized to those reported in theoretical literature.

Open coding into substantive categories highlighted respondent perceptions by identifying terms such priority, balance, stress, flexibility, pandemic, and others that describe the emotions, relationships, work and life conditions, and respondent motivations. The initial coding process was followed by a second analysis, dividing themes into subthemes. Using two sequential coding processes provided an opportunity to check and recheck the initial results, enhancing intra-rater reliability.

Findings

Table 5.2 presents a summary of the themes produced by open coding along with substantiative categories (Maxwell, 2013), keywords, and characteristic interview responses. Key themes that were generated by analysis include perception of work-life balance, support systems, and personal care. These themes address the work-life balance concerns, perceptions of support systems, and feedback regarding time for self-care that female professionals experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. All respondent quotations are presented exactly as stated by participants.

Table 5.2

Coding Summary of Interview Responses

Substantive Category	Key Terms	Characteristic Responses
Work-life balance is difficult to achieve	Balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I think that work-life balance really is that being able to enjoy both . . . get joy out of both, your work and your life, at the same time. • Ideally means a balance in my life between work and home. • Well, ashamedly, it's not ideal. It's not what I wanted but it means to me [a] balance between work-life, your career, and your personal, social, family life and it has to be a balance. • And now I understand, because that work-life balance is so hard in a job when you're leading an organization.
	Prioritize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having time to take care of personal life and to be successful and productive at work. • And being able to prioritize when to do what, what is the priority when, because both works. • And that's another definition . . . am I putting the big rocks, the most important things . . . are they being prioritized?
	Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pandemic gave me more time at home. • I left my job because my son was a little over a year, so I got a job at the prison that my sister found. This freed me up to have a better lifestyle, to have more time with my family because I was a young wife . . . married [only] a year or two. • I struggle with it because as I say to younger administrators and people starting out, and I will remind myself, I could spend 24 hours a day in principal work and still never get this job done. So

Substantive Category	Key Terms	Characteristic Responses
		<p>where is that balance? And when is enough, enough? And how do I evaluate?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Really, the organization can't do so much. It only is impacted by the number of people they schedule, and I think if they can give us enough time, which is not negotiable, without doing that. And what I do is I try to do my notes as I go along. It doesn't always work out, so my plan is I'm going to buy a Dictaphone and dictate it, and it types it.
	No balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> My life lacks a balance . . . it is never-ending. In my life as a teacher there was a large imbalance between my life and family because the job was so demanding.
	Personal challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I have an autistic child. Well, my son can't balance it because he has needs that only I can meet because I'm a single parent so he's my priority, so I know that I must get home by a certain time. I don't have any extended family support. And I think that's probably where I feel the most pain points.
Support is important	Team Resources Coworkers Colleagues Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Camaraderie of the team and establish rapport and to be able to serve them, both their mental, physical, and spiritual needs. It is a team effort with the nurse, with the office, the medical assistant, the managers, as well as the residents and myself. And it's just a really good team. The chemistry is working so well right now. We all enjoy being there and being with each other and working together on different things. And we make each other laugh, and it's a very upbeat, happy environment. And I've really tried to lay the foundation for, we are always trying to help you get to where you want to be. Teachers were my support system. No supervisor support, none, or from [the] assistant principal [or] principal. No support system.
	Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> And I also love the fact that there isn't a huge distance between teachers working in classrooms with students and the highest leadership that you can get. And to me, that's really important, because there's transparency. As a classroom teacher, you have access to directors, and you meet instructional leaders, and you have an opportunity to interact with these people.
	Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I definitely think, with personal satisfaction, if they're there, you're not working alone. You have someone to collaborate with that knows the practice. And I've really tried to lay the foundation for [in my organization] . . . we are always trying to help you.
	Friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Friends and teammates have dinner together.

Substantive Category	Key Terms	Characteristic Responses
	Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friends from school [go on] overnight field trips. • Some colleagues worked together and developed life-long friendships. • It is nice to have been known, [and to know] the people and the system and to be familiar. That familiarity provides some comfort. You know the county, you know the expectations. You know the vision and mission, because you've grown up through it; seen it evolve and change as well. • Lots of principals I work with, and collaborate with a lot of different building leaders as well. And it's very pervasive that family, your family, is a priority to them; so I love that part about it.
	Flexible scheduling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semiflexible schedule, [so I] can volunteer and choose days to work from home or come into office.
	Wellness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They gave us for COVID, they gave us five extra days to use. • They had a wellness center, teacher assistance, but no one trusted it because the county had a demand.
	Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working as a principal, working for the organization, I do like the autonomy to end the ability to make changes and influence what happens in your own school.
	Microaggressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They did not do anything to help.
	Workload	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They kept adding more and more demands.
	Conservative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's a very conservative culture there.
	Preferential treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a county, um, I do feel like there is a central network that gets preferences and preferential treatment. • And I think there's been some very dynamic people who've been passed over for some very deserved positions
	Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Well, it's because leadership is living out their mission to serve every student. • [My county] is the first county to have the LGBTQ laws and rules and stuff. And it was amazing because nobody expected that. • And the fundamental truth that every individual deserves a right to an education, regardless of culture, creed, religion, sexual orientation.
	Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On their wedding. Weddings and babies . . . still in contact with a few of those, those customers, because we've had 15 years of relationship.
Personal care is essential	Time/balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And I'm . . . I struggle with it because as I say to younger administrators and people starting out and I will remind myself, I could spend 24 hours a day in principal work and still never get this job done. So where is that balance? And when is enough, enough? And how do I evaluate. • And now I understand that, because that work-life balance is so hard in a job when you're leading an organization.

Substantive Category	Key Terms	Characteristic Responses
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In my life as a teacher there was a large imbalance between my life and family because the job was so demanding. • Really the organization can't do so much. It only is impacted by the number of people they schedule, and I think if they can give us enough time, which is not negotiable, without doing that. • And what I do is I try to do my notes as I go along. It doesn't always work out, so my plan is I'm going to buy a Dictaphone and dictate it and it types it. • Organizations have a very huge financial benefit because they're getting so much work, more work.
	Relationships/family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You know, I was guilty that I found out a couple weeks later or something about something important about my family. • I have a child in daycare. • I have an autistic child. • Well, my son can balance it because he has needs that only I can meet because I'm a single parent so he's my priority so I know that I must get home by a certain time. • Takes pride in having a relationship with customers. • Oh, yes, most definitely "T" and "B" was, you know, my main managers [family members who work at the restaurant]. • No support system. • I don't have any extended family support. And I think that's probably where I feel the most pain points. • Very supportive, very, very supportive, all my whole family was. Well also 'A', my oldest daughter, and Pastor was very, you know, helped out wherever they could. • I think I had a pretty good relationship with [the] majority of my employees . . . I prayed with my employees if they want prayer. I was there to support them, if they had, you know, a death in the family, or they were going through something hard within the family.
	Pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoy developing close relationships with different colleagues with like-faith and lifestyle. • Pandemic gave me more time at home. • Telemedicine that came about with the COVID-19 pandemic, because we had to start seeing patients. • You know what, COVID. You know, they can't provide a lot of things that I [did] want to do last year, but I know I did get the rest that probably my body needed. So, I'm not so upset about it. • No, no, I didn't get to travel to all the places that I wanted to go. But my husband and I did get to spend a lot of quality time together, and just rest. • Because it's just go, go, go, go, go. You know what, I'm grateful for the pandemic, though.

Substantive Category	Key Terms	Characteristic Responses
	Reconnect with friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So, I'm going to, this week, just have that personal contact that I think we've lost through this pandemic. • Some colleagues worked together and developed lifelong friendships. • I have a colleague that I work with who we've become really good friends. We'll have dinner together and our husbands know each other now.
	Self-care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So, I've started in my school, every meeting that we have to do has a meditation moment at the beginning. And I found that that's been really good for myself as well, because it forces me to model and to stop, and to make sure that I'm doing some kind of self-care or mindfulness action . . . And so that I'm trying to get that integrated into my life as a whole. Like, I get up in the morning and I kind of get on YouTube or I look for articles or I do something, you know, I didn't know how to do anything with my hair, now I can do a little something with my hair, like I just, that was my thing to learn or, you know, I've been reading about, you know, I want to do consulting. So, I've been reading about government contractors and things like that. And so that's a self-care moment for me. • I spend a lot of time on the computer. I actually spend almost all my time on the computer [in] meetings or answering email or working in documents. I crave the exact opposite. And by that, I mean I crave nature. I crave being outside, and working in the dirt, and my garden, and planting things, or pruning things. So I spend time in the garden, in the yard I am tech free. There is not one piece of technology on my body, and I'm in the yard, and I played in the dirt. • I had a Pajama Day, would have to have one day that the curtains would not go open, and we could do room service, or we would [prepare] enough food, the day before that we would have food there, and just stay in bed and be lazy. • Two vacations a year, I tell you, I love it. I am, and I promise, more released, relaxed. I am lying in a chair beside the blue water. So, I like going to tropical areas and just relaxing, especially in the wintertime. You know, that was one of my favorite places to go, [in] December and January—the end of December, beginning of January—so I can recoup from the holidays and rejuvenate and give back to myself. • "R" being the pastor, I had spoken with him. Probably like his second year, in that I know how much time he was doing between his regular 40-hour job and pastoring is than he needed. If it wasn't anything but us going to, because we have a timeshare, we have a couple of times gone here to National Harbor, Old Town, Alexandria, or gone to a B&B if it was like a 3-day weekend or 4-day weekend kind of thing, just to be away. • I didn't know how bad I was in bad shape, running from 4:28 in the morning until 8:00 at night; just traveling is horrible.

Substantive Category	Key Terms	Characteristic Responses
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You don't realize how because you do badly for so long, bad becomes right. And that's even with taking care about our bodies. We don't realize how bad it is, until we start getting sick, and you realize, Oh, wow. There're times where I just like I'm running, and I don't even think about it until I'm about to almost crash. And then you go, well wait a minute, when was the last time I took care of me? I will be bad. My body would be that tired and that worn out that I would be like, just barely make it into the house.
	Exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After work I took exercise classes, Pilates, yoga, and music classes. I walk with friends, attend community, and church outings. My family does [exercise] three days a week, we do online zoom sessions with YouTube, and we do some exercise. And we'll do chair exercises or those kinds of things. Just to get our bodies moving, have some family time, catch up on things and that's I found that to be didn't know the impact that that would be but I'm going to tell you, it's been really good just connecting the family and just being able to talk about things and that and have touching base and seeing because I'm on zoom right, seeing my family and make sure everybody's okay, but also, you know, getting our bodies moving and having that dedicated time to exercise as well which has been really good in so many ways and working in the dirt, and my garden, and planting things, or pruning things.
	Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I also feel like I get support from my church. I could call on my pastor and his wife and different people at church that I know and love that if I needed something, I could call on them and they would 100% be there. And of course, get more involved with the church, and maybe the seniors. Ladies of our church. I get phone calls from sisters of the church, that I may be on a phone call, I'm thinking it might be a 30-minute phone call, where, like today, I was on a phone call for over two hours last night, and that's what we do because we know it is about serving God.
	Set goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I've started several diets and work and I have not gone through, you know, so I'm trying to set goals for myself, I'm about ready to turn 50 and I said I want you know, my goal is 50 before 50. So, I've set some goals and I am attending classes on Sundays. I have started drinking water more. I've several outings planned this week. I've also this week being off. I called five of my friends and said hey, I want to get together want to see you now that I have the vaccination.
	God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We have to remember that Jesus got in the boat and went to the other side, you know, so we have to and I have to say that to

Substantive Category	Key Terms	Characteristic Responses
		<p>myself sometime that you know you can't do everything right, you just can't. You have to take care of yourself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My testimony is when God said and 2019 it was time to move into the new season and shut it (the restaurant) down. So, I didn't . . . debate with him, and I didn't understand why he was saying what he was saying. But then I started thinking, I know every stitch, every inch of my body needed something that is about to happen to me physically. If I don't be obedient. And you know, and I was like, but we on the top, guide the business is doing good business is making money, you know, he was like, but what if you shut it down? (And I closed the business in March), and when COVID came, all I could do was cry. All I could do was Praise God. Right, there was what He was saying to me, "I am saving you, my daughter." Yes. And I'm grateful. So great. So, it was amazing.

Note: Open coding with substantitive categories (Maxwell, 2013, p. 108).

Theme 1: Work-Life Balance Is Difficult to Achieve

The perception of work-life balance is the ability to prioritize your life and work segments in order to achieve a measure of satisfaction. In this section of my study, I asked the interviewees to define what work-life balance means to you and explain the work-life balance in your life. Their answers were intertwined throughout the entire session. This question seemed to invoke emotional responses on multiple levels but especially due to the present pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic shifted our world into a virtual realm almost overnight. Due to the federal, district and local mandates most businesses were required to shut down and move to virtual only setting. This sudden shift caused the boundaries between work and home to become blurred or disappear. As families and businesses struggled to acclimate to their new environment the stress levels increased. Women have made major achievements in the workplace but the social norms concerning the role of women in home life changes slowly. Thus, the impact on women and men in the home was different.

Betty said, “Well, ashamedly it’s not ideal. It's not what I wanted but it means to me a balance between work-life, your career, and your personal, social, family life and it has to be a balance so that a person won’t get mentally and emotionally burnt out.” She added multiple ways she was imbalanced:

It used to be that I would bring my computer home. I would take a break and talk to my family. Sit down with my husband and child after getting home maybe about six or seven. Then I would start right back an hour or two later and I would do charts or work on my computer on patient-related stuff until I could not hold my eyes open. Then, on the weekend, I would work on the computer too.”

Betty’s work life is even more complex because of her position as a leader of medical residents in a health care setting:

What happens is four days a week, three and a half days, the residents see the patients. They come to me after that. They present to me what’s going on with the patient and we decide, they tell me what they’re management plan is, what their diagnostic impression is, and the plan on treatment. So, I make any corrections. That’s the time I educate and teach and then we go back to the room to see the patient and see if there are any changes that we need to make. Then, we’ll educate the patient.

Due to the nature of her job the level of stress is intense. She is required to ensure that her residents do not make mistakes causing harm to the patients. Coaching and educating residents is only one part of her job:

Thursday afternoon and all day Friday, I see patients myself. I see my own patients and I have a break. During the break, it is time to catch up with prescriptions that need to be submitted or patients that need to be called back, instructions to the nurse or just tell them

what to do. So, I finish between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m. and then I do my notes and I work on my in-basket, which involves results, patient calls, prescription refill requests, et cetera.

