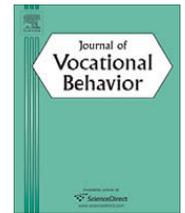




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Work–family climate, organizational commitment, and turnover: Multilevel contagion effects of leaders [☆]

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents empirical research analyzing the relationship between work–family climate (operationalized in terms of three work–family climate sub-scales), organizational leadership (i.e., senior manager) characteristics, organizational commitment and turnover intent among 526 employees from 37 different hotels across the US. Using multilevel modeling, we found significant associations between work–family climate, and both organizational commitment and turnover intent, both within and between hotels. Findings underscored the importance of managerial support for employee work–family balance, the relevance of senior managers' own work–family circumstances in relation to employees' work outcomes, and the existence of possible contagion effects of leaders in relation to work–family climate.

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1. Introduction

Previous research has shown that the availability of organizational work–life benefits, in conjunction with a supportive supervisor and an organizational climate promoting their utilization, aids organizations in attracting and retaining human resources (Casper & Buffardi, 2004). Other research has suggested that organizational work–life benefits and a supportive work climate are linked positively to employee job satisfaction and motivation, and reduced employee stress (Allen, 2001; Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002; Behson, 2005; Casper & Buffardi, 2004; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). The purpose of this study was to conduct a multilevel examination of the implications of top management spillover and work–family climate for lower-level managerial employees' commitment and retention in the organization. In doing so, we focused on service occupations in the US, specifically jobs within the hotel industry, and we analyzed both within- and between-organization differences.

In the aftermath of the 2001 US terrorist attacks and the subsequent drop-off in travel, many hotel companies faced stiff challenges and, as a result, learned to do more with less. Lean staffing structures have restored profitability for many hotel companies, but have also placed heavy demands on employees which may, in turn, pose challenges for their physical and psychological health, work performance, and productivity, as well as their lives off the job (Mulvaney, O'Neill, Cleveland,

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& Crouter, 2006). Although work–family balance has been listed as one of the top five factors determining job satisfaction for employees in the service sector such as the hospitality/tourism industry (O'Leary & Deegan, 2005), employees often do not use family-friendly benefits even though organizations provide them (Butler, Gasser, & Smart, 2004; Judiesch & Lyness, 1999; Thompson et al., 1999). Employees may be reluctant to use such benefits unless they perceive their supervisor and organization as supportive of them doing so. Therefore, it is important to learn more about the work–family characteristics of top level organizational leaders or senior managers (e.g., in hotels, the general manager, or GM) who play a significant role in shaping the organization's climate and who may set the stage for employees' work outcomes.

1.1. Organizational climate

Employees may be offered a variety of family support benefits by their organization to help them balance their multiple roles (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Formal family-friendly policies and benefit availability can reduce work–family conflict and enhance employee job outcomes (Anderson et al., 2002; Behson, 2005). Further, formal practices, such as childcare, telecommuting, and flex-time, help employees manage their work and non-work life, and enhance employee perceptions of the supportiveness of their organization regarding their family life (Allen, 2001; Casper & Buffardi, 2004). However, when employees expect that using family-friendly benefits would seriously harm their career progress and status at work, they are less likely to use such benefits (Butler et al., 2004).

Indeed, formal organizational policies and benefits alone are not useful to the organization or its employees when the climate is not supportive of their use (Allen, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999). The informal organizational support that creates a family-friendly climate in an organization has more influence on employee attitudes toward their job and organization than has formal support (Anderson et al., 2002; Behson, 2005). For example, a workplace intervention described by Munck (2001) illustrated the importance of informal practices, e.g., significant requirements for non-productive “face time” for upward mobility. Leaders provided mid-level managers with greater technological support and enhanced job efficiency, and eliminated inefficient procedures such as wasteful meetings (Munck, 2001). This enhanced organizational support reduced the percentage of managers who considered their job too demanding to spend their time with family from 77 to 36 percent (Munck, 2001). It also changed managers' perceptions of organizational climate. The proportion of managers who thought the organization was more focused on hours worked than work accomplished dropped from 43 to 15 percent (Munck, 2001).

In the present study, we used multilevel modeling to examine both the individual-level (i.e., psychological level) and organizational level climate effects on turnover intentions and organizational commitment. We applied Thompson et al. (1999) work–family model to assess hotel and employee level perceptions of work–family supportive climate. Thompson et al. (1999) identified three dimensions of work–family climate: managerial support for work–family balance, perceived negative career consequences regarding work–family benefit use, and organizational time expectations that require employees to sacrifice their family lives. These dimensions of work–family climate are related to employee benefit use (Allen, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999), work–family conflict (Anderson et al., 2002; Behson, 2002), and employee job attitudes (Allen, 2001; Thompson et al., 1999). The present research contributes to existing literature in at least two ways. One, we assess organizational climate at both the individual and organizational levels. Two, using multilevel analyses, we demonstrate the linkage between top manager or leader attitudes and characteristics, and the perceptions of their lower-level managers.