Betty's workdays are filled with constantly changing, sometimes unexpected activity followed by increased pressure. She describes in detail one of her main frustration points:

So, they can do better with the schedule. In other words, we need more time. We used to get 30 minutes for each patient. That allowed them to check-in, the nurses' triage sees them, and then we had at least 20 minutes of face-to-face. Now it's limited to 20 minutes so that usually gives me 10 minutes because it may take them 5 minutes to check-in, and they're brought back. The nurse may take 10 minutes to triage them, so I get, at most, 15 minutes so my plan is for him to knock on the door once or to call me and remind me it's time to go. The reason I've done that is that he's the only nurse, so what I'm going to do is I'm going to do a timer and I'm going to have different alarms, alarms like I do when I wake up. I'm going to do the same thing with these patients so that I can time myself.

She seemed to reflect on the imbalance in her life and responded, "But I don't have a great balance but I'm trying to do everything at work so that I will not bring work home because I feel like one thing should not invade the other." She described in great detail the cause of the imbalance and stressors. The demands at work spill over into her family affecting her personal life.

Jane, an elementary school principal, said:

I understand that, because work-life balance is so hard in a job when you're leading an organization. And, you know, I think that work-life balance really is that being able to enjoy both; you must get joy out of both your work and your life at the same time. And being able to prioritize when to do what, what is the priority when, because both works.

And work can take over your entire life, right? Every minute of your day. And so being able to have that balance is so hard to achieve.”

Jane thought carefully and paused several times digging deep into her thoughts as she reflected and produced her self-revealing answers. Later she described specific changes she made to bring balance into her life.

The lack of balance among the professional women continued. Lucy, a successful business owner and the wife of the pastor of the church (first lady), said: “It was very rare for me to have a lot of balance, because between work and my life, you know, it was just busy, busy, busy. I literally work 70 hours a week. Yeah. Easily 70 hours a week and during the holidays, it was more than that. There were times I would get to work 9:00 a.m. may not have left until 2:00 or 3:00 a.m.” The demands of a business owner require total attention or could result in a major loss. Later she confessed she often did not realize how tired she was until the end of the year when she took a much-needed vacation. The damaging effects of work-life balance are seldom noticed and appear as burnt out, stress or conflict.

Sally, a leader coordinator expresses her work life balance in a descriptive manner: “There are days when it feels like a job, and I’m tired, and I’m burnt out, and I don’t want to go anymore. I’m like, “This too hard,” because I’m human and I’m like, “I can’t do it,” and that’s when I have to back it up. So, what does it mean to me? I think it means truly understanding why you do what you do, and connecting it to your life aspect of it. So why do you do your work and how do you connect that to your life? And because I work for an organization that says family first, I know that if something comes up in my family, I will be there 100%, without question. So sometimes, it tips and I’m not balanced because work is taking up mental energy and physical energy. But then other times, it’s pretty good because it’s all integrated.” Sally was one of the

only interviewees who described the high level of support from her direct supervisor and organization. She was also overwhelmed, but because of the spoken understanding of family first, she felt supported.

Improving work-life balance for the employee ultimately improves the outlook for the organization. It decreases absenteeism, improves productivity, and increases organizational commitment and increased satisfaction (Jain & Jain, 2015a). Technological advances catapulted people into work and home life without boundaries. Thus, prioritizing became one of the biggest necessities to survive and meet multiple challenges. Women no matter their roles and position in the workplace continue to be the dominant caretakers at home. According to Catalyst's study, women spend 4 hours and 22 minutes per day in unpaid labor, while men spend 2 hours and 15 minutes (Catalyst, 2021).

Theme 2: Support Is Important

Supporting is a significant factor leading to satisfaction in work-life balance. Belonging and being supported affect gender roles differently. According to a study by Harandi et al. (2017) correlating mental health status with social support, women are more likely to suffer negative mental health impacts than men because of social support deficits. Support can provide protection from feeling alone, stressed, and conditions that can lead to illnesses. The study concluded that if individuals had a secure social support system, they were less likely to suffer from depression and other mental problems (Harandi et al., 2017).

Sally, a leader coordinator in a public-school setting shared how supportive her supervisor and school leaders are:

So, I really interact a lot with directors and executive directors, and some interactions with the superintendent and the deputy superintendent, and just a lot of different leaders.

Lots of principals I work with and collaborate with a lot of different building leaders as well. And it's very pervasive that family, your family, is a priority to them." She continued, "and I also love the fact that there isn't a huge distance between teachers working in classrooms with students and the highest leadership that you can get. And to me, that's really important, because there's transparency. As a classroom teacher, you have access to directors, and you meet instructional leaders, and you have an opportunity to interact with these people. And so, there's a very slim kind of gap between what's actually happening in the classroom and what upper leadership is aware of. And because of that, I feel like we can better meet the needs of our students and meet the needs of our community and our families. Because all the way to the tippy top, they know exactly what's happening in the classroom.

She became emotional as she described the unexpected support from the county toward a small segment of the community: "[My county] is the first county to have the LBGTQ laws and rules and stuff. And it was amazing because nobody expected that. So, I hear what you're saying and I see what you're saying." She clarified that her county is not only making a statement but putting it into action:

Well, it's because leadership is living out their mission to serve every student. And that's a marginalized group of students that need to be wrapped around and supported. And the fundamental truth that every individual deserves a right to an education, regardless of culture, creed, religion, sexual orientation, it doesn't matter. Everybody has that right to an education, and that's truly lived out in leadership.

Support comes in many forms. In Sally's county, the leadership is supportive to leaders, staff, and students. Later we will see a correlation to Sally's satisfaction and receiving sufficient support.

However, she explained the the view through a different lens, that of the organization:

A teacher cannot do her job or his job in seven and a half hours. It's impossible. Yet, the organization, if you think about it from a business perspective now, so we're taking off kind of the mission-driven perspective and putting on a business. Because this is a business, they benefit from a lot of extra hours of work that they don't have to pay their employees. And that's because the work is so tied to the mission. So that's the downside of work being tied to mission, is that organizations have a very huge financial benefit because they're getting so much work, more work, out of their employees than they're having to pay.

Sally clearly described the lack of boundary that exists in many of the participants' lives. Professionals when feel supported become more committed to the organizations mission and work beyond the required work hours.

Support from the organization can also come in the form of team resources, help from coworkers, collaboration as well as supervisors. Betty is the only caretaker of her home and a single parent. She has limited support at home. However, she describes her place of work as supportive with multiple team resources: "You're not working alone. You have someone to collaborate with that knows the practice and has the same medical knowledge that you can bounce off of. Everybody had different experiences." She continues to explain:

And that helps because their experience in their practice is different so we both really complement each other. We help each other because I'm stronger with clinic stuff and I

haven't been in a hospital in a long time and the guy that was in the hospital, he's better with that so people coming out of the hospital. Here in the ... clinic, they can't really help us with management and everything and I can help him in clinic flow."

As a result of support from team resources Betty can work in a less stressful environment.

Sometimes collaboration and working in teams can be difficult when you have a private/closed personality. Jane describes her personality as private and closed: "I would say that I'm a very private person, I'm a very closed person. And I'm very, not a very trusting person. So, it takes a long time for somebody to get into my circle." However, her longevity in the county has provided her with an unusual level of comfort and camaraderie: "And so, I do have to say, and that's one of the positives of being an organization for so long, that I've gotten to know people and really know people, because I've known them for so many years, and have been able to establish some really good support structures. And I don't know without them, what I would do." As a student in the county, she is very familiar with the mission and desires to give back to the community. In addition, many of her friends have moved to higher positions giving her support at the top of her organization: "And you know, some of those people have progressed into central office, and they're good contacts for me to kind of bounce ideas off and things of that sort, which helps for personal satisfaction and knowing how to navigate the system. My friends, my principal, friends, my principal, colleague, friends are truly friends, they aren't just colleagues, they are my friends. And I don't know what I would do without them. And two of them . . . we travel together." The supportive relationships at various levels have built confidence of steel in Jane. The lifelong friendships have strengthened her character traits allowing her to create a group for African American educators to assist them in mitigating some of the microaggressions they perceive in the workplace. Betty explained that even though she had

support from her family, the support she received from her colleagues and organization was different because they often have a deeper insight into work-related concerns.

Other participants concurred by further explaining the importance of work relationships. Jackie, a public-school reading specialist, expressed the importance of the support from her colleagues: “The teachers supported me. I developed long-term relationships that extended beyond the school setting. We would go to dinner and visit each other. I still keep in touch with some of them.” She continued describing the team and their relationship, “It’s just a really good team. The chemistry is working so well right now. We all enjoy being there and being with each other and working together on different things. And we make each other laugh, and it’s a very upbeat, happy environment. . . . Camaraderie of the team and establish rapport and to be able to serve them both their mental, physical, and spiritual needs.” Jackie discussed the supervisory support she gives to her staff. Her interaction among her staff identified that there was not an invisible boundary. She was willing to help at all levels, thus building a supportive organizational culture. Support was equally important in the medical setting, “It is a team effort with the nurse, with the office, the medical assistant, the managers as well as the residents and myself.” In all professional settings, it was clear that support from teams was equally important as support from the supervisor to build a supportive organizational culture.

Another major part of support is the importance of developing collaborative relationships. According to Emerson’s (1976) examination of the social exchange theory, resources will only be continuously exchanged only if there is a valued relationship in place. Part of that valued relationship includes accessibility and collaboration. One participant explained the importance of accessibility as having little distance between the workers and top management, “And I also love the fact that there isn’t a huge distance between teachers working in classrooms with students

and the highest leadership. . . . As a classroom teacher, you have access to directors, and you meet instructional leaders, and you have an opportunity to interact with these people. And to me, that's really important, because there's transparency." Having accessibility and relationships was important in the medical organization as well. "I definitely think with personal satisfaction, if they're (there), you're not working alone. You have someone to collaborate with that knows the practice." Betty continued to say that the professional relationship spilled over to personal settings. She is a single parent with a special needs child who always requires her attention. Therefore, when she goes out or plans any event, she must have someone to care for her son: "She helps me take care of my son if I have to go anywhere and my mother she'll come and stay." She added that she also gets mental support from a friend: "I have a friend in Haley that I talk to. She's a social psychologist so she gave me some counseling. She helps me with my son, and mental support as well." The integration of work and life can be positive. Work relationships can spill over and affect home life.

Lucy, the restaurant owner, shared the level of team support within her company. She described the support as flowing in two directions. The employees and family understood the hardships and were willing to adjust as needed. They worked overtime and took time off when closing was needed. In addition, employees received support during their family crises and celebrations. Praying together, officiating weddings, attending funerals, and dedicating babies are some of the ways employees were supported.

Also, she passionately shared how her family members stepped up to help meet deadlines and never allowed her to work in the wee hours alone. Her husband also came to escort her from the restaurant when she worked until 2:00 a.m. or 3:00 a.m. This is a model of how team support flows in both directions, providing satisfaction to the employer as well as the employee.

Theme 3: Personal Care Is Essential

A study by Andrea Gragnano, Silvia Simbula, and Massimo Miglioretti (2020) focused on work-life balance and work-health balance (WHB) focusing on the nonwork domain of health on job satisfaction. In this study, employees considered health as important as family. The study found that the ability to work determined job satisfaction when measuring WHB. The final analysis also determined that the health domain was just as important as the family domain when evaluating job satisfaction. Therefore, because personal care and health are major factors in job satisfaction, it is important to focus on personal care because of its role in impacting on WLB satisfaction.

The participants shared a common concern about their health and personal care. Often, they provided a long explanation, sometimes followed by an apology or future plan of correction.

Betty said, “I walk mostly on the treadmill. I need to do it more but that’s an excellent release. It’s physically viable to the body as well as emotional that you have natural endorphins that get released and it’s very satisfactory.” When asked if there was any block of time, she had for herself she responded, “Well, those are far and few between because again, I’m a single parent.” This was one of several times she explained that being a single parent changed everything. Even though not mentioned, we previously talked about her family contracting COVID-19. She and her son recovered but her husband died. She was grateful that he was a strong Christian and was in heaven, but his absence was an obvious strain on her family. As a single parent her imbalance was compounded.

Yet, Betty somehow found time to help others: “With a special needs child, what I do is plan events to go to. I met people through an event on this mission trip to Nashville, in Nashville. So, I did have, in a way (serve others).” She paused and continued to explain her routines. “I’ll

do it sometimes for 10 minutes. I would like to get back to 30 minutes to an hour of devotion and prayer, Bible-reading, and meditation. And when I get back, my idea is to get back. I should get back and get on my knees and pray and thank God for the day, but I usually don't do that until it's time to go to bed. I'm so sleepy." Her lack of time leads to her inability to properly address her personal care needs. As women often do, she puts everyone and everything above herself. Her devotion to God is one of her top priorities but it is tough to fulfill and out of exhaustion she falls asleep. She is an example of the typical participant, finding it difficult to prioritize personal care.

Lucy described the lack of personal care best when she stated:

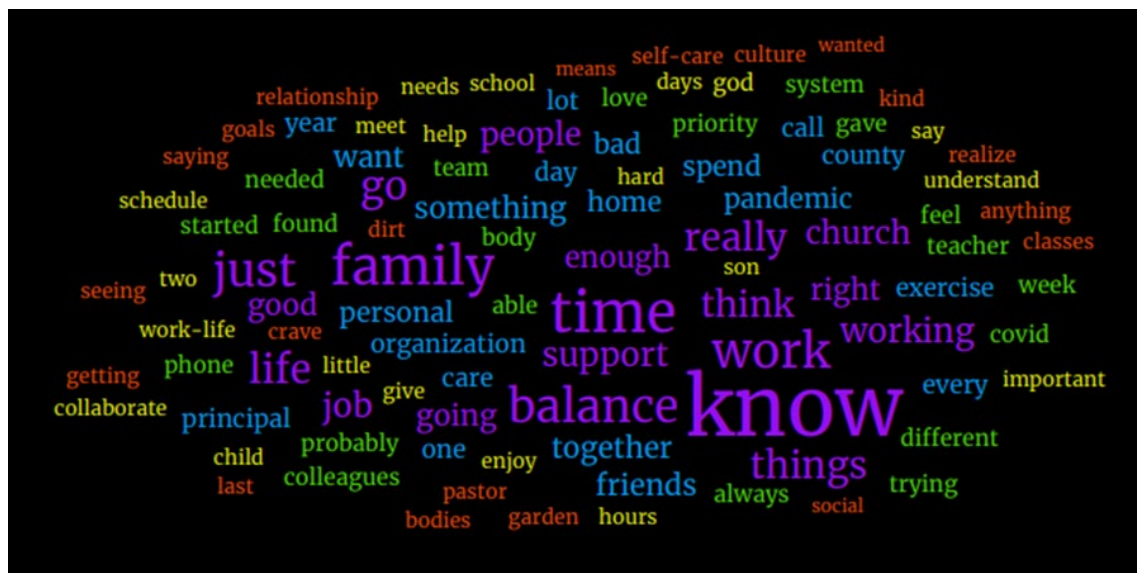
I didn't know how bad I was in bad shape, running from 4:28 in the morning until 8:00 at night; just traveling is horrible. You don't realize how because you do bad for so long, bad becomes right. And that's even with taking care of our bodies. We don't realize how bad it is, until (it) starts getting (to) get right, and you realize there's times where I'm just like I'm running, and I don't even think about it until I'm about to almost crash. And then you go, "Well wait a minute, when was the last time I took care of me?"

This participant describes the reality of most of the participants when they did not realize their lack of self-care due to their lack of WLB. She, like the others, had a rude awakening and made intentional changes, such as Pajama Day, buying a Dictaphone to record and transcribe notes, putting away all electronics and playing in the dirt. Jane, the principal, decided that her staff also needed self-care and integrated her change into her meetings. "So, I've started in my school, every meeting that we do, has a meditation moment at the beginning. And I found that that's been really good for myself as well, because it forces me to model and to stop and to make sure that I'm doing some kind of self-care or mindfulness action."

Figure 7 represents participants' responses during an interview session describing the effects of their WLB satisfaction. It perfectly captures the participants' sentiments I have discussed in the previous section under the six themes.

Chapter Summary and Conclusions

Figure 7



horrors of dreading COVID infections invading their families and even killing their loved ones. They described what seemed to be overnight changes to their workplace. They also expressed that virtual solutions and new family-friendly organizational policies were detrimental to the organization's efficiency. Poor physical health, depression, and anxiety were common themes that emerged from the isolation and lack of balance. Furthermore, isolation enhanced the lack of satisfaction. Some respondents felt they received little support due to the required isolation; this finding supported conclusions in literature that the presence of team resources positively impacts employee satisfaction of work-life balance.

The study participants also reported an improvement in work-life balance due to flexible scheduling and the use of teaming structures at work. Respondents emphasized the freedom they felt when they were able to make appointments, take care of small children, complete chores, and even guiltlessly spend more time with their spouse, as a result of these policies. Some even suggested the reduction in pay was worth the benefit of more time at home.

This chapter has presented the interview results of this study, providing participants' perceptions of how organizational policies, personal support systems, and ability to have self-care influenced their level of satisfaction with their work-life balance. In addition, perceptions were presented showing that the COVID-19 pandemic tested our current organizational policies and personal support systems as we shifted to new models of work and life. Chapter 6 will present conclusions, implications, limitations, areas for future research, and an epilogue.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The purpose of this mixed-methods study was to examine the role of organizational, personal, and interactional influences on the perceptions of work-life balance among professional women. The preceding chapters have provided the theoretical framework, literature review, methodology, as well as the results of the survey and the interviews. In this chapter, I present the conclusions and implications of the study for organizations, professional women, and governmental policy. In addition, the limitations of the study are provided. I will conclude this chapter with an epilogue containing my views on the challenges associated with exploring this research topic during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the impact the pandemic may have had on the study's outcomes and conclusions.

Conclusions

To examine the work-life balance perceptions of professional women, I collected data through an anonymous online survey to which 184 individuals responded. This data collection included quantitative data as well as 133 narrative responses to an open-ended question about the effects of COVID-19 on the balance between work and life, and six interviews with respondents who self-identified as interview volunteers.

There were six major variables that were hypothesized to influence satisfaction with work-life balance, including: organizational variables such as human resource policies, team resources (work-life support systems), personal support systems, time for self-care, work-family conflict, and family-work conflict. Organizational variables affected the respondents as workers, personal variables affected them as individuals, and interactional variables involved conflict between their roles as family members and workers. In the case of the interactional variables, the

categories of conflicts are large and inclusive, such as the perceived conflict between family and work requirements, and how that conflict impacted an individual's WLB satisfaction.

The main conclusions of this research are provided in the next section. This section is divided into various categories based on the main variables of the study, as given above. As the different variables are presented, quantitative conclusions are shown first, followed by the qualitative feedback.

Organizational Policies and Systems

One of my study's main conclusions is that both organizational policies and systems are important factors in employee WLB satisfaction. The two main hypotheses that dealt with the policies and systems affecting WLB satisfaction were supported at a significant level.

Organizational Policies

The work-life balance satisfaction of the respondents is heavily influenced by organizational policies such as flexible schedules, social benefits, and family support. The ability of professional women to give immediate attention to urgent personal or family needs contributed significantly to WLB satisfaction. Having clear work expectations, supportive colleagues and understanding supervisors also contributed to WLB satisfaction. Employees' ability to discuss WLB issues with their supervisors was an important variable in their satisfaction. If HR policies benefiting employees, such as flexible work schedules and paid leave for therapeutic and preventative medical care, were in place in respondents' organizations, then employees were more likely to report positive work-life balance ($p < .01$).

Reinforcement by Qualitative Feedback

The qualitative feedback also emphasized the importance of organizational policies in achieving WLB satisfaction. However, open-ended responses to Question 15 were different than

the feedback from interviews regarding policies. Interviewees had an interesting take on the availability and use of organizational policies. They cited a lack of family-friendly policies as a cause of stress. They also noted that employees frequently do not know their organization's policies, receive training on them, or have easy access to them. Respondent perceptions ranged from "it means to me a balance between work-life, your career, and your personal, social, family life and it has to be a balance," to "So, where is that balance? And when is enough, enough?"

I also found, however, that for some respondents, working at home solved problems and made their work-life balance better: They noted the lack of commute, recovering two or more hours per day, and the ability to shift priorities between work and home as needed with greater flexibility, including the option to spend time with children and attend their school events without asking permission or feeling guilty. As one respondent stated, describing the new balance in her life: "It feels like a fair trade." This is due to the availability of flexible work policies such as telecommuting.

Organizational Systems

In addition to policies, the organizational environment in which they were executed was also important. In other words, the structures in place inside the organizations were also perceived to be a significant contributor to WLB satisfaction. These structures, which included formally organized work teams, were found to be strongly significant in generating work-life balance satisfaction ($p < .001$). This formality of organization carried with it the expectation that employees would support each other as needed—employees simply had to request assistance. By organizing collaborative work teams ahead of time, employees could call on other team members to share the workload when health- or family-related situations arose, and could do so without feeling guilty or that they were unduly burdening their coworkers.

Reinforcement by Qualitative Feedback

These findings about the importance of organizational systems in achieving WLB satisfaction were reinforced by the qualitative feedback that was received by the open-ended question in the survey as well as the six interviews. However, the experience of respondents differed, as expected, as there were 133 responses to the open-ended question and only six interview participants. Interviewees spoke about the importance of support, the types of support they had, and, most often, the specific types of people who were most helpful. They noted the importance of teams and that, even when they did not have extended family-member support, they received support from friends and coworkers. Just knowing the support was there was important to respondents. Interview participants also noted the absence of support from their supervisors, in contrast to the support they received from coworkers, who understood their position, role, and needs. These comments back up the quantitative findings on the importance of social networks, friends, and coworkers as support providers. Some interviewees highlighted specific areas and gave examples and how that balanced their work lives and lives in general with the help of coworkers. They also provided examples of how team support flows in both directions, providing satisfaction to the employer as well as the employee.

Personal Support Systems

Two hypotheses addressed the impact of personal support systems on WLB satisfaction. One was about support system/network and the other was about time for self-care. The first one was not supported, whereas the second one was supported. The details are given below.

Support System/Network

It was proposed that personal support systems, defined as the presence of family, friends, churches, and coworker friends (coworkers with whom strong personal relationships had

developed), would be influential in achieving and maintaining WLB satisfaction. This hypothesis was not supported in quantitative analysis ($p = .118$), although these elements were frequently cited as important by respondents in the qualitative analysis. One likely reason for the nonsignificant result here is that the sample included more mature respondents (69.8% were over 45), married (63.2%) with fewer small children at home (68.4% had no small children at home), and therefore less likely to require these resources to maintain their work-life balance.

Reinforcement by Qualitative Feedback

The importance of personal systems in attaining WLB satisfaction was enthusiastically supported by qualitative feedback. Respondents to the open-ended Question 15 described support systems that they either had or wished they had in order to achieve better work-life balance. Respondents reported that family members supported them by listening to their concerns and providing emotional support, picking up duties, and supporting them through mental crises. These comments reinforced for me the importance of this type of supportive relationship.

Coworkers became a support system at times because family members were not in the area. Coworker support included things like praying for them, attending family events such as weddings or funerals, and recognizing major events. In this way, coworkers became a bridge to security during tough times. Respondents said that when coworkers became friends, these “work friends” were better than other friends because they understood the stress at work; in the midst of everything, these special friends could help them work through challenges because they understood them better. Respondents commented that the pandemic limited their social interactions and access to their coworker and friends support networks, which increased their stress and decreased their WLB satisfaction.

Lack of adequate family support also affected WLB satisfaction. Respondents reported the challenges of living and working with young children and family disputes due to the lack of balance. Families also suffered from the “constantly changing landscape of rules and expectations” that created additional stress within the family, limiting family members' ability and/or willingness to be supportive. My interpretation of the interview results in this category was that respondents with secure family support systems were more balanced. Even during especially difficult circumstances, they were able to reach out for support, which prevented them from going into health or mental crisis themselves.

One thing that came through in the comments was that because of the lack of support, respondents seemed to give up. They described being lost, and how the extra responsibilities of the pandemic had hindered their ability to find respite. For example, they spoke about not being able to have supportive family and friends come to a funeral or visit them at home. I perceived from their comments that this lack of support caused them to lose their ability to keep up the struggle, causing them to enter what I call “pandemic depression.”

Time for Self (Self-Care)

One of the personal hypotheses (H4), time for self/self-care, included both the freedom to carve out time for self and access to mechanisms for self-care. Also included in this category were items such as being able to take care of personal needs, getting exercise, eating well, meeting with friends, and doing other things respondents wanted to do. Within the personal category, time devoted to self-care was a strongly statistically significant influencer of WLB satisfaction ($p < .001$). This result may be attributable to the reduction in stress that would be assumed to accompany the flexibility and financial capability to do the things one wants to do for oneself, along with the benefits of doing so, such as healthy eating, exercising, and having social

contact. This result may also have been influenced by the demographics of my sample, whose members required less time to take care of small children, and whose education (66.4% have a master's or doctoral degree) and seniority at work (41.9% have been employed by their current organization for 15 or more years) may have placed them in a position where they strongly value and are able to afford these personal amenities.

Reinforcement by Qualitative Feedback

The qualitative feedback also reinforced the importance of self-care in achieving WLB satisfaction. Some interview participants spoke of almost always putting themselves last and even being apologetic for not taking time for self. Others realized that they had to do something different and made a plan. One participant started meditation, another started nature walks; another participant turned off all technology and worked in the garden and raised chickens, another had prayer time; and yet another participant had pajama days—closing the blinds, having family days without the Internet, and watching movies. These respondents provide examples of establishing boundaries between work, family, and self. Such boundaries enable an individual to determine what self-care is needed, and then to receive it, leading to greater personal satisfaction.

With self-care, a common thread among the interviews wasn't a lack of knowledge or not knowing what they should do to support themselves. Instead, what I found was that most interviewees had servant-type personalities, always putting others first. Even while promising and trying to take care of themselves, they still put themselves last. Their compassion and caring for the needs of others overshadowed their need to care for themselves.

Respondents to survey Question 15 also had very illuminating comments about self-care. The concurrence of this study with the COVID-19 pandemic undoubtedly heightened the importance of self-care among participants. Subthemes related to personal care that emerged

from participant comments included aspects of personal care itself (exercise, vacations, massages, meditation, watching movies), illness and death (family members and friends), and the importance of personal contact. Participants described how their lack of self-care increased stress and anxiety, particularly related to loved ones. They spoke about living through the death of a loved one and being unable to visit relatives in nursing homes or offer loving support in their final days.

These examples of loss and separation increased respondents' own sense of isolation and made social contact and self-care even more important. Once again, the central theme among these responses was the need to put others first. There was a gap between what respondents knew they should do to take care of themselves, and actually doing it. It was not a lack of knowing, but more a commitment to serve others before self.

Interactional Hypotheses

There were two hypotheses that dealt with the interactional dynamics of respondents' different spheres—work and family—and the conflict between them and the impact of this conflict on WLB satisfaction. While one of the hypotheses was supported, the other was not.

Work-Family Conflict

In Hypothesis 5, work-family conflict was shown to detract from WLB satisfaction at a statistically significant level ($p < .001$). This tells us that when work infringes on family, satisfaction is significantly impaired. Participant responses to the five items that make up this scale show that work significantly affects their family responsibilities and time. This in turn produces dissatisfaction with their WLB balance. Work-family conflict interfered with family involvement. Boundaries became unclear or absent because of the shifting environment; there was constant spillover. Families struggled. Roles changed. Parents became teachers and

caregivers and roles shifted frequently. The anxiety and distress of respondents increased because they were unsure of how their lives were going to be affected from day to day by mask and vaccine mandates related to COVID. Many respondents felt there was little balance.

The hypothesis regarding the conflict between family and work affecting WLB satisfaction was not supported ($p = .599$). For this sample, the five items that made up this scale showed that the respondents did not perceive family responsibilities as detrimental to their work obligations. Thus, this is in direct contrast to work responsibilities negatively infringing on family time that we have seen in the earlier hypothesis above.

Furthermore, taking the two interactional conflict hypotheses together, the outcome indicates that it was within normal expectations and more acceptable for family life to alter the normal work routine and that when it did so, satisfaction was not diminished. However, when the opposite occurred, when work kept respondents from meeting important family needs, this outcome was neither normal nor acceptable, and satisfaction decreased.