1.2. Employee perceptions of climate and withdrawal

Employee perceptions regarding the family supportiveness of their organization are related to intentions to leave the organization (Allen, 2001; Anderson et al., 2002; Thompson et al., 1999). This association is important to consider because turnover, especially among mid and lower-level managers, referred to as department managers or DMs in our study, is one of the most pervasive problems in service organizations (Deery & Shaw, 1997). Specifically, the annual turnover rate has been estimated to be 50 percent in the hotel industry (Smith Travel Research, 2003). Causes of turnover include limited career and financial advancement, organizational climate, and work–family conflict (O'Leary & Deegan, 2005; Stalcup & Pearson, 2001). Stalcup and Pearson (2001) reported that long working hours and regular relocation are additional reasons for hotel management turnover, but participants in their study emphasized that the primary concern regarding work time was not working too much, but not having enough time to spend with family.

O'Leary and Deegan (2005) examined career progression of hospitality and tourism management graduates. There was a significant drop-out rate from employment in the tourism/hospitality industry over the course of 10 years. Unsuitable working hours and poor remuneration were the major reasons for the turnover. There was also reference to work/life balance. Many of the respondents reported that they left the industry because of the incompatibility of work and family life and that the incompatibility hampered their advancement in the industry (O'Leary & Deegan, 2005). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1. Lower-level manager perceptions of a supportive work–family climate (including organizational time expectations, career consequences, and managerial support) are negatively associated with their turnover intentions.

Employee perceptions regarding the family supportiveness of their organization are also significantly related to their job outcomes and attitudes toward the organization, such as job commitment and job satisfaction (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Employees who perceive their organization to be more family supportive report greater job satisfaction (Anderson et al.,

2002; Thomas & Ganster, 1995) and organizational commitment (Bragger, Rodriguez-Srednicki, Dutcher, Indovino, & Rosner, 2005) than those who see their organization as less family supportive. Supportive supervisors directly and indirectly influence employee job attitudes, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Allen, 2001). Anderson et al. (2002) reported that managerial support directly affected job satisfaction and absenteeism. In a study of hotel department managers and their spouses, Cleveland et al. (2007) found that hotel department managers emphasized the importance of supervisory support for their family roles and that such support went a long way in reducing some of the stress of long, unpredictable work hours and tense interactions with guests. Therefore, we propose:

Hypothesis 2. Lower-level manager perceptions of a supportive work–family climate (including organizational time expectations, career consequences, and managerial support) are positively associated with their commitment to the organization.

1.3. Aggregating employee climate perceptions to organization-level

During the 1970s and 1980s, the research regarding organizational climate was characterized by controversies and methodological difficulties (Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989). These controversies centered around three issues (1) the objective versus perceptual nature of climate; (2) the appropriate levels of analyses for addressing climate; and (3) the aggregation of climate perceptions. To resolve this controversy, a distinction was made between *psychological climate* in which climate is conceptualized and measured at the individual-level, and *organizational climate*, in which climate is conceptualized and studied as an organizational variable (Hellriegel & Slocum, 1974; James & Jones, 1974). It has been argued that organizational climate research should rely on the individual as the basic unit of theory because it arises out of the collective cognitive appraisal and sense-making of individuals (James, 1982). Since climate is fundamentally an individual-level construct, the unit of measurement must begin at the individual-level (Ostroff, Kinicki, & Tamkins, 2003). Yet when consensus among individuals in their perceptions of climate is demonstrated, these perceptual ratings can be aggregated to reflect subunit or organizational climate (James, 1982).

Despite the fact that work–family culture is defined as shared perceptions (Thompson et al., 1999), very few studies consider the aggregate of these perceptions. In other words, we know little about the extent to which employee perceptions of a work–family supportive environment are shared.

In the present research, we hypothesize that *organizational climate* (e.g., employee perceptions of climate aggregated at the organizational level) will be linked to important work outcomes. Multilevel modeling (MLM) techniques permit researchers to simultaneously assess climate at the individual and the organizational levels.

Hypothesis 3. Organizational-level work–family climate (including organizational time expectations, career consequences, and managerial support) is negatively associated with lower-level manager turnover intentions between hotels.

Hypothesis 4. Organizational-level work–family climate (including organizational time expectations, career consequences, and managerial support) is positively associated with lower-level manager commitment to the organization between hotels.

1.4. Top leadership spillover

Open systems theory suggests that what happens to one individual affects other individuals within the same network (Gharajedaghi, 1999). This crossover effect has received substantial support within the family domain. For example, crossover effects from one spouse or partner to the other has been documented in terms of work and family conflict (Matthews, Del Priore, Acitelli, & Barnes-Farrell, 2006), symptoms of depression (Westman & Vinokur, 1998), and mood (Williams & Anderson, 1991). Crossover or linkage effects may be particularly pronounced between the top level leaders or managers and followers because the leaders are salient role models. One of the rare studies of this kind examined the crossover effect of strain from school principals to teachers. Westman and Etzion (1999) found evidence of a significant crossover effect of job-induced tensions from principals to teachers. This finding suggests that the strain an individual experiences in a work environment, especially the top level leader, can influence the strain others experience, as well.

In addition to stress and strain crossover effects (i.e., strain to strain effects), the leader's perceptions and experiences may also influence the work attitudes of lower-level managers within the organization or hotel (i.e., strain to satisfaction). For example, a series of studies supported a direct influence of the top leader's identification with the organization on follower job satisfaction and citizenship behavior (Van Dick, Hirst, Grojean, & Wieseke, 2007). As such, leaders' own attitudes and experiences can have direct influence on follower work attitudes.