Reinforcement by Qualitative Feedback

Qualitative feedback reinforced the struggles that respondents had in meeting work and family obligations. What I heard from my interview participants is that their lives were not in balance, but that they were struggling hard to meet obligations in their homes and workplaces, and that in the struggle, they were in the middle and having to deliver on both ends. When that control and balance are absent, health consequences follow. Respondents reported that the pandemic affected their mental health. The disruption in work affected their ability to manage anxiety and depression, which in turn affected their perceived work-life balance. One respondent reported having to seek additional therapy and medication to control her mental health; she became despondent and even considered suicide. She reported improvement but that she was

“still struggling to figure out a better work-life balance.” Technology has enabled us to work almost anywhere. However, it comes with a potential cost to our physical and emotional health.

Post-Study Framework for WLB Satisfaction

The results of the study were remarkably interesting. While there was qualitative support from the 133 respondents to the open-ended question and the six interviewees regarding the importance of the six different variables in the study that affect WLB satisfaction, the quantitative support was only for four variables. They are organizational variables, such as WLB policies; workplace support systems; one personal variable, time for self; and one interactional variable, work-family conflict. Figure 8 summarizes the post-study model of WLB satisfaction. As discussed in detail in the preceding paragraphs, only personal support systems and family-work conflict were found to be non-significant contributors of WLB satisfaction among the six independent variables tested.

Figure 8

Post-Study Model of Work-Life Balance Satisfaction



** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Implications and Recommendations

This study produced outcomes that highlight the need for changes in workplace practices and also generated ideas for further research on this and related topics.

Implications for Practice

Implications for practice generated by this study may be grouped into three categories: those for employers, those relating to government policies and actions, and those specifically for professional women.

Recommendations for Employers

- **Provide work-life balance policies**, such as flexible scheduling, paid leave, and parental leave as my study found a direct and positive relationship between organizational policies that promote flexibility and employees' satisfaction with work-life balance. These policies need to be communicated throughout the organization and employees need to know the procedure they must follow to avail themselves of the various options. According to Connerley and Wu, (2016), employee well-being impacts the organization, individuals, and society.
- **Provide social benefit policies**, such as health insurance, educational benefits, dental and vision benefits, promotion of health and wellness, and employee assistance programs that enable employees to balance their lives better, as my research showed that social benefit policies mattered with respect to WLB satisfaction.
- **Provide workplace support systems** that promote greater cooperation and teamwork among employees, as my study found that "team resources" positively affect work-life balance satisfaction. A significant implication for practice was generated by respondents who highly praised their ability to work in formal work teams. They cited

this collaborative practice as making it possible for them to shift workload to other team members to meet a short-term need without feeling guilt, and with the knowledge that the work would be conducted well. The use of formalized work teams should be encouraged more broadly as a means to effectively meet organizational objectives while also enhancing employee work-life balance.

- **Supervisors need to set the tone** for how WLB policies are implemented within the organizations. Employees who had supportive supervisors had a better perception of work-life balance.
- **Employers need to promote employee wellness policies.** Promoting self-care should be an important part of the wellness program, as my research showed that time for self was a strong antecedent of perceptions of work-life balance. Employers must also encourage employees to set boundaries so that they are not plugged into work 24/7 and feel they do not have any personal downtime.
- **Managers must create an organizational culture** that promotes the integration of work and life considerations for their employees. In my study, some participants felt that although their organizations had WLB policies, some supervisors did not perceive the employees who took advantage of such policies as serious workers.
- **Managers must minimize work-family interactional conflict** that employees feel through establishing WLB policies and encouraging employees to create a balance between their work and family obligations. As my regression results showed, work-family conflict is a strong negative predictor of WLB satisfaction. Many respondents in the study felt that their work obligations were intruding on their family responsibilities and time. To many, COVID and the ensuing telecommuting

responsibilities created a scenario where they felt that either there were very few boundaries or that the boundaries were porous. Social isolation was another byproduct of telecommuting for some. Employers need to create opportunities for building team spirit and social interactions in a cyber environment. Some of my respondents strongly felt the social isolation and it contributed to their depression.

In summary, the results of my study suggested that organizations can significantly improve employee perceptions of work-life balance through appropriate human resource policies, procedures, and programs that promote flexibility with boundaries. Also, a crucial factor that is often missed, as determined by my quantitative and qualitative results, is the need for self-care. Employees need time away from the job without the requirement to be electronically connected. True self-care allows the employees to rebuild their capacity to work, which is beneficial to both the worker (Liechty & Anderson, 2007) and the organization (Bird, 2006). As a result, the company's bottom line increases or their mission area is accomplished, and employees are more committed to their employers (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Ferguson et al., 2015; Rhoades et al., 2001).

Organizational culture is an area that study participants noted as needing attention. Even when policies such as paid leave are in place, employers did not necessarily apply them fairly or expressed anger or retaliation when employees used them (Adams & Jex, 1999). Another example of employers expecting employees to work beyond the boundaries of the policy is the unspoken rule for school employees to return parent phone calls instantly, even after work hours or weekends. To combat this unrealistic expectation that would create an imbalance between work and life, employees need to take the initiative to access, read, and understand their organization's policies and keep their knowledge current as policies change. Having a good,

trusting relationship with a representative in human resources is an excellent place to start (Eisenberger et al., 1986).

Open-ended responses and interviews suggested that employers need to show flexibility in the application of some policies. For example, respondents cited the difficulty of having to use a sick day to take care of personal needs or just get some rest. An implication for workplace practice would be to eliminate the distinction between sick days and vacation days and just have a specified number of personal days available to employees so that they don't have to pretend to be ill in order to take time to take care of pressing personal needs. As professionals, employees should be able to make the choice of how to use their time. While this practice is available in some workplaces, it is recommended here for broader application.

Professional Women

The implications for professional women resulting from this study are clear. The results of the study, especially the question about personal support systems as well as the open-ended comments and the interviews suggested that the personal role of the woman in the home, no matter her position outside the home, has not changed much—she is the primary caretaker. She is responsible for most of the work in the home. Therefore, the implications for practice regarding her professional and personal roles may be the most impactful in achieving work-life balance.

These recommendations include:

- ***Know your workplace policies***—It is to the advantage of every employee, but especially to women, to have a good understanding of the policies that affect them. Ensuring that they have access to the policies is essential; building a relationship with a human resources representative is also helpful.

- ***Practice self-care***—Research shows that women take care of others and do not always practice self-care at the level it is needed. The lack of imbalance creates anxiety, depression, and may lead to interactional conflict or loss of productivity.
- ***Set boundaries between work and family responsibilities***—If you are telecommuting, it is important to ensure that you take time off from online activities related to work to focus on nonwork activities. While the flexibility offered by telecommuting is good, it can lead to being “always on.”
- ***Be an effective advocate***—This includes advocating for yourself as well as for others, especially when policies are not applied fairly. It also includes advocating policy changes when existing policies do not meet employee needs for work-life balance or when they are not family-friendly.
- ***Be a role model and mentor***—To create a staunch support system, a force to be reckoned with, for themselves and for others, women need to be good mentors.
- ***Know when to seek help***—It is important to know yourself and to take your emotional temperature. If you are feeling anxious, depressed, socially isolated, and/or overwhelmed, do not forget to seek help or get in touch with family or friends. Do not feel like you have to be a superwoman!
- ***Be politically active***—Men do not always understand the roles women play; therefore, women should achieve and maintain a political voice by writing to political leaders about the issues that affect them. These include paid medical leave (FMLA); extended paid leave for childbirth, adoption, or elder care; greater support for mental illness therapies; and support for self-care. While these employment policies may not

be in place for the entire U.S. workforce, they could become more uniformly available with federal action.

Government

This study also raised some interesting implications, either directly or indirectly, about government. During my study, the world was in the middle of a pandemic. Government agencies were scrambling to create policies to support the social and economic infrastructure of our society. The complexity of balancing work and life requires input from family, employers, as well as the government (Seierstad & Kirton, 2015). Policies such as mask mandates, social distancing, vaccines, boosters, required quarantine times, as well as the amount of money given to unemployed families and businesses that were required to close, are just a few examples of COVID-related government intervention during the pandemic. These policies and their inconsistency created stress and division. This was especially true at the workplace, in general, and for public schools, in particular.

Some of the implications my study has for government are the following:

- ***Provide more family policies at the federal level***—The United States is the only major Western country that does not have national legislation mandating paid family medical leave. Our health insurance system relies mostly on employer-provided insurance, which can be inflexible when employees want to change jobs for greater work-life balance.
- ***Provide clear direction***—There should be an agency to review the effectiveness of the policies and revise them where needed, based on data and studies. The process should be structured and the policies consistent—not multiple agencies conducting reviews, establishing policies, and providing conflicting advice. Plans have to be

developed ahead of time and put in place so that when changes are needed, they can be put into effect smoothly. The current plan is not working. Policies have life and death consequences.

- ***Engage in data driven decision making***—In addition, mandates should be issued with an intellectual explanation, not as something to be imposed under the strong arm of the law. The job of our research agencies is to conduct research; almost no messaging related to study outcomes was provided to accompany mandates or policy changes, which should be data driven.

Implications for Further Research

The demographics of this study's sample offer areas for additional research. Specifically, the sample is predominantly comprised of female professionals with no small children at home. It would be interesting to conduct the same study using a sample comprising women with small children or elderly relatives who require care at home to see if the results varied from those of this study. Similarly, it would also be interesting to conduct a repeat study with a sample comprised solely of men.

During the months of analysis for this study, and particularly during the analysis of the participant comments and interviews, several additional areas for further research came to mind. The interviews generated ideas for additional research because interviewees had few boundaries and could explore adjacent topics. One of those topics was in the area of mental health. Several interview participants and narrative respondents who said they did not have enough support, whether from friends, workplace policies, or coworkers, experienced a mental crisis. Those individuals expressed elevated levels of stress and anxiety. They could not bridge the gap between work and home responsibilities to take care of their personal needs. Some reported

hypertension, failing eyesight, and back pain from enduring hours of screen time at home, worsening mental health, and even suicide ideation. An area for additional research would be the compounding impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on work-life balance, particularly its impact on the mental health outcomes of working female professionals.

Finally, the pandemic has challenged us all to cope with and conquer any limitations we have with technology, which has become our lifeline to work, for scheduling remote tasks, for ordering food and supplies, for managing our daily work and personal lives. It is particularly challenging when technology doesn't work, as we rely on it so heavily, often without other options. This suddenly increased reliance on technology may have had a disproportionate impact on our elderly population, who are not as facile with technology and may have fewer options for solving problems when they occur. Therefore, an additional research area would be to explore whether there were disproportionately negative outcomes in the population of older workers resulting from their increased reliance on technology during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Relationship of Findings to Literature

The findings in the study support the literature in several ways. On the topic of work-life balance in general, the interviewees and many narrative respondents agreed that work-life balance is important and commonly described as the ability to prioritize work and life roles in order to achieve a level of satisfaction. This aligns with the literature of WLB (Fisher, 2001; Greenhaus et al., 2003; Hobson et al., 2001), formally known as work-family balance, which is divided into three components: time, involvement, and satisfaction. The spillover effect (Sok et al.; 2014, Stein, 1980) had many implications and multiple effects extending to general life domains as well as work performance. In order to be satisfied in the dual domains of work and personal life, there should be a degree of balance observed in each.

This study's qualitative findings are generally consistent with this literature, and present interesting insights relative to the COVID-19 pandemic. Women, no matter their position at work, normally became caretakers of the home. Women are responsible for the home as well as their professional careers (Seierstad & Kirton, 2015). They were in charge of managing schedules, monitoring children in the virtual school, sanitizing the home, and even being the referee when needed. Balancing seemed to take a back seat to management. Women reported taking care of everyone first, then, if any time was left, trying to find time for guiltless self-care. Many respondents even apologized for their lack of self-care and made a promise to change. According to Seierstad and Kirton (2015), for a woman (especially a mother) to hold a high position and to maintain a WLB, she needs a work-family-friendly culture and a supportive family. As a result of the lack of balance and self-care, there seemed to be many who described the feeling of anxiety and stress (Williams & Alliger, 1994). A study by Kiyimaki et al. (2006) revealed a link between long-term stress, heart disease, and aging. Here again, is the alignment with the literature, when there is a lack of work-life balance, health issues can arise (Rincy & Panchanatham, 2010).

The damaging effects of the COVID-19 pandemic impacted work-life balance of everyone, especially women. The psychological effects may be evident for years to come. Suggestions for organizational policies for flexible work scheduling and family medical leave were no longer an option but became a necessity. Many respondents spoke of the horrors of the dreaded COVID-19 infections invading their families and even killing some of their loved ones. They described what seemed to be overnight changes to their workplace and platform. Virtual solutions and new family-friendly organizational policies were detrimental to the organization's efficiency. Poor physical health and depression and anxiety were common themes that emerged

from isolation and lack of balance. Furthermore, isolation enhanced the lack of satisfaction. In most cases, the isolation created fewer opportunities to collaborate and work in teams, which created a heavier workload leading to decreased satisfaction (Bowling et al., 2015). Some respondents felt they received little support due to the required isolation, which supported the literature that team resources impact employee's satisfaction of work-life balance (Kalliath & Brough, 2008).

A positive outcome from the study is the reported improvement in work-life balance resulting from flexible scheduling. Respondents emphasized that this flexibility gave them the freedom to make appointments, care for small children, perform household chores, and spend time with their spouse without feeling guilty of neglecting work obligations (Jones et al., 2013). This positive spillover allowed families to benefit from flexible scheduling, which helped balance their work and life. (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Some respondents even suggested that a reduction in pay was worth the benefit of more time at home.

Research Limitations

Perception study. This study was limited by the use of a survey to measure perceptions, which can be imprecise due to social desirability bias, and it is limited in its generalizability.

Treatment of Likert scale data as interval. Also, our treatment of Likert scale data as interval rather than ordinal data, while common in social sciences, is a limitation.

COVID-19. The pandemic limited access to wider samples for survey—there were challenges in gaining permission from the desired school district to disseminate the survey, and the use of the resultant convenience sample limited generalizability. The pandemic limited and altered the interviews, which had to be conducted online versus in person, placing boundaries on the interpretive environment. A final pandemic-related concern was the limitation of resources,

such as the inability to use interlibrary loans, make copies, access research librarians, meet with staff and professors, and collaborate with doctoral program cohort members.

Lack of generalizability. In addition, my sample may not have been representative of the population as a whole, as most respondents had no small children at home and did not care for elderly parents, limiting the potential for work-life conflict.