The stress leaders experience between their work and family lives may crossover to the experiences and attitudes of their followers. As such, we predict that leader perceptions of negative work–family spillover will adversely influence followers' turnover intentions. Alternatively, leaders who are able to capitalize on positive aspects from work and family may have a positive influence on followers' attitudes. Therefore, in the context of our investigation, we predict that when top level leaders experience work–family spillover (either negative or positive), it will influence the work attitudes of other lower-level managers in that organization.

This study extends previous work using systems theory on the relationships between leaders and followers in two ways. First, the study is one of the first to examine the influence of leader work–family attitudes and characteristics on follower

work attitudes. Whereas Westman and Etzion (1999) examined stress and strain between leader and followers, we examined the effect of work–family spillover on follower commitment and turnover intentions. Additionally, our study differs in the treatment of the non-independence of the data. Westman and Etzion (1999) aggregated all teachers within a school and treated school as the unit of analysis. As such, they were unable to examine individual-level data. We use multilevel modeling (MLM), which allows us to maintain the integrity of individual-level data and partition the effects into within-hotel (e.g., individual-level) and between-hotel (e.g., hotel-level) effects. Based on this review, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 5. Top leader negative work–family spillover is negatively associated with greater lower-level manager organizational commitment and positively related to turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 6. Top leader positive work–family spillover is positively associated with lower-level manager organizational commitment and negatively related to turnover intentions.

2. Methods

2.1. Procedures

Our research design involved initial, in-person contact with the top manager or leader (i.e., general manager, or GM) at each of 48 full-service hotels located across the US and representing every major US region. These organizations were located in geographic clusters throughout the US. We conducted face-to-face interviews with GMs (approximately 1 h) and distributed a survey instrument at the conclusion of the interview for the GM to complete in private. During the meeting with the GM, we asked for permission and access to other lower-level department managers at the hotel. Approximately 77 percent of GMs (37 hotels) gave us permission to contact their department managers. We conducted structured telephone surveys with department managers using computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) procedures. These surveys were conducted by trained survey research center personnel using a structured interview format with established coded response categories. Participants received an honorarium of \$20.

2.2. Sample

The sample of the 37 GMs surveyed was 91 percent male, with an average age of 47 years (ranging from 37 to 59), and an average tenure in the hotel industry of 24 years. The majority had at least a college degree (88%) and were married or living with a romantic partner (91%). The racial composition included 88 percent Caucasian, 6 percent African American, 3 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent Asian. The average number of employees in the 37 hotels was 476 ($SD = 251$; range = 120–1000).

Within these 37 hotels, a total of 526 hotel department managers (274 males and 252 females) took part in the study. Approximately 83 percent of the managers whom we contacted agreed to complete the interview. Managers were sampled across all departments, in areas including rooms operations, food and beverage operations, sales and marketing, human resources, accounting and engineering, and had an average tenure in their current position of 3.5 years. The average age was 37.7 years (ranging from 21 to 64), and the average education was 15.25 years. The majority (69.4%) were married or living with a romantic partner, and 52 percent of managers had biological or adopted children. The racial composition included 65 percent Caucasian, 11 percent Hispanic, 10 percent African American, and 14 percent other/unknown/unidentified. It is important to note that all of our participants were managers. However, within each hotel, there was only one GM (who reflects top management) and all other managers (department managers) reported to him/her either directly or indirectly.

2.3. Measures

2.3.1. Work and family climate

We used the work and family culture scale developed by Thompson et al. (1999). This 20-item scale assesses respondents' perceptions of the extent to which their organization facilitates employees' efforts to balance work and family responsibilities. Response options ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. High scores on these dimensions reflect a more supportive work–family climate, i.e., high managerial support (11 items such as “In general, senior management in your hotel is quite accommodating of family-related needs”), low negative career consequences for using work–family benefits (5 items such as “To turn down a promotion or transfer for family-related reasons will seriously hurt one's career progress in your hotel company”—reverse coded), and low organizational time expectations that interfere with family responsibilities (4 items such as “To get ahead in your hotel, managers are expected to work more than 50 h a week, whether at the workplace or at home”—reverse coded). Slight word changes were made to increase relevance to the hotel industry. For example, “hotel” was substituted for “organization.” Further, “manager” was replaced with “senior manager” and “employee” was replaced with “manager” because all participants were managers. Thus, the managerial support items reflect managers' perceptions of their own supervisors, rather than perceptions of their own supportiveness towards their direct reports. In our study, Cronbach's α (Cronbach & Quirk, 1971) was 0.84 for managerial support, 0.70 for career consequences, and 0.81 for organizational time expectations.

2.3.2. Organizational commitment

We used the 9-item short form of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) developed by Mowday, Steers, and Porter (1979), a frequently used and respected scale, to assess affective organizational commitment. Participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with each item (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Sample items include “You are proud to tell others that you are part of this company” and “You are extremely glad that you chose this company to work for over others you were considering at the time you joined.” Cronbach’s α was 0.88.

2.3.3. Turnover intentions

The intent to turnover scale was inspired by a review of the employee turnover process conducted by Mobley, Griffeth, Hand, and Meglino (1979). We created a three-item scale of turnover intentions including expectations of alternative jobs, intentions to search for another position, and intentions to leave the organization. This scale had a coefficient α of 0.88 in our study.

2.3.4. Leader background characteristics

The top leader (GM) interview included background information such as age, gender, how long the leader had been in the industry, how long the leader had led this particular organization, and whether or not the leader was a parent.