Sampling bias. This study is limited to examining perceptions in a single subset of working professionals: those who responded to my survey and participated in interviews. The study is limited by not knowing how large the total population of working professionals is and the percentage of that population represented by the sample. It is, therefore, possible that my sample does not reflect the demographics of the larger population. As one example, it is possible that there is an overweighting of individuals who are top performers in their fields and that these individuals self-select to participate in the Delta Sigma Theta sorority or pursue advanced degrees and certifications in their work as educators and administrators. These highly motivated individuals may have experienced work-life balance challenges that are different from those with less education, financial security, or social position.

Survey instrument limitations. For purely practical reasons, the quantitative survey methodology was chosen to reach as many participants as possible within a brief timeframe. This survey methodology may have been limited by not examining the qualitative aspects of WLB perceptions in this population. To counter this limitation, a question was included offering participants the opportunity to tell how the pandemic affected their work-life balance, and in-depth interviews were conducted with a small subset of six participants to elicit perceptions on a deeper level, particularly on the emotional aspects of perceived job dissatisfaction, overwork, family disruption, and stress caused by work-life imbalance. Question 15 asked, “How has the

COVID pandemic affected your work-life balance?” and Question 5 stated, “Whether available to you or not, what WORKPLACE BENEFIT, POLICY OR PROGRAM is or would be MOST HELPFUL FOR YOU in balancing your work and personal life? Why?”

Using a narrative, each participant could describe unique aspects of work-life balance, shedding light on areas affecting them and their family. Responses to questions were coded and structured according to organizational policies, personal support system, work-family conflict, and family-work conflict themes.

Another limitation was purposefully not asking the participants’ race. This was not an oversight. After some consideration, we thought asking participants to identify their race might create apprehension in getting to the depth of concerns and limit transparency. However, I now think collecting data concerning race would add another dimension to the study.

The length of the survey may be a limitation. The survey contains six sections, each with subsections comprised of multiple questions. In all, 109 survey questions including two open-ended questions were asked. The invitational email told participants that the survey would only require 15 minutes to take; however, it could take longer due to the open-ended response. Thus, the time required for some participants to complete the survey may contribute to non-completions or cause respondents to complete the survey by rushing and not thinking critically before responding. However, this limitation was not considered a problem during the pilot testing.

Despite these limitations, I believe that this study is valuable and contributes to the body of knowledge on the topic of work-life balance.

Significance of This Study

My study is significant because it focuses on organizational policies and personal support systems that directly impact families and individuals, particularly the unique segment represented by professional women with diverse family structures. As described in Chapter 2, previous studies have provided reasons why organizations should implement family-friendly policies but there is a gap in the research with regard to studies tailored to working women and the new diverse family.

The percentage of women participating in the U.S. labor force began rising in the 1920s and steadily increased to 50% of unmarried women and 40% of married women by the 1970s (Yellen, 2020). These percentages continued to increase as the concept of women working outside of the home became more acceptable. This transition away from the traditional family, with a mom at home and dad at work, created a need for a dedicated support system for child and elder care. Family structures and organizational policies were key components required to meet these needs. Thus, balancing work and life became a focal point for families and organizations.

My study will bring to the forefront inequities caused by the lack of organizational policies and personal support systems. Deficient policies not only contribute to imbalance in work and life, but also cause stress impacting physical and mental health. According to Sandoiu (2016) in *Medical News Today*, poor work-life balance causes an increased risk of stroke, coronary heart disease, anxiety, and depression. On the other hand, working flexible hours has a positive effect on health and well-being. In the scientific journal of the British Geriatrics Society, Birgitta von Bonsdorff (2016) reported data from Finland showing that longer working hours at a younger age are associated with negative health consequences later in life. Von Bonsdorff (2016)

found that a poor work-life balance can affect health and quality of life later in life and, therefore, they recommend that work-life balance should be encouraged early in life.

Unfortunately, 2019 to 2021, the period concurrent with this study, was a most unusual time in the United States. The overwhelming burdens of the COVID-19 pandemic, the response to the racial injustice of killings of unarmed Black Americans, and the January 6, 2021, insurrection provide another platform highlighting the need for work-life balance policies. In 2020, the country became abruptly aware of the systemic racism in America. The unjust murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and several others led to massive protests. A survey of 3,409 adults in the U.S. conducted by the Harris Poll on behalf of the American Psychological Association in 2020 as part of its Stress in America™ series revealed that 59% of adults agreed that police violence targeting minorities was a major source of their stress (American Psychological Association, 2020). Interestingly, this is a 23% increase from 2016. However, the rate of stress caused by perceived discrimination is 2 in 5 or 44%, which was up from 38% in 2019.

In addition to this stress, multiple interruptions to normalcy caused the boundaries between work and life to almost disappear, compounding the pressure. Many governors closed businesses, schools, and churches. People were isolated and became fearful. They were forced to continue working from home and faced layoffs and furloughs. People in service jobs faced a greater challenge than many other workers. They were not able to work from home and many did not have access to paid leave. In addition, many in the workforce did not have adequate savings or support systems to provide assistance with childcare. These conditions caused a greater hardship for women, who are normally the major caregivers in the home. All these issues of compounding stress spill over into the workplace. Stressors like these are similar to the ones

described by American Psychological Association's *Stress in America™ 2021* report, which impact not only the health of employees, but also the organizations in which they work. The findings in this study will help organizations and families create policies and support systems to help individuals and families maintain a healthy work and life balance (American Psychological Association, 2021).

Summary

This mixed-methods study examined the impact of organizational policies and personal support systems on perceptions of work-life balance in professional women. I reviewed how family-friendly policies, personal support systems, and organizational policies impact perceived satisfaction of work-life balance. The COVID-19 pandemic tested our current organizational policies and personal support systems when shifting to new models of work and life.

This study's quantitative results demonstrate that four of the six hypotheses drawn from the literature are significantly supported, including the importance of HR policies ($p < .01$), team resources ($p < .001$), and time for self-care ($p < .001$) in generating WLB satisfaction, and concluded that the intrusion of work on family life is more negatively impactful than the intrusion of family responsibilities on work ($p < .001$ vs. $p = .599$). These outcomes are consistent with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. With this study's sample, the presence of personal support systems was not significant, which was inconsistent with literature and may have been influenced by the sample's demographics.

These quantitative results are supported by this study's qualitative findings. Data were collected from six interviews conducted in 2021 and 133 responses to an open-ended survey question on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on work-life balance. Results included a large number of comments on three items found to be significant in the quantitative analysis, namely,

the importance of family-friendly HR policies, collaborative team resources, and time for self-care. Participants stated that when those factors were present, it was easier to achieve work-life balance, and that their absence led to role conflict, stress, and even negative mental and physical health outcomes.

Summary conclusions from the Phase 1 (survey and opened-ended question) and Phase 2 (interviews) analysis include the following:

1. Most women in the sample believe they are overworked and do not have adequate support to prevent negative spillover.
2. Women professionals with young children experience more negative work-life balance than older women who are empty nesters.
3. Flexible scheduling was a very desirable option for women with children.
4. The pandemic demonstrated that isolation stifles productivity and caused increased mental health issues. Therefore, collaboration and support (team resources) were needed for work-life balance.
5. The COVID-19 pandemic forced certain aspects of self-care, such as: increased sanitization, greater focus on in-home diet due to decreased eating out, less time commuting, greater ability to sleep late or take naps, and being less driven by external schedules. All of these aspects of self-care, even when forced by external circumstances, increased work-life balance satisfaction.
6. Organizational policy awareness by employees and support by employers are necessary for their successful use, leading to satisfaction.

Closing Thoughts

I developed the idea for my study pre-pandemic because my mother and three of my sisters had little to no work-life balance, which led to their early death. After the premature birth of our twins, I also experienced having no work-life balance. My interest in the impact on work-life balance satisfaction on working women has led me to a quest for answers.

During my study, my life became the prototype for my research. My brother died of lung cancer and I could only attend his funeral remotely. Close relatives in four households, including my twins, tested positive for COVID. Our house became a hospital for three of those households. While my husband treated them and I hosted them, it was a battle for survival and we were very blessed that no one died.

Then, within four months, my husband had three strokes, which left him with a seriously impaired left-side and unable to care for himself. He could no longer walk, drive, work, or sit up by himself. My youngest daughter was also sick and in treatment for weeks. She was failing in her schoolwork and might have to repeat the 12th grade. Overnight, I became ill and was told not to drive. During a visit to my doctor, he wanted to call 911 and admit me to the hospital. I refused. I told him I could not afford to be sick because I was the caretaker. I was allowed to leave his office only after I promised to call him as soon as I got home. I did.

After 3 weeks on medical leave, my principal informed me I was going to be replaced at the school where I taught and my position would be posted on the 60th day of my absence. After 15 years of loyal service, I was only an afterthought. I grieved for less than 15 minutes because I had another crisis to face. My husband had an accident at the rehab facility and was taken to a hospital where he needed to undergo emergency surgery. I had to get to the hospital as soon as possible.

My life continued in this pattern for months, with a new crisis topping the last. Our family income dropped to \$0, and the government decided that if we needed Medicaid, we must relinquish most of our assets. The stress was so extreme that I went into temporary shock. After pondering all my problems and praying, I decided to make a plan. I allowed God to take control of things I could not handle and saturated myself with sermons, Biblical teaching, and motivational counseling. My church, family, and friends also helped. However, my primary care doctor said I was under so much stress that I needed medication. She also sent me to a neurologist and several specialists for testing. Eventually, it was determined that excessive stress was a major cause of my illness. However, I always try to see a positive side to everything. Stress causes one to develop strong roots, allowing a person to develop a solid core with the ability to conquer life's storms. My only option was to continue to fight.

Although these circumstances are particular to me and my family, many people in my study have dealt with similar challenges. Psychological strain caused by life and role interference causes negative spillover, which in my case led to a health crisis. Thus, as a researcher my positionality was challenged by my circumstances but I purposefully reflected often to ensure that the information was based solely on the literature and my research findings.

This is an example of the importance of my study. Women who have invested in their education and careers need to be policies to protect them. Therefore, my study matters. This research is important and should continue. It is important for organizations to consider the changes in today's society and the forces impacting employees. Given today's pressures, it necessary for organizations to create effective policies appropriate for all job types, and ensure that they fit the needs of all employees, enabling them to reach a level of satisfaction in each domain of work and life.

Leaders must understand that behind every policy there is a person and a family. A successful leader must be actively involved with their employees in order to make meaningful policies. Leaders are most successful when they turn their followers into leaders. I agree with General Dwight D. Eisenhower when he explained that the success of D-Day was the result of individual GI's becoming leaders in their specific areas, not the superiority of the general (Gini & Green, 2013). Therefore, the character of the leader matters, because it establishes the structure of the organization and creates the destiny of the employees.

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Appendix A

Work-Life Balance Survey

Dear Participants:

Greetings from Hood College! I hope you are keeping well during this challenging time. My name is Shelia Shipmon-Friedli, and I am a doctoral candidate at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland.

I am kindly requesting your participation in a research survey that explores work-life balance. The study intends to inform the Organizational World about ways to further improve work-life balance satisfaction. Therefore, your participation is extremely valuable in helping to continue to advance the understanding of effective work-life balance policies.

Your participation involves completing this online survey regarding the work-life balance policies of your current employer. Completion of the survey is expected to take approximately 15 minutes. The survey does not require any personally identifiable information, and all data will be kept confidential. The survey results will be presented only in an aggregated format.

In order to thank you for your invaluable time in this survey participation, I am providing you with two options. The first option involves four drawings for a Starbucks gift card (\$25). The second option is for you to receive the aggregate results of the study. If you prefer to participate in either of the options, you must provide your email address at the conclusion of the survey. If you submit your email address, it will be kept confidential and will be used only for communication purposes.

Thank you in advance for your support of this important effort and sharing your valuable knowledge, insights, and experiences. Your responses will help in continuing to advance the state of practice within the human resource management arena.

If you have any questions, please contact me at sas36@hood.edu or 240-422-7315. If you have questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to speak with someone other than the researcher, you may contact Dr. Anita Jose, Professor of Management, Hood College, 401 Rosemont Ave., Frederick, MD 21701, ajose@hood.edu.

Please note that participation in this survey is totally voluntary. By clicking on the “Agree” button below, you give your consent to participate in this study.

Sincerely,

Shelia Shipmon-Friedli

Work-life Balance Survey of Professional Women

This is a survey that measures your perceptions of work-life balance and associated variables. It is divided into six sections: Workplace Benefits, Policies, and Programs; Personal Support Systems; Conflict between Work and Family Obligations; Workplace Experiences and Satisfaction; Self-Care; and Demographic Information. In addition, there is an open-ended question about your work life balance related to the COVID19 pandemic.

Please note that there are no right or wrong answers to these questions. Please indicate your best response based on your experiences.

Section 1 – Workplace Benefits, Policies, and Programs

Please indicate whether the following workplace benefits or programs are AVAILABLE TO YOU and whether YOU HAVE USED them. If you have more than one job, please answer the question focusing on the job where you work the most hours per week.

1. Flexible Schedule and Working Day Policies

Flexible Schedule and Working Day Policies	This benefit is AVAILABLE to me in my current job			I have USED THIS BENEFIT at my current job	
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Yes	No
Extension or reduction of the working day	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexible schedule	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Controlled meeting schedules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paid leave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Flexible shifts	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leaves of absence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maternity/paternity leave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The statements given below refer to the policies and programs mentioned above (**Flexible Schedule and Working Day Policies**) in the previous question. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements after reviewing your previous answer.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My organization's flexible schedule policies enable me to work better.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My organization's flexible schedule policies enable me to find work-life balance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with my organization's flexible schedule policies .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Social Benefit Policies

Social Benefit Policies	This benefit is AVAILABLE to me in my current job			I have USED THIS BENEFIT at my current job	
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Yes	No
Health insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Dental insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Vision insurance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Educational benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Discounts on firm's products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial services, such as loans	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Retirement benefits	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promotion of health and well-being	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Help with transportation/parking facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employee Assistance Program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assistance with physical exercise (e.g., discounted gym membership, gym at work)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The statements given below refer to the policies and programs mentioned above (**Social Benefit Policies**) in the previous question. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements after reviewing your previous answer.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
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My organization's social benefit policies enable me to work better.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My organization's social benefit policies enable me to find work-life balance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with my organization's social benefit policies .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

3. Family Support Policies

Family Support Policies	This benefit is AVAILABLE to me in my current job			I have USED THIS BENEFIT at my current job	
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Yes	No
Daycare in the workplace	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Books and scholarships for children	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Assistance for special family situations, such as adoption	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Maternity/paternity support measures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sporting, leisure, and cultural activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The statements given below refer to the policies and programs mentioned above (**Family Support Policies**) in the previous question. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements after reviewing your previous answer.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My organization's family support policies enable me to work better.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

My organization's family support policies enable me to find work-life balance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with my organization's family support policies .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

4. Mobility Policies

Mobility Policies	This benefit is AVAILABLE to me in my current job			I have USED THIS BENEFIT at my current job	
	Yes	No	Not Sure	Yes	No
Videoconferencing facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Transfer to other locations with or without reserved position, if required	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Telework/remote work	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Expat policy (travel insurance)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

The statements given below refer to the policies and programs mentioned above (**Mobility Policies**) in the previous question. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements after reviewing your previous answer.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
My organization's mobility policies enable me to work better.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My organization's mobility policies enable me to find work-life balance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with my organization's mobility support policies .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Whether available to you or not, what **WORKPLACE BENEFIT, POLICY, OR PROGRAM** is or would be **MOST HELPFUL FOR YOU** in balancing your work and personal life? Why?

6. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements, which are about the dissemination of work–life-Balance (WLB) Policies at your organization.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
In my organization-specific, WLB policy has been established and documented.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The employees are expected to adhere to and sign the WLB policy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization provides family-friendly policies that help me to fulfill family commitments.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Various unique programs are offered by the organization to the employees for maintaining WLB.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employees are expected to attend training programs for understanding the organization's WLB policies.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
All the employees are aware of the WLB policies provided by the organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

7. Thinking about your workplace support, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
All employees are treated equally if they request assistance with work and family related matters.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The organization makes it very clear to employees about the expectations to be fulfilled.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My supervisor gives importance towards the well-being of the employees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am able to give immediate attention to urgent family or personal issues if needed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My organization supports the employees in terms of combining professional life with family life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can openly discuss issues relating to work-life balance with my supervisor.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have good relations with the employees in my workplace.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My colleagues understand my nonwork situation and assist, if needed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
In my organization, employees who use WLB policies are viewed as less serious about work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel comfortable using the WLB policies at my organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with my organization's work-life benefits, policies, and/or programs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 2 – Personal Support Systems

Thinking about your **Family and Social Support**, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A
My partner equally shares in household activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My partner equally shares in responsibilities for children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have support from extended family to balance my life obligations, such as caring for elderly parents and young children.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have a good social support system that I can count on to help with any emergency situations in my personal life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can give my attention for urgent family or personal issues immediately with the help of my family members .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can give my attention for urgent family or personal issues immediately with the help of my friends .	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My friends enable me to find greater balance in my life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 3 – Conflict Between Work and Family Obligations

This section is about the conflict between the different obligations at work and family.

Please note that the first five questions ask about how work interferes with your family life, and the last five questions ask about how family interferes with your work life.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Work-Life Intrusion into Family Life					
The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Things I want to do at home do not get done because of my job demands.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Due to work-related duties, I must make changes to my plans for family activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family Life Intrusion into Work Life					
The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I must put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Things I want to do at work don't get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work, such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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Section 4 – Workplace Experiences and Satisfaction

Thinking of your current job/employer, to what extent do you AGREE or DISAGREE with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I feel that my job is secure.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have good friends at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel appreciated at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My job allows me to realize my full potential.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have enough time away from work to take care of my personal and family needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel satisfied with my working hours.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the fair treatment and respect I get from the employees of the organization.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the flexibility of work targets.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with my work performance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel satisfied with my relationships at work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I often think about quitting.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am satisfied with the separation of my professional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

and personal life without any serious conflicts.					
I am satisfied with my Work-Life Balance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 5 – Self-Care

Thinking about your **time for yourself**, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I can spend the time I want on my self-development.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have enough time to think, plan, and schedule my day-to-day activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have enough time to take care of myself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have time and energy to engage in any leisure activities that I want to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have enough time to take care of my religious/spiritual needs.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have enough time to relax.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have enough time to exercise if I want to do so.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have enough time to engage in as many community service activities as I want to.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Section 6 – Demographic Information

Please provide the following demographic information so that I know more about you.

1) What is your age?	(check one)
18 to 24	<input type="checkbox"/>
25 to 34	<input type="checkbox"/>
35 to 44	<input type="checkbox"/>
45 to 54	<input type="checkbox"/>
55 to 64	<input type="checkbox"/>
65 and over	<input type="checkbox"/>

2) What is your gender?	(check one)
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>
Male	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to answer	<input type="checkbox"/>

3) What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?	(check one)
High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some college but no degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Associate's degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bachelor's degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Master's degree	<input type="checkbox"/>
Doctoral degree	<input type="checkbox"/>

4) How long have you worked for your current organization?	(check one)
Less than 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 to 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
10 to 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>

5) How many children under 12 do you currently have at home?	(check one)
0	<input type="checkbox"/>
1	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	<input type="checkbox"/>
3	<input type="checkbox"/>
4 or more	<input type="checkbox"/>

6) Do you have parents and/or in-laws at home?	(check one)
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

7) Are you caring for aging and/or disabled family members?	(check one)
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

8) What is your current relationship status?	(check one)
Single, never married	<input type="checkbox"/>
Married	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unmarried, but with a partner	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>
Prefer not to answer	<input type="checkbox"/>

9) Which of the following best describes your current job level?	(check one)
Entry Level	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intermediate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Middle Management	<input type="checkbox"/>
Senior Management	<input type="checkbox"/>
Owner/Executive/C-Level	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

10) In what sector do you work?	(check one)
Private organization	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publicly traded corporation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nonprofit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government (Federal, state, county, local)	<input type="checkbox"/>

11) In what industry do you work?	(check one)
Education	<input type="checkbox"/>
High Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>
Manufacturing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health Care	<input type="checkbox"/>
Professional Services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Government	<input type="checkbox"/>
Telecommunications	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (please specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

12) What is the size of your organization?	(check one)
1 to 99 employees	<input type="checkbox"/>
100 to 499 employees	<input type="checkbox"/>
500 to 1,000 employees	<input type="checkbox"/>
1,000 or more employees	<input type="checkbox"/>

13) What is the number of community service hours you spend in a month?	(check one)
None	<input type="checkbox"/>
1–10	<input type="checkbox"/>
11–20	<input type="checkbox"/>
21–30	<input type="checkbox"/>
More than 30	<input type="checkbox"/>

14) I am responsible for taking care of: (Check all that apply)	
Small children under 5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elderly parents	<input type="checkbox"/>
Family members with disabilities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children between 6 and 19	<input type="checkbox"/>
Young adults living at home	<input type="checkbox"/>

15. How has the COVID pandemic affected your work-life balance? (500-word limit)

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please provide your information below if you would like to participate in any of the following activities. Please note that this information will be kept in the strictest of confidence.

NAME: _____

EMAIL: _____

☐

I would like to participate in an interview to share my experiences with work–life balance.

☐

I would like to receive a copy of the results of this survey.

☐

I would like to participate in a drawing for a Starbucks gift card for \$25.

Thank you so very much for your participation. It is greatly appreciated!

Appendix B

Oral Interview Questions Used in This Study

1. How long have you worked with your organization?
2. What is your favorite part about working for your organization?
3. Define what work-life balance means to you and explain the work-life balance in your life.
4. How does your organization support you in achieving this balance? What can they do better?
5. How would you describe your relationships with your colleagues, and how do they affect your work-life balance and personal satisfaction?
6. How do family and social support systems factor into your perception of work-life balance?
7. Explain your organization's culture and what makes it unique.
8. What self-care practices do you perform to achieve a sense of balance?
9. Do you participate in community service? If you had more free time, would you do more? Is there a conflict between WLB and community service?
10. What other feedback do you have about today's discussion?

Appendix C

Hood College Institutional Review Board Research Proposal

1. **Title of Proposal:** An Empirical Investigation into the Antecedents of the Perceptions of Work-Life Balance of Professional Women
2. **Principal Investigator (PI):** Shelia Shipmon-Friedli, Science Resource Teacher
3. **PI Department:** Hood College Doctoral Program in Organizational Leadership, George B. Delaplaine Jr School of Business, Doctoral Program in Business Administration (DBA)
4. **PI Contact Information:**
5. **Faculty Sponsor and Contact Information (if PI is a student):** Anita Jose, Ph.D.,
6. **Other Investigators:** None.
7. **Date of this Submission:** December 18, 2020
8. **Proposed Duration of the Project:** February 1, 2020 through March 15, 2021.
9. **Background Information and Research Questions/Hypotheses:**

The globalization of organizations and technological advances are significant contributors to the two domains in the lives of women: work and family. They have caused the boundaries of these two domains to be blurred (Rincy & Panchanatham, 2010), creating a work-life imbalance. Maintaining a balanced work and non-work life has been an important topic of investigation of many researchers (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Ferguson et al., 2015; Hogarth et al., 2001; Goode, 1960). However, there is a gap in the research regarding professional women and how human resource policies and support systems affect their satisfaction with work-life balance. The purpose of my study is to narrow this gap.

Certain segments of the employee population suffer more from stress from the work environment causing a lower work–life balance than others (Zheng et al., 2015a). For example, women in leadership positions often face many challenges and these necessitate that they work harder and spend longer hours than their male counterparts. Thus, professional women in leadership positions have a lower work–life balance than non-professional non-leaders (Xiao & Cooke, 2012).

Researchers have found that the lack of work-life balance affects employee health, organizational productivity, and employee satisfaction (Zheng et al., 2015). Given the serious ramifications of work-life imbalance, organizations have responded through

policies and practices to correct this. The blurred boundaries between workplace and home have made it necessary for organizations to develop flexible solutions for increasing productivity while maintaining an environment promoting healthy relationships for their employees (Jones et al., 2013). Research has indicated that companies with excellent work-life balance policies can easily recruit and retain quality employees (Jones et al., 2013), increase employee satisfaction (Zheng et al., 2015), and reduce turnover (Parker, 2018). My research seeks to empirically validate the impact of these policies on professional women's satisfaction with work-life balance and looks to extend existing research through incorporating additional variables, such as team/organizational resources and personal support systems, on such satisfaction.

My research question for this study is as follows:

RQ: How do WLB policies, team resources, and personal support systems influence perceptions of work-life balance among professional women?

Based on my literature review, I developed the following four hypotheses:

H1: WLB policies will be positively related to perceived satisfaction of work-life balance.

H2: Team resources will be positively related to perceived satisfaction of work-life balance.

H3: Family support systems will be positively related to perceived satisfaction of work-life balance.

H4: Social support systems will be positively related to perceived satisfaction of work-life balance.

Multiple regression analysis will be the primary data analytical technique. As a mixed-methods study, the quantitative part described above will be followed by a qualitative interview of 10–12 women. The purpose of this is to capture the voices of the women describing their experiences with achieving work-life balance and their recommendations for organizations for improving this balance.

As a result of my study, I anticipate that we would gain a deeper understanding of how organizational policies, practices, team resources, and personal support systems enable employees to achieve work-life balance. This information will not only add to the current field of work-life balance studies, but also will be helpful for human resource managers to develop policies and practices to benefit their organizations, employees, and families. Therefore, this study is significant because it will guide organizations, especially human resources managers, when creating policies, training programs, and other opportunities to balance work and life domains.

In addition, a small portion of my study is dedicated to work-life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic. This unique opportunity will be a useful window into how professional women are navigating the challenges posed by this once-a-century phenomenon.

This study is very personal to me. It is a pivotal study due to the current challenges facing our nation and the global community as we struggle with work and life imbalance. The

compounded stress of the COVID-19 pandemic, racial injustice, and the challenges of the political environment have created a perfect storm. I am committed to capture the difficulties of this moment in real time. The cries of peoples will be captured in my study and their needs will be made visible. It is my hope that by the accurate portrayal of the pain and needs of the people, change will come.

My survey questions were developed using vetted questionnaires from the following institutions and researchers:

- Cornell University, K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tang Institute on Employment and Disability (Cook, 2014)
- Instituto de Empresa (Rojo, 2016)
- Annamalai University (Rincy & Panchanatham, 2010)
- Manonmaniam Sundaranar University (Swarnalatha, 2013)

10. Human Participants:

Who are the participants? I will use a convenience sample for my study. Participants will be part of my work and social environments. The majority of them are members of the following organizations: (...) Hood College; and the Frederick, Maryland, chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

- A. **How many participants do you plan to have in your study?** The survey will be available to approximately 400 women, as described in #9. Due to COVID and the stress of excessive computer time each day, I think the rate of return could be higher due to limited mobility or lower due to screen fatigue. However, I would be pleased to get a 30% response rate, which would provide adequate data for my planned multiple regression analysis. For my interviews (Part 2 of the study), I will choose 10–12 women who express a willingness to be interviewed.
- B. **How will the participants be contacted or recruited?** Surveys will be sent to the participants, most of whom are my social media contacts. After the survey is sent electronically, I will follow up within one week with a reminder email. This email will be positive and uplifting, reminding them of their important role in this critical study. I will keep the survey open for approximately two weeks after my follow up. If my response rate is low, I will send a second reminder asking for feedback within 72 hours.

In addition, I plan to conduct a limited number of in-person interviews with survey participants who volunteer using the form at the end of the questionnaire.

- C. **Will the participants be compensated for participating? If so, describe:** The final page of the questionnaire (see Appendix A) provides an opportunity for participants to indicate that they would like to be included in a drawing for four Starbucks gift cards of \$25 each. The contact information they provide is for notification purposes only; it will be protected and will be destroyed after the drawing has been conducted.

Procedures: Study participants will receive an email invitation explaining the purpose of the study and requesting their participation. Participants will be asked to review the invitational email, click on the link to the survey and complete the anonymous survey questionnaire using SurveyMonkey. The email invitation will suggest taking the survey at home using a nonwork email account. Participants may complete the survey during one visit or pause and resume later. They can exit the survey at any time without completing all questions. A copy of the survey is attached to this application as Appendix A.

At the conclusion of the survey, participants will have an option to volunteer for an in-person interview, which may be conducted using Zoom, Teams, or other electronic media depending on circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. Questions planned for the interview are contained in Appendix B. Participants will also be able to register for a drawing for four Starbucks gift cards and sign up to receive a copy of the survey results.