2.3.5. Leader's work-to-family spillover

The 37 leaders each completed two scales reflecting their perceptions of the ways in which their work positively and negatively affected their lives off the job. The measures, adapted from Grzywacz (2000) and Voydanoff (2005), included a three-item assessment of positive spillover ($\alpha = .65$) and a four-item assessment of negative spillover ($\alpha = .71$). Participants were asked to rate the frequency with which they experienced work and family spillover (1 = never; 5 = all the time). An example of positive spillover includes “The things you do at work help you deal with personal and practical issues at home,” whereas an example item of negative spillover is, “Your job makes you feel too tired to do the things that need attention at home.”

2.3.6. Control variables

Control variables included lower-level manager age (mean = 37.24, $SD = 4.08$), sex (males = 1; females = 0), whether or not they had children (yes = 0; no = 1), and the number of years they had been employed by their current company.

2.4. Analyses

The data were analyzed using MLM in SAS with the Proc Mixed program. This approach takes into account the ‘nested’ data structure, such that the 526 managers were nested within 37 hotels (see Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992). At the within-organization-level, predictors included the three variables reflecting managers’ perceived work–family climate, as well as key demographic factors, including manager age, gender, tenure in company, tenure in industry, and whether the manager had children. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested at this level. At the between-organization-level, relevant predictors included the aggregate of manager ratings of work–family climate and top leader (e.g., general manager) work–family spillover. Hypotheses 3 through 6 were tested at this level. The MLM analysis consisted of two levels, one capturing manager, or within-hotel effects (Level-1) and the other capturing organization-level, or between-organization effects (Level-2).

2.5. Agreement

To estimate the between-organization effects, we used the leader (e.g., GM) scores as well as characteristics of the lower-level managers (demographics, work–family climate) aggregated within each organization. Before examining the between-hotel analyses, it was necessary to determine whether there was significant between-hotel variance and agreement. Therefore, we calculated intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC) to assess the agreement within hotels as an index of the proportion of the variability that exists at the organizational level relative to the total variability in the data (Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992; Snijders & Bosker, 1999). Table 1 presents ICCs for each of the variables investigated. ICCs ranged from .016 to .128, indicating between 1.6 and 12.8 percent of the variability in these scores was attributable to differences between hotels.

Table 1

Intraclass correlation coefficients (ICCs) for work–family climate, organizational commitment, and intentions to leave organization.

	Between-hotel variance	Within-hotel variance	ICC
Intentions to leave organization	0.040	1.156	0.034
Organizational commitment	0.054	0.368	0.128
Org. time expectations	0.082	1.076	0.071
Career consequences	0.016	0.613	0.025
Managerial support	0.035	0.448	0.072

3. Results

Table 2 shows descriptive statistics and inter-correlations for intention to leave the company, organizational commitment, work–family climate, and demographic variables for the lower-level managers (e.g., department managers, DMs). On average, managers who reported higher levels of organizational commitment were less likely to intend to leave the company. In addition, the three work–family climate variables were related to both intentions to leave the company and organizational commitment in the expected direction. Manager perceptions of greater flexible time expectations, lower career consequences and greater managerial support were associated with lower intentions to leave the company (r s between $-.33$ and $-.35$, $p < .01$) and greater organizational commitment (r s between $.25$ and $.35$, $p < .01$). There was also a high degree of association among the work–family climate variables (r s between $.54$ and $.71$, $p < .01$) indicating that greater flexible time expectations were associated with lower career consequences and greater managerial support. A few of the demographic variables were also related to work–family climate, specifically flexible time expectations. Managers who reported greater flexibility in their time expectations were, on average, older, more likely to have children, and had a longer tenure in the industry.

Tables 3 and 4 present the results of a series of multilevel models predicting manager intention to leave the company and organizational commitment, respectively. The first model presents the results of an empty model (no predictors) to estimate variance components. Models 1 and 2 address the manager-level effects (psychological climate). Specifically, Model 1 presents the results of Hypotheses 1 and 2, which predicted that work–family climate (including organizational time expectations, career consequences, and managerial support) would predict job attitudes. Model 2 adds in the effects of manager characteristics. Next, Models 3–5 present tests of the hotel-level effects (organizational climate). Specifically, Model 3 presents the results of Hypotheses 3 and 4, which address the work–family climate variables at the hotel-level. Further, Model 4 adds the characteristics of the GM. Finally, Model 5 spillover effects of the GM, testing Hypotheses 5 and 6.

3.1. Psychological climate

Table 3 presents the results of multilevel models in the prediction of intentions to turnover. The intercept of Model 0 shows that, on average, managers' intentions to leave the company were low. The variance components in this model, however, revealed significant variation both within (Estimate = 1.16, $p < .01$) and between (Estimate = .04, $p < .05$) hotels. Model 1 presents the results of Hypothesis 1, which predicted that work–family climate (including organizational time expectations, career consequences, and managerial support) would be negatively associated with turnover intentions within organizations. Within organizations, flexible time expectations (Estimate = $-.14$, $SE = .06$, $p < .05$), career consequences (Estimate = $-.27$, $SE = .07$, $p < .01$), and managerial support (Estimate = $-.24$, $SE = .10$, $p < .01$) were all associated with intentions to leave in the predicted direction, thus supporting Hypothesis 1. Managers who perceived greater support for balancing work and family responsibilities, who saw fewer negative consequences for using work–family benefits, and who perceived greater temporal flexibility were less likely to intend to leave the company compared to managers who perceived less work–family support. These associations remained after controlling for several demographic characteristics of managers (Model 2).