11. **Consent:** The invitational email will state that participation is voluntary, and that no personal data will be collected that can associate an individual with their survey responses unless they desire to do so. In addition, the opening page of the SurveyMonkey questionnaire will contain a “Welcome” letter that explains the research purpose and privacy protections, and provides researcher contact information. The letter invites the participants to click on the “Agree” button at the bottom of the page to indicate their consent and begin the survey. The survey will not open without the participants’ consent (see Appendix A).

Participants who are selected from a volunteer pool to participate in in-person interviews will also be asked to complete the attached written consent form (attached).

12. **Risks and Debriefing:** The electronic survey methodology is well-tested and is considered safe and very low risk, with no physical, psychological, or social threats associated with participation. The only equipment involved is a computer, which is considered low-risk use. When discussing their work–life balance challenges, during the oral interviews, participants may choose to discuss painful feelings or experiences. No formal debriefing is planned for the study participants as a whole, but individual participants may use the form at the end of the questionnaire to request a copy of the survey results.
13. **Privacy and Storage of Data:** Upon completion and collection of all surveys, I will download the data to a password-protected Excel file and store it in a password-protected computer under my personal control. I am using SurveyMonkey because it has a secure protection option for the respondents’ personal data and survey responses. SurveyMonkey enables me to select options so that as a researcher, no identifying participant information (name, IP address, email address) is collected. I will not have access to any identifying information, ensuring that participants remain anonymous if they wish. Participants may choose to provide their email address if they want to participate in the email drawing, in the follow up interview, and/or to receive the survey results.

**HOOD COLLEGE
INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PERSONAL INTERVIEWS**

An Empirical Investigation into the Antecedents of the Perceptions of Work-Life Balance and Organizational Commitment of Professional Women

1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for expressing an interest in this follow-up personal interview that resulted from the survey that you took on the work-life balance policies. Please read this document carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be personally interviewed.

Please note the participants in this study be at least 18 years old. As you know, my name is Shelia Shipmon-Friedli, and my contact information is [REDACTED]. I am conducting this study as part of my doctoral dissertation at Hood College.

2. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Please see Question 9 on page 1.

3. DURATION

The length of the interview will be approximately 25–30 minutes.

4. PROCEDURES

Please indicate your willingness to participate in this personal interview by giving your consent at the end of the form.

5. RISKS/BENEFITS

This study has the following risks: It is not anticipated that you will experience any hazards or risks while participating in the interview; however, you may choose to discuss issues affecting your work-life balance that has been challenging or painful.

The benefits of participation are: It may prove beneficial to you to discuss your work-life balance concerns. You may also derive satisfaction from knowing that you are contributing to a study that could beneficially affect workplace policies, human resource practices, and personal support systems that can help achieve more positive work-life balance outcomes in the future.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

The records of this study will be kept private. Once the survey is complete, all data will be collected and analyzed. All information will be password protected. To ensure additional security, I will only use my personal computer with a firewall to work on data. Any report that is published or presentation that is given based on this study's data will not include any information that will make it possible to identify any participant.

7. VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Hood College or any of its representatives. If you decide to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw from the study at any time without affecting those relationships. You may withdraw from this study at any time. If you have already participated in the oral interview and wish to withdraw from the study, please use the email below to contact us. Your responses will be destroyed and will not be used in the study results.

8. CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

The researcher conducting this study is Shelia Shipmon-Friedli. You may ask any questions you have right now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher at 240-422-7315.

If you have questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to speak with someone other than the researcher, you may contact Dr. Anita Jose, Professor of Management, Hood College, 401 Rosemont Ave., Frederick, MD 21701 [REDACTED]

9. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this form to keep your records.

The procedures of this study have been explained to me, and my questions have been addressed. The information that I provide is confidential and will be used for research purposes only. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw anytime without penalty. If I have any concerns about my experience in this study (e.g., that I was treated unfairly or felt unnecessarily threatened), I may contact Dr. Jose at any time.

Participant
signature_____

Date_____

Appendix D

Survey Question 15 COVID-19 Impact Open-Ended Question Responses

Comments
The inability to see and be with the family has affected my balance. I find that I spend more time worrying about family and their health, including mine. Work has been flipped on its head, so something new occurs every day, and that makes it difficult to settle down and get the job that I know, done. I have been able to resume some activities to take care of myself, and I'm very conscious of what I need to help me stay healthy and support my mental health (monthly massage, time away with husband, ending my work day at a reasonable time).
My organization has allowed a flex schedule to work from home 2–3 days a week and provided the necessary equipment to do so.
I'm a single mom and have the children 100% of the time. This pandemic has been incredibly hard to balance the stresses of coping through a pandemic, helping my children navigate, and dealing with difficult people at work. I had a hard time leaving work at the office as I have been working full time at home. Tough!!
I work from home now, and I like it.
I was busier at work, but my home time centered around family because the activities and organizations I participated in or with did not provide in-person activities. The overall mood in my household was down because of lost experiences, so I appreciated each moment I had to hold my family close where we would all otherwise be scattered.
It's dramatically improved my WLB because the nature of my work is either very busy or very slow, so when it's slow, I can be productive with house chores while still being fully available to work. Also, I don't mind working late or on weekends when I have to because I'm in the comfort of my home, so I find myself feeling happier about working extra hours. It feels like a fair trade. Also, no commute = a lot more time back to spend on chores, leisure, and relationships.
In some ways, more family time and in others more overall stress and time demands
Put much more responsibility for the care of elderly mother on my shoulders since we have had to limit who comes into the home and risk exposure.
It was better when I could work from home
I am working mostly at home. I only go into the office to use the high-speed printer.
It is easier. working at home and not being tied to strict office hours allows me to have a flexible schedule
I am not able to travel and visit my family
Much less time away from work and more stress in the workplace

Comments
At first, it was difficult because I work with higher ed IT, so last March the demands on my time and the stress from upper-level manageable was unbearable. I have recently switched jobs with a more supportive leadership culture. I work from home, which frees me from a commute and allows me to attend to home responsibilities during the work day (like interfacing with service people or using my lunch hour to wash my car).
It made it very hectic and stressful. It has reduced the balance.
I have a private office that is just for me. So, COVID hasn't impacted that. I do MISS meeting and working with clients in person.
Put more strain on teaching due to online teaching instead of in-person. Students' participation and new & innovative method of teaching had to be learned and implemented on the go.
My work-life balance has been improved during the pandemic due to working from home.
It's affected my husband and adult children living at home more than me. I have worked 100% at home since March 2020. My eyesight has deteriorated, I have back pain from endless screen hours. I used to travel internationally every month and now do my job remotely. My workload and hours have significantly increased, and I don't take care of myself. We have many family disputes. My husband is unemployed, and young adult children do university studies from home while working part-time. I increased my cigarette intake. My sleep habits are poor. Despite this, I prefer being at home rather than going back to the office.
I work harder and longer than I ever have before. My level of stress is significant and is impacting my health. I keep hoping it is only for a short time, but I really don't know.
It has made work more stressful and affected my ability to provide the care I need to some family
The worldwide pandemic impacted everyone. As an educator, it was very demanding- planning, presenting lessons, and the technology portion was overwhelming.
Isolated
It has been incredibly stressful learning how to do my job virtually. The constantly changing landscape of rules and expectations have been hard to handle.
Working remotely has been a plus when daycare is available.
Work expectations haven't changed; still, report to the office. I am able to work from home when my kids are sick now.
It has improved a lot due to being able to work from home.
not much
COVID allowed me to work from home and my kids to do virtual school.
I was furloughed then laid off for a total of 7.5 months. Provided more time with my children but at the expense of my career and an income. Back to work now at the same company, with a 4-day work week as opposed to a 5-day - therefore bringing in less money. Removal of our bonus program due to COVID, removing the possibility of making a monthly bonus potential.

Comments
It has not affected it.
It has become a blur. With bad weather, it is hard to do things like go for a walk and escape like I normally do.
I have lost many social connections as well as a few social hobbies (playing music) that I used to participate in.
working from home has allowed me to better meet some of the needs of my family
Limited my social interactions and support network. I have increased my workload at home. It made it harder to keep a balance between getting work-work done and getting homework done. There's no place to go to escape all the responsibility.
It has totally limited in-person gatherings and the informal, impromptu conversations that are energizing in high-pressure social work. The necessary collaboration continued as usual, but the camaraderie was missing.
My work-life balance hasn't been affected by COVID. Being able to work from home has made things so much easier, especially after having a baby.
Work from home; not able to do much else
It has allowed me to work from home and do other things I need/want to do
yes
COVID has made my immediate family closer. Just making sure family's needs are met spiritually and economically.
It was ok
the ability to work from home cut down on the stressful commute time, so it provided some welcomed relief to be able to focus on issues and also address things at home
COVID has given me more work/life balance due to not commuting to and from work.
It has allowed me to spend more quality time at home with my husband.
It actually has helped give me the opportunity to work remotely. The hours are longer.
I had to quarantine 14 days with family member. No more comments. If you have been thru it, you will understand.
No
It has halted my availability to time spent working attending church in person. However, I have experienced some virtual work/social activities,
Change my entire life experience things that I never experienced before. Adapting to the new normal has caused stress and some anxiety, but I am adjusting very well. Daily work performance responsibilities and duties can become very hectic at times
In some ways, it has allowed for a more flexible schedule; however, it is also difficult to sometimes separate work life from home life due to working from home.

Comments
Working from home, but seem to be on call 24-7.
No one in my family has gotten COVID. We are thankful, but it has been difficult
My life was affected due to the fact that I was not allowed to see my brother in the nursing home, and we were close. The part that hurt me was that he could not walk, and just he was blind. I would go to see him nearly every day, and I did his laundry from 2013 until they stopped letting me go in to see him. On March, I think he just gave up. He was mentally challenged, and I know he did not understand why I wasn't coming to see him. He died June first, two months after they stopped me from seeing him.
Work is a little slow
I have worked from home. I spend many extra hours in prep.
I would have answered several questions differently if we weren't in a pandemic. Online teaching has been exhausting and unhealthy for all to sit in front of a computer for 10+ hours a day. We are created to interact with other people, yet we were forced to interact only through a computer. As an extrovert, it's been draining on me, and I feel less motivated to do things.
It has made it challenging.
Not being able to get out of the house has been somewhat difficult. I miss traveling, going to the movies, going to the gym and museums. Which are activities that help me relax and enjoy time with my family.
The sports team I coach is limited to certain activities and shuts down seasons.
Has not affected my work-life balance. I have more accommodations with adjusting my schedule, leave options, and more.
Yes
My first grader is taking classes online, and it's very difficult. The teachers are understanding, but it is nearly impossible to keep him engaged.
Working longer hours and putting strain on everything due to the inability to participate in leisure activities, travel, and vacation.
Covid has allowed me to work from home for his time, So that has helped with the work-life balance as there is no commute. However, I do work more since I work from home, and it is easier to end up missing lunches/breaks/work beyond my scheduled hours knowing I need to finish something up.
We usually take a vacation every year to get a break from home. COVID has not allowed us to do that. Being in the house is starting to get to me.
It has actually made it better, as I get to work from home more often.
Yes, it has made it more difficult in some ways but easier in others. I have more time to address home and work throughout the day since I work from home. However, lack of childcare makes work difficult, so I spend all hours of my day switching from work and childcare.

Comments
Not working but unable to spend time with friends or social activities with friends, former classmates, etc.
Increased stress and anxiety
It has been very challenging to maintain balance when teleworking and assisting my son during virtual learning. I have various Zoom meetings throughout the week, and I have to check on my son to ensure he is in class and focused. It is also challenging to ensure he has completed and submitted all work by the deadlines.
COVID has actually enabled me to assist my mother because I recently moved back home, and the house is in disrepair and is unsafe for her. Not having a commute has been helpful, but there is so much work and moving that I am afraid I will not be finished in a reasonable time.
Made it better because I work at home a few days during the week
No, there is NO balance - work, life, family, it's all blended together.
I feel like I live at work. Covid has made my job more demanding. Social distancing has kept me from doing activities I enjoy. My life has become my job during Covid.
It hasn't affected much. I don't go out to eat with my friend for a year.
The pandemic has afforded me the opportunity to work from home 100%, but my company has not made the final decision if this will be ongoing/not. I have worked from home (longer hours) but have been able to stay at home with my teenagers and ensure that they are learning and completing their assignments in a timely manner. Insincerity, the pandemic, has afforded me time with my family that I did not have beforehand and has given me a greater appreciation for the use of technology.
It took me off my work schedules.
Minimal
The pandemic has given me more time to do the things I like to do, such as reading, walking, baking, spending time with my immediate family at home. However, it has prevented me from doing some of the community service activities I did before, and from travel to see my mother, and trips I had planned with my husband. Overall, I have more time to take care of myself than I did before.
I am a special education teacher with [...] Public Schools. We have been through school closures, virtual instruction, and now hybrid teaching. It is the hardest I have ever worked, and I still feel like I am not doing enough.