A similar pattern was found for organizational commitment. Table 4 summarizes a series of MLM models predicting employees' organizational commitment. Model 0 (the empty model) indicates that organizational commitment varied significantly both within (Estimate = .37, $p < .01$) and between (Estimate = .05, $p < .01$) organizations. Hypothesis 2 stated that manager perceptions of a supportive work–family climate (including organizational time expectations, career consequences, and managerial support) would be positively associated with commitment to the organization. In our analyses, managerial support was the only independent predictor supported. Models 1 and 2 show that, within organizations, perceived managerial support for work–family balance was associated with greater employee organizational commitment (Estimate = .20, $SE = .06$, $p < .01$), even after controlling for employee demographic characteristics (Estimate = .19, $SE = .05$, $p < .01$). Organizational time expectations and career consequences were not significantly associated with commitment to the organization within organizations. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was partially supported.

Table 2

Descriptive statistics and correlations among intention to leave organization, organizational commitment, work–family climate, and demographic variables.

		M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Turnover intentions	1.84	1.09	–								
2	Commitment organizational time	4.31	.64	-.59**	–							
3	Expectations career	3.13	1.07	-.33**	.28**	–						
4	Consequences managerial	3.62	.79	-.35**	.25**	.58**	–					
5	Support	3.70	.69	-.35**	.35**	.71**	.54**	–				
6	Age	37.69	8.99	-.08	.10*	.13**	.11**	.12**	–			
7	Gender	.52	.50	.07	-.10*	-.05	-.06	-.04	.10*	–		
8	Kids	-.52	-.50	-.03	.13**	.15*	.10*	.10*	.44**	.14**	–	
9	Tenure	4.82	5.35	.02	.06	.01	-.01	-.01	.47**	-.01	-.27**	–

Note. N = 526. Turnover intentions, intentions to leave organization; Kids, does manager have children; Tenure, tenure in hotel.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Table 3

Results of multilevel models examining the effects of DM and GM characteristics on intentions to leave organization.

Fixed effects	Model 0 Estimate (SE)	Model 1 Estimate (SE)	Model 2 Estimate (SE)	Model 3 Estimate (SE)	Model 4 Estimate (SE)	Model 5 Estimate (SE)
Intercept	1.87 (.06)**	4.63 (.84)**	4.55 (.10)**	4.55 (.86)**	5.01 (.98)**	3.86 (1.01)**
<i>Within-hotel effects</i>						
Org. time expectations	—	-.14 (.06)*	-.14 (.06)*	-.14 (.06)*	-.16 (.07)**	-.17 (.07)**
Career consequences	—	-.27 (.07)**	-.24 (.07)**	-.24 (.07)**	-.20 (.07)**	-.20 (.07)**
Manager support	—	-.24 (.10)**	-.23 (.09)**	-.23 (.09)**	-.21 (.10)*	-.21 (.10)*
Age of DM	—	—	-.02 (.01)*	-.02 (.01)*	-.01 (.01)*	-.02 (.01)*
Gender of DM	—	—	.19 (.09)*	.17 (.09)*	.19 (.09)*	.19 (.09)*
Have kids DM	—	—	.04 (.10)	.05 (.10)	.06 (.10)	.06 (.10)
Years in industry DM	—	—	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
Years in company DM	—	—	.00 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.00 (.01)
<i>Between-hotel effects</i>						
Org. time expectations	—	—	—	.41 (.21)*	.61 (.25)*	.64 (.24)*
Career consequences	—	—	—	-.29 (.37)	-.44 (.38)	-.15 (.36)
Manager support	—	—	—	-.81 (.40)*	-1.04 (.41)*	-1.04 (.38)**
Age of GM	—	—	—	—	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)
Gender of GM	—	—	—	—	-.01 (.01)	-.00 (.01)
Have kids GM	—	—	—	—	-.34 (.15)*	-.38 (.14)**
Yrs in hotel GM	—	—	—	—	-.02 (.02)	-.01 (.02)
Years in company GM	—	—	—	—	-.01 (.01)	-.01 (.01)
Positive W/F spillovers GM	—	—	—	—	—	-.09 (.09)
Negative W/F spillovers GM	—	—	—	—	—	.07 (.03)**
Variance components		Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Between-hotel (Level-2)	.04*	.02	.02	.02	.01	.00
Within-hotel (Level-1)	1.16**	.96**	.94**	.94**	.93**	.93**
<i>Model fit</i>						
-2LL	1578.7	1470.1	1460.3	1450.4	1371.9	1364.4
Change in -2LL (from previous Model)		98.3	20.1	9.9	78.5	7.5
p		0.0000	0.0012	0.0194	0.0000	0.0235

Note. DM, department manager; GM, general manager. -2LL, -2 log likelihood.

* $p < .10$.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

3.2. Organizational climate

Models 3–5 in Tables 3 and 4 add information at the hotel-level. Models 3 and 4 present the results of tests of Hypotheses 3 and 4, whereas Model 5 presents the results of Hypotheses 5 and 6. Hypothesis 3 stated work–family climate (including organizational time expectations, career consequences, and managerial support) would be negatively associated with turnover intentions between organizations. In Model 3, the aggregate of the managers' reports of work–family climate variables were added to the model. As presented in Table 3, intention to leave the organization was lower in those organizations where managers, on average, perceived more family-related support from supervisors. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was confirmed for managerial support. This effect remained significant even after controlling for top level leader (e.g., GM) characteristics (Model 4). We found no significant relationship between career consequences and turnover intentions between organizations. Organizational time expectations were marginally related to turnover intentions, but not in the direction hypothesized. Thus, Hypothesis 3 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 4 stated manager perceptions of a supportive work–family climate (including organizational time expectations, career consequences, and managerial support) would be positively associated with commitment to the organization between organizations. Hypothesis 4 was confirmed for managerial support only. Model 3 of Table 4 shows that managerial support also predicted between-organization differences in organizational commitment (Estimate = .83, SE = .29, $p < .01$): In organizations in which top level management was perceived to be supportive of family responsibilities, managers reported greater commitment. This effect remained significant even after controlling for top leader (e.g., GM) characteristics (Model 4). We found no significant relationship between career consequences or organizational time expectations and organizational commitment between organizations. Thus, Hypothesis 4 was partially supported.

3.3. Leader work–family spillover

Hypothesis 5 stated that when the hotel leader experienced greater negative work–family spillover, lower-level managers in the same organization reported lower organizational commitment and greater turnover intentions. This hypothesis was confirmed for turnover intentions. The final model shown in Table 3 indicates an association between the leader experiences of negative work-to-family spillover with their managers' turnover intentions, suggesting that managers are more likely to

Table 4
Results of multilevel models examining the effects of DM and GM characteristics on organizational commitment.

Fixed effects	Model 0 Estimate (SE)	Model 1 Estimate (SE)	Model 2 Estimate (SE)	Model 3 Estimate (SE)	Model 4 Estimate (SE)	Model 5 Estimate (SE)
Intercept	4.27 (.05)**	4.27 (.05)**	4.42 (.06)**	2.45 (.62)**	2.09 (.68)**	2.52 (.67)**
<i>Within-hotel effects</i>						
Org. time expectations	—	.07 (.03) ⁺	.06 (.04) ⁺	.06 (.04) ⁺	.06 (.04) ⁺	.07 (.04) ⁺
Career consequences	—	.04 (.04)	.03 (.04)	.03 (.04)	.03 (.04)	.03 (.04)
Manager support	—	.20 (.06)**	.19 (.05)**	.19 (.05)**	.19 (.06)**	.19 (.06)**
Age of DM	—	—	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)	.00 (.00)
Gender of DM	—	—	-.16 (.05)**	-.16 (.05)**	-.17 (.05)**	-.17 (.05)**
Have kids DM	—	—	.13 (.07) ⁺	.13 (.06) ⁺	.13 (.06) ⁺	.13 (.06) ⁺
Years in industry DM	—	—	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)
Years in company DM	—	—	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.01 (.01)
<i>Between-hotel effects</i>						
Org. time expectations	—	—	—	-.25 (.16)	-.30 (.17) ⁺	-.35 (.16) ⁺
Career consequences	—	—	—	-.09 (.28)	.08 (.27)	-.09 (.26)
Manager support	—	—	—	.83 (.29)**	.83 (.29)**	.92 (.27)**
Age of GM	—	—	—	—	-.00 (.01)	-.01 (.01)
Gender of GM	—	—	—	—	-.00 (.00)	-.00 (.00)
Have kids GM	—	—	—	—	.08 (.11)	.10 (.10)
Years in hotel GM	—	—	—	—	.02 (.02)	.02 (.01)
Years in company GM	—	—	—	—	.01 (.00) ⁺	.01 (.00) ⁺
Positive W/F spillovers GM	—	—	—	—	—	.12 (.06) ⁺
Negative W/F spillovers GM	—	—	—	—	—	-.02 (.02)
Variance components		Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
Between-hotel (Level-2)	.05**	.05**	.06**	.03**	.02 ⁺	.01
Within-hotel (Level-1)	.37**	.33**	.31**	.31**	.32***	.32**
<i>Model fit</i>						
-2LL	1002.6	937.6	912.7	901.2	860.9	856.45
Change in -2LL (from previous Model)		65	24.9	11.5	40.3	503.5
<i>p</i>		0.0000	0.0001	0.0093	0.0000	0.0000

Note. DM, department manager; GM, general manager. -2LL, -2 log likelihood.
⁺ $p < .10$.
^{*} $p < .05$.
^{**} $p < .01$.
^{***} $p < .001$.

report thinking about leaving to the organization when their top leader (GM) reports experiencing the negative effects of work on family life (Estimate = .07, SE = .03, $p < .05$). In organizations where leaders reported greater negative work fallout in their families, lower-level managers within their organizations were more likely to consider leaving the organization compared to hotels where leaders experienced less negative work-family spillover. However, Hypothesis 5 was not supported for the organizational commitment variable. Thus, Hypothesis 5 was partially supported.

Hypothesis 6 stated that when a leader reported greater positive work-family spillover, their managers would report greater employee organizational commitment and lower turnover intentions. We found marginal support for this hypothesis; specifically, top leader positive work-family spillover was marginally associated with greater manager organizational commitment. However, top leader perceptions of positive work-family spillover were not associated with lower turnover intentions among their managers. The final model of Table 4 shows a marginal association between employee organizational commitment and leader ratings of positive work-to-family spillover suggesting that managers reported more commitment to the organization when their leader (e.g., GM) reported beneficial effects of work on family life (Estimate = .12, SE = .06, $p < .10$). However, because we found only marginal, i.e., trend level, significance, Hypothesis 6 received weak support.