Comments
<p>The COVID pandemic has allowed me time to complete many at-home projects, administer to the elderly and sick in the community by sending food and shopping for them, and attend to the needs of my grandson. I formed a prayer group of 40 women that send daily requests for prayer as well as scripture lessons, devotions, and words of encouragement. I have kept in contact with church committees that I chair and other committees in which I am a member. Although I am retired, I have continued to keep abreast of the educational needs of my grandson. I have had the opportunity to take patients to doctor appointments. With other women of a church organization, we constructed 75 dresses to be sent to Haiti. I have been able to do this only because I have been blessed with good health and kept safe by God's grace.</p>
<p>I have more time with my family since I've been sent home to work</p>
<p>I work for a Healthcare Corporation, and Covid work-wise has affected us all. The workload has increased being we test and give out vaccines. My husband and I have worked through this pandemic. So, we have to be extra careful not to get sick.</p>
<p>Teaching from home. Stress-related to no routine.</p>
<p>Yes, because it caused the death of my husband, and I am now a single parent</p>
<p>At the start, it made the work-life balance very difficult. I spent WAY more hours on work than family, and it negatively affected my family life. It has balanced out a bit more now but was very much a struggle for the first four months or so.</p>
<p>All my work takes longer, leaving me little time to engage in meaningful discourse and activities with family, friends, and self-care.</p>
<p>I am somehow working more hours for my salary position job</p>
<p>My children, husband, and I are now all "working" from home. I have had to balance my children's education and my work as a teacher. The COVID pandemic has taken away the time limits on my work. I spend more time at night on lessons/grading/paperwork than before because I am busy during my "school day" with teaching, helping my children with their work, making meals, etc. My husband works later now because the workday hours don't seem to exist, so often, my children only see me during the day because my husband is working in our basement until after their bedtime. This has been difficult for us; however, I am enjoying seeing my children and husband for more hours in the day than ever before.</p>

Comments
<p>Tremendously. Last March 2020, due to teleworking, I was able to travel 300 miles from my place of work to live with my 101-year-old mom. I was blessed to take care of her from March 2020 to December 10, when she passed quickly from COVID. I also caught COVID but was not as sick as my mom. I am forever grateful that I was able to live with & help my mom during the final year of her life and not have to leave my job. My workload was lighter. I also was able to take several months of paid leave after my mom's passing while I was still sick from COVID. Had it not been for COVID, I would have been forced to quit my job right away (after working there for 25+ years) because the agency's family medical leave policies would've been insufficient to cover my need for nine months of caregiving plus an additional three months of sick leave for myself. Thus, unfortunately, COVID brought me the priceless benefit of being with my mother before her death and taking care of myself when very sick. The benefits from my job were because of COVID: there are few formal policies during "normal" times in my government health department that would have supported my family and me.</p>
<p>I have continued to work the entire time. I am tired.</p>
<p>I am now being told that I have high blood pressure. The recommendation is medication. I am not happy about this. As a result, I am trying to exercise 4 days a week.</p>
<p>Trying to balance working with everyone working at home has been challenging at times and also beneficial. I was able to save money on gas last year when we were not permitted in the building. I like having the option of working from home sometimes. It's been challenging maintaining my health at home. I move more at work. My family has been distracting at home a few times. I am distracted at work, too, so having the option to do both balances things out. I wish we could maintain the option of working from home on Wednesday next year; however, that's not the plan.</p>
<p>Additional pressure and stress, both work and home-related</p>
<p>I work from home 100%. This tends to lengthen my workday because I have no commute. It is often difficult to separate work time from personal time.</p>
<p>It has changed it to where the lines were blurred. Working from home while taking care of a toddler has been a challenge. We have transitioned back into the building and daycare, and now I miss the time with my toddler.</p>
<p>minimally; making arrangements for employees' safety</p>
<p>During the pandemic, I have been responsible for my job as well as the household work, which is normal. But having to do all the shopping alone and sanitize everything that comes into the house has been extra stress. We have learned the value of being home together, which has made some things easier and others more difficult. It has made me rethink the workload in my home. I have tried to get my housemate to do more. It has made me value my personal time.</p> <p>It has made me appreciate my home much more.</p>

Comments
Made me appreciate telecommuting and making my own hours. I have meetings that I have to attend, but I make my own schedule and don't have to be on the office during business hours.
It has improved a work-life balance.
Allowed me to telework full time and eliminated my commute, giving me back 2 to 3 hours per day. I also have the flexibility to take my teens to their sports practices and see their games without taking leave or feeling bad about leaving early
Increased demands and workload, carrying others stress
In the beginning, work took over my life since there was no longer a physical separation between work and home. Now, I have found a great balance and have "extra" time in my day due to not having to commute or deal with child care. I wonder how my answers would have differed if I were back in my typical "rat race" of running around town.
I have worked from home, which allows me to assist my children who are doing virtual learning.
Worked longer hours. Did not always step away from work.
Telework due to COVID has caused me to work an excessive amount of hours more than I ever have in 25 yrs of my professional career
Increased overlap. Having to work from home while managing my children as students were tough. Also, because of people's concerns about COVID I had less access to help.
Being in healthcare working has not stopped much.
None
It has affected my work balance extremely for the worse—more time at work and work to be done
It's been a blessing to keep my job and be with my kids but extremely stressful in terms of a constant 'involuntary stay at home mom' lifestyle combined with an intense, mentally demanding, and beyond 40 hours a week job
The pandemic affected my mental health. I was previously managing my anxiety and depression with therapy and family support. During the pandemic, I had to seek additional therapy and medication to control my mental health. I became despondent and had suicidal ideation. I'm in a better place now but still struggling to figure out a better work-life balance. Working from home makes separating work life and home life challenging.
I was working at home, so the lines became blurry between my work life and my home life. I had to section off a space in my home that I worked in so that I could make it feel different than my home space. Nights and weekends were more impacted than they needed to be because I couldn't switch it off. Plus, students needed desperate support
I am not able to interact with my students the way I used to in person. Staying at home was challenging.

Comments
It has been very nice being at home. Sometimes when I'm at school, I will stay until my duties are done so that I do not bring any work home. But this can be problematic for my home life if I stay late regularly. Working from home has given me more flexibility because travel time is gone, and I set my clock at 4 PM every day to be completely done with work.
It blurred the lines between work and life. It makes it harder at times to say no or turn off work and be present with my children. Also hard to assist them with virtual learning while trying to be present at work.
I work from home, so it does get lonely.
I have learned that my personal/nonwork time is important and that I need to do a better job balancing my work and home life. I cannot keep working for 50+ weeks.
I have been able to spend more time at home but have a harder time focusing and have more stress and responsibilities
Working from home has been an amazing opportunity to take better care of my elderly parents and young adult children and to maintain my home and spiritual life.
More work, although at home, so more time balancing a young child and getting lesson plans and grading completed. This is much harder than when I was a medical intern.
Working from home made that line very blurry. I used to be very firm about my work hours and about leaving work at work. Having a home office often meant that I had no sense of when my work hours ended. I often worked weekends and felt as though I was on call most of the time since we were all in "crisis mode."
I love working from home. I hate that I have to return back to the building.
My husband temporarily lost his job.
COVID caused me to work full-time remotely. This increased remote work has given me a) more time for self-care (exercise) and b) more time to manage aspects of my elderly mother's care. However, it has also caused me to feel more isolated and depressed.
Teaching from home has impacted my work-life balance because I am always working.
I've been working 100% remotely from home since March 16, 2020. Am able to continue from home 100% for the time being. This has improved my WLB as I used to work from home 1 or 2 days per week.
COVID has allowed me to work from home and focus more time with my family. It had provided me with an opportunity to create a flexible schedule when there was no opportunity before.
Teaching from home has created a very difficult life/work balance situation because of needing to essentially guide my children through virtual learning while fulfilling my virtual teaching responsibilities to my students.
It has been difficult. It has interrupted my field research and jobs.

Comments
COVID has allowed me the time to work on me! Being virtual allowed me to spend less time in traffic and more type reading policies, curriculum, and meeting with coworkers. Besides being in a pandemic, there were so many work projects I was able to complete with my team.
There's no separation between work and home!
Being at home made it easier to get home chores done more easily during the day instead of in the evening. Also, it made it easier to schedule doctor and dentist appointments for the afternoon.
not much
I am teaching from home. Stress—related to no routine.

Appendix E

Interview Protocol and Coding Analysis

Steps	Action
1	I established a rapport and empathy in order to get a depth of information by greeting each interviewee, engaging in small talk, then briefly explaining process/study (Weiss, 1994)
2	I gave each participant a list of questions and asked permission to record
3	I asked participants about their surroundings and if they were alone then we began.
4	I read each question. Paused. Asked a follow-up for clarity if needed or rephrased when needed, being careful not to lead or influence their answer.
5	I made notes in the side margin using symbols such as one star for interesting or two stars for very important, so I could revisit it immediately after the interview.
6	Immediately after the interview, I thanked them and turned off the recording. I wrote my thoughts and impressions I heard and saw.
7	The interview recording was sent to a professional transcription service.
8	Once I received the professionally transcribed document, I read the transcript and made notes in the margin.
9	During the second reading, I highlighted important concepts and gave them a code, using different colors.
10	I reread the transcript, bracketing similar points making a list of key words.
11	Next, I used a word count to help identify word frequency. This gave me a visual representation of what participants were saying. To do this, I used a word count generator and an Excel table.
12	From the word count and open coding I was able to identify substantive categories and subthemes (Maxwell, 2013). Using an Excel sheet, I made a list of subthemes, which were recurring key issues that appeared in interviewee narratives.
13	Next, I identified relationships between the subthemes to create themes related to the constructs.
14	The findings were organized by themes and topics and I used direct quotes of participants to illustrate points.

Note: These steps are based on protocols described by Weiss (1994) and Maxwell (2013). See also: Appendix G.

Appendix F

Work-Life Balance Policy Data Tables

This appendix provides data gathered from responses in Section 1 of the survey questionnaire in three areas: Flexible Schedule and Working Day Policies, Social Benefit Policies, and Family Support Policies. In each area, respondents were asked to specify whether the benefits in question were available to them in their workplace.

Table 1

Flexible Schedule and Working Day Policies

POLICY	YES % and #	NO % and #	I AM NOT SURE % and #	TOTAL
Maternity/paternity leave	80.98% 149	14.67% 27	4.35% 8	184
Unpaid leaves of absence	77.47% 141	15.38% 28	7.14% 13	182
Paid leaves of absence	75.69% 137	18.23% 33	6.08% 11	181
Ability to control meeting schedules	48.09% 88	49.73% 91	2.19% 4	183
Extension or reduction of working day	39.89% 73	54.64% 100	5.46% 10	183
Flexible schedule (choice of days)	33.70% 61	64.64% 117	1.66% 3	181
Flexible shifts	33.33% 60	63.33% 114	3.33% 6	180

Table 2*Social Benefit Policies*

POLICY	YES % and #	NO % and #	I AM NOT SURE % and #	TOTAL
Health, dental, and /or vision insurance	92.39% 170	7.61% 14	0.00% 0	184
Retirement benefit	88.46% 161	9.34% 17	2.20% 4	182
Educational benefits	87.29% 158	8.84% 16	3.87% 7	181
Programs to promote health and well-being	85.71% 156	10.99% 20	3.30% 6	182
Employee Assistance Program	78.26% 144	14.13% 26	7.61% 14	184
Assistance with physical exercise (e.g., discounted gym membership or gym at work)	54.40% 99	33.52% 61	12.09% 22	182
Help with transportation/parking facilities	35.87% 66	50.54% 93	13.59% 25	184
Financial services, such as loans	24.59% 45	51.37% 94	24.04% 44	183

Table 3*Family Support Policies*

POLICY	YES % and #	NO % and #	I AM NOT SURE % and #	TOTAL
Sporting, leisure, and/or cultural activities	40.98% 75	42.62% 78	16.39% 30	183
Maternity/paternity support measures	34.78% 64	30.98% 57	34.24% 63	184
Books and /or scholarship for children	23.91% 44	57.61% 106	18.48% 34	184
Assistance for special family situations such as adoptions	19.57% 36	39.67% 73	40.76% 75	184
Daycare in the workplace	11.41% 21	80.98% 149	7.61% 1 4	184

Appendix G

CODING ANALYSIS EXAMPLE

Research Question: How do WLB policies, workplace support systems, personal support systems, personal time, and interactional conflict influence the perceptions of work-life balance among professional women?					
Interview Question 5: How would you describe your relationships with your colleagues, and how do they affect your work-life balance and personal satisfaction?					
Theme: Support is Important					
Subthemes:	Relationships at Work	Help From Friends/ Colleagues (Team resources)	Personal Satisfaction	Supervisor Support	Culture
Participant No.					
1	Good working relationships No personal relationships No effect on my WLB.	If I had a project at work, they would support it.	Yes...good relationships affect the work environment and determines if you are comfortable and more productive	n/a I guess, if needed	Family owned/ traditional
2	So, it takes a long time for somebody to get into my circle... one of the positives of being an organization for so long, that I've gotten to know people ...to establish some really good support structures.	... knowing how to navigate the system... so having that peace and being able to talk to them and do things with them outside and inside of school has helped us tremendously	some of those people have progressed into central office, they're good contacts for me to kind of bounce ideas off and things of that sort, which helps for personal satisfaction	I just realized how important it is to have that, that that strong relationship with colleagues because they understand what you're going through,	Educational/ Professional Sometimes bias based on who you know instead of qualifications

Subthemes:	Relationships at Work	Help From Friends/ Colleagues (Team resources)	Personal Satisfaction	Supervisor Support	Culture
	My friends, my principal, colleagues, friends are truly friends, they aren't just colleagues, they are my friends. And I don't know what I would do without them.				
3	Teammates assisted in planning Departments in worked together to support each other.	Some colleagues worked together and developed lifelong friendships	Enjoy developing close relationships with different colleagues with like faith and lifestyle	Found it difficult to compromise principles and personal standards—as a Christian. School rules did not always align with my principles.	if you have issues, you can really talk to someone about struggles and things like that. It's a good sounding board
4	collaboration is very important	you're not working alone. You have someone to collaborate with that knows the practice and has the same medical knowledge that that you can bounce off of. Everybody had different experiences and so it's positive because their experience in their practice is different so we both really complement each other.	Support from mainly from colleagues...company enforce rules and focus on bottom line...don't seem to listen to people working on the front lines.	...company runs on quota before patient care ...colleagues work collaborative but it is difficult to compromise care for time
5	I have a colleague that I work with who we've become really good friends. We'll have dinner together and our husbands know each	And then the people I supervise are really hard workers and really collaborative. And it's just a really good team. The chemistry is	We all enjoy being there and being with each other and working together on different things. And we make each other	And so, I want them to feel like this is a place where they're respected and their ideas are heard, and I	... I started to try to change that culture. And I really started to push transparency... She was part of that culture shift. And she

Subthemes:	Relationships at Work	Help From Friends/ Colleagues (Team resources)	Personal Satisfaction	Supervisor Support	Culture
	other now. And so that's really nice, to work with somebody who not only challenges you intellectually, but you're a friend with.	working so well right now. And part of that is because I want them to enjoy coming to work. We share information. If she goes to a meeting, she debriefs me on everything that happened in the meeting. If I go to a meeting, I debrief her. And so we are lockstep on the same page.	laugh, and it's a very upbeat, happy environment	want to support their professional growth.	saw me changing that culture and she became a part of it, and then she became a supporter of it and also pushing it.
6	I think I had a pretty good relationship with majority of my employees	I prayed with my employees if they want prayer. I was there to support them, if they had, you know, death in the family, or they were going through something hard within the family,	And because it is our investment, and you have no clue. God has done for us to get to that point, and our business is that you are not going to be in control. I'm not going to allow an employee to handicap me.	I've built relationships really close	... the employees they would, you know, care you know they would be understanding ... and I text them and say you know unfortunately sorry you know we're gonna have to be closed tomorrow, they will be understanding they cared about us, just like how we cared about.

Note: Protocol based on Maxwell (2013). Colors: **Red:** Aligned with the independent variables, **Yellow:** Repetitive through the interviews, **Blue:** Specific to the theme of support