We calculated pseudo- R^2 (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002) as an index of effect size. Together, all variables included in the final model, Model 5, accounted for approximately 20 percent of the variability between managers within hotels, and 100 percent of the variability between hotels in terms of intention to turnover. Additionally, calculating the pseudo- R^2 for models predicting organizational commitment, the final model, Model 5, explained approximately 13 percent of the variability between managers within a hotel, and 80 percent of the variability between hotels.

Results also indicated lower-level managers were less likely to intend to leave the organization when their top leader (GM) had children. In addition, the leader's organizational tenure was positively correlated with manager commitment to the organization. Managers were more committed when they worked for leaders (e.g., GMs) who had been with the organization longer.

4. Discussion

The results from this study revealed the importance of considering work-family climate at the level of the individual and of the work organization, in this case the hotel. MLM analyses revealed that several qualities of the leader or top organization

manager (the general manager, or GM) emerged as significant correlates of lower-level manager perceptions of turnover intentions. Specifically, managers were less likely to intend to leave the organization when their leader reported less negative work–family spillover. In addition, managers were less likely to report intending to leave the organization when they perceived greater managerial support, i.e., from senior management, for work–family balance, more family-friendly time expectations, and fewer career consequences for using work–family benefits. Also, managers in organizations where managers, on average, perceived greater top managerial support for work–family balance and greater latitude in time expectations saw themselves as less likely to leave.

The findings were similar, although less strong, for models predicting organizational commitment. Again, a characteristic of the leader, how long they had been employed in the organization, predicted employee commitment. In addition, perceived managerial support, i.e., from senior management, for work–family roles at the individual-level and at the hotel-level was positively associated with department managers' organizational commitment.

This study provided a deeper examination of one important variable: work–family climate. The results support and extend Thompson and colleagues' (1999) work in a number of ways. First, our findings highlight the importance of examining both psychological and organizational climates (Schneider, Bowen, Holcombe, & Ehrhart, 2000) as work–family supportiveness was an important factor both within and between organizations. Work–family climate, and particularly managerial support for work–family balance, appears to be a consistent predictor of turnover intentions and organizational commitment above and beyond the effects of individual perceptions of supportiveness. These findings support multilevel examinations of various types of climate, such as Zohar and Luria's (2005) multilevel model of safety climate.

In addition to the methodological contribution based on the multilevel examination of work–family climate, our findings are important for research and practice. In our discussion, we focus on four issues: (1) the importance of managerial support for work–family roles; (2) leaders as influential shapers of work–family climate in organizations; (3) the limitations of our study; and (4) the implications of our work for research and practice.

4.1. *The importance of managerial support for work–family roles*

Our analyses suggest that, of the three dimensions of work–family climate identified by Thompson et al. (1999), managerial support for work–family roles was perhaps the most important correlate of employee intentions to leave the organization and of their commitment to their organization. We see managerial support as most important because it mattered for both work outcomes—intention to turnover and organizational commitment, and it emerged as a significant correlate not only at the level of the individual but at the organizational (hotel) level: employees were less likely to intend to leave their organizations and were more likely to report higher organizational commitment if they perceived greater managerial support for work–family roles *and* if they worked in an organization where, on average, other employees saw it the same way.

The other dimensions of work–family climate—expectations in terms of time and career consequences for using work–family benefits—mattered in terms of individual perceptions (for turnover intentions, but not commitment), but aggregated at the organization-level these were not significant correlates of employee intentions to turnover or of organizational commitment. Our findings underscore the importance of all three dimensions but emphasize the primacy of managerial support.

These findings suggest that managerial employees in hotels may perceive organizational time expectations and career consequences for using work–family benefits to be inescapable requirements of hotel careers. However, it also could be that senior management support provides managers with more reasonable and flexible time expectations, and to a lesser degree few negative career consequences. Supervisory support for work–family balance appears to give employees permission to have a life off the job, and in so doing, is associated with commitment and loyalty. Indeed, the presence of managerial support may be a necessary condition for the other two dimensions of work–family climate—an atmosphere that does not penalize careers when employees use work–family benefits, and time expectations that do not overly interfere with family responsibilities. Results from a qualitative study of hotel managers and their spouses reinforce this interpretation. Cleveland and colleagues (2007) found repeated instances in which managers emphasized the importance of senior manager support for their lives off the job, including the importance of support emanating from the top leader—the general manager. Indeed, some respondents in Cleveland et al.'s study likened the hotel to a “family,” noting that people watched out for one another and stepped in informally when personal responsibilities pulled someone away from the job.

4.2. *Leaders' influence in establishing work–family climate in hotels*

Perhaps our most novel findings point to the importance of top level employees, the highest ranking leaders in organizations, in shaping employees' intentions to leave the organization. Two correlates suggest that the leader's own work–family situation matters for employees at lower levels of the organization. Specifically, lower-level managers were more likely to report intending to leave the organization when the top leader reported higher levels of negative work-to-family spillover. Expressed in a more positive way, employees were more likely to remain with the organization when their leader reported lower levels of negative work-to-family spillover.

The leader's own reports of negative work-to-family spillover mattered for their managers' intentions to leave the organization. Managers were more likely to intend to leave if their leader reported higher levels of negative work-to-family spillover. This situation may reflect negative emotional contagion processes in the organization (Barsade, 2002). If leaders have a difficult time with work having negative effects on family life, they may be moodier and more difficult to associate with at

work, and their negativity may be contagious. This relationship could also reflect leader performance on the job, however. Negative work-to-family spillover may be debilitating for leaders, distracting them from focusing fully on the tasks at hand on the job. If leaders are unfocused and less effective, more work may fall on subordinates with the effect of increasing strain and temptations to leave. Finally, leader ratings of negative work-to-family spillover may reflect a third variable such as depressive affect or neurotic personality qualities that are the real “cause” of the association.

The findings were similar, although less consistent or strong, for models predicting organizational commitment. Perceived managerial support for work–family roles at the individual-level and at the hotel-level were positively associated with department managers' organizational commitment.

Additionally, the results pertaining to the covariates were of interest, although not the primary focus of attention. For example, these results indicated managers were less likely to intend to leave the organization when their top leader had children. Leaders who balance their work role with being a mother or father may have more empathy for their employees who are balancing work and life off the job and thus may set a more supportive tone. They may also model family supportive behaviors that send a symbolic representation of the climate (Schein, 1990) or visible message to others. For example, they may occasionally leave work early to attend a child's academic or social activity, work from home when a child is ill, or bring their children to work. It is also possible, however, that the parental status variable reflects a selection effect. Perhaps those leaders who have been able to rise through the ranks to a high position while also forming families are better at time management and/or multitasking, or that some other, unmeasured quality accounts for this interesting association. For example, previous work has suggested that holding multiple roles (i.e., parent and manager) may contribute to both well-being and leadership skills for women (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002). Replicating this finding and examining *why* having a leader who is a parent appears to be beneficial for employees is a worthy topic for future research. Again, for organizational commitment, one of the covariate relationships was of interest relating to a characteristic of the leader. Specifically, the tenure of the top leader positively predicted manager commitment to the organization. Employees were more committed when they worked for GMs who had been with the organization longer.

This study demonstrates work–family crossover effects between top management and employees, extending previous research beyond that of intimate relationships (Larson & Almeida, 1999). Our findings suggest the importance of understanding the personal side of leadership, including organizational leaders' own struggles and successes in balancing work and family roles. These findings parallel recent work in the leadership domain on authentic leadership (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004) in which attention is given to the personal values of the leader, one of which may be a balance between work and family. This topic is a promising one that is worthy of attention in future research.

4.3. Limitations

Our cross-sectional design precludes making causal conclusions. Although it is tempting to conclude that managerial support for work–family balance causes people to be more committed to the organization and to be less likely to leave, that conclusion is untenable without an experimental design. The survey approach we took here provided a large sample size but time constraints meant that inevitably we were not able to obtain all of the information we wanted to collect. To complement the survey, it would be informative to include a more intensive “daily diary” study. In such a study, managers and their spouses could report their daily stressors, psychological well-being, productivity, and health across multiple days. With such data, we would be able to examine daily stressors in conjunction with employees' more global appraisals of work–family climate, the variables of interest in this particular set of analyses.

4.4. Implications for practice and research

Our investigation has implications for both research and practice. Our findings reinforce the importance of work–family climate, in particular, managerial support. Although, as mentioned previously, we cannot make causal statements about the role of work–family climate, our research suggests that organizations may gain advantage if they eliminate negative work–family climate. It may be particularly useful to include work–family issues in management training specifically, training both top level as well as mid and lower-level managers to be sensitive to the issues their subordinates face balancing their jobs with their non-work responsibilities. In addition, organizations can hold their managers responsible by evaluating them on managerial support.

Our findings also suggest that it is important for organizations to support their leaders' own work–family balance. Organizational leaders have enormous responsibilities. Although Cleveland et al. (2007) provided qualitative evidence that flexibility and ability to balance work and family appear to increase as managers move up through the organization, upper level managers or leaders still face challenges that may make it difficult to manage the balancing act. Organizations could consider how they can provide support for work–family balance for this crucial set of employees who provide essential top management oversight for all other employees. The results of our research suggest that managerial support may be implemented or enacted via adjusting organizational time expectations and by reducing negative career consequence (to a lesser degree).

Our findings also have implications for researchers. We found important and interesting correlates of turnover intentions and organizational commitment at both the individual and organization-level. We recommend designs of this sort for future research, especially for other service industries that have a similar structure to the hotel industry. For example, the type of design we implemented could be used to study retail stores nested within companies, public schools nested within school

districts, and so on. With designs of this kind, we recommend MLM as a data analytic approach. MLM enabled us to simultaneously examine individual-level and hotel-level effects in a parsimonious way that treated the nested nature of the data appropriately.

5. Conclusions

In summary, managers generally reported lower turnover intentions when their organization's leader perceived less negative work-to-family spillover in his or her own life, was a parent, when the manager perceived a more positive work-family climate in their organization, and when the manager worked in an organization in which other managers perceived it to be the same way. These findings underscore the importance of the open systems approach to understanding possible contagion effects of leaders in the creation and maintenance of work-family climate and the importance of work-family climate, itself. Employees and managers are expensive to recruit and train, making retention an important goal. It is functionally strategic, therefore, for organizations to consider how they can facilitate both employee and leader balance of work with life off the job.

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