Strengthening the Employment Relationship: The Effects of Work-Hours Fit On Key Employee Attitudes

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Today's hourly workers are facing revised work schedules and shifting hours, which may have critical implications for employment relationships. This study considers the impact of work-hours fit on key attitudes of hourly employees—perceived organizational support, job stress, work–family conflict, intent to turnover, and life satisfaction. We define work-hours fit as the difference between an employee's desired number of hours and the actual hours worked, and we examine both the congruence of work-hours fit and the degree of misfit. We also examine the moderating impact of the type of misfit, defined as working too many versus too few hours. Results indicate that, in our sample, hourly employees are typically not working the hours they prefer. As predicted, work-hours fit impacts the attitudes we examined, and, when considering the type of misfit, congruence matters more for life satisfaction and intent to turnover. Results also indicate working too few hours impacts job stress and life satisfaction, whereas working too many effects work–family conflict. This paper demonstrates the importance of preferences, as a reflection of time/money resource trade-offs, and offers ways for employers to improve work–family facilitation and strengthen their employment relationships.

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. economy has faced ups and downs during the past decade; each cycle of downturn has resulted in resizing, layoffs, reduced paychecks, and changed hours—all of which have critical implications for today's workforce. Even with the nation's economic conditions improving, the strong and growing emphasis on worker productivity and cost control only signals that many companies will still look for ways to lower labor costs. Numerous companies continue to reduce the amount of working hours, a clear and direct way to decrease costs for workers who are paid by the hour. Indeed, by October 2013, the average workweek for non-supervisory employees had decreased to 33.6 hours (Bureau of Labor Statistics); simultaneously, the number of individuals working part-time because of reduced business transactions or the inability to find full-time hours has increased dramatically (Friede, Kossek, Lee, & MacDermid, 2008; Goodman & Grynbaum, 2008; Lambert, 2012). Although anecdotally many workers may value simply being employed, we argue that this type of environment may have significant implications for employee attitudes about work. Some employees may need more non-work time and want to work fewer hours, whereas others may find themselves frustrated and stressed over working fewer hours and earning less money.

Previous work has examined the effect of additional work on employee well-being (e.g., Caruso, Hitchcock, Dick, Russo, & Schmidt, 2004; Spector et al., 2004); some research has also considered the consequences of reduced-load work arrangements (Friede et al., 2008; Lee, MacDermid, Williams, Buck, & Leiba-O'Sullivan, 2002; Lirio, Lee, Williams, Haugen, & Kossek, 2008; Litrico & Lee, 2008), and other research has considered employee preferences for full-time versus part-time work (e.g., Bernard-Oettel, De Cuyper, Berntson, & Isaksson, 2008; Krausz, Sagie, & Bidermann, 2000; Lee & Johnson, 1991; Morrow, McElroy, & Elliott, 1994). However, research has yet to explicitly consider the attitudinal impact of the difference between an employee's desired number of hours worked and the actual number of hours worked. Applying research from employee–organization relationships, as well as from work–family integration, we explore the impact of work-hours fit—defined as the degree to which employees work

their desired number of hours—on employee attitudes, including perceived organizational support (POS), job stress, work–family conflict, intent to turnover, and life satisfaction.

Prior research has argued that accommodating workers' preferences leads to better on-the-job performance and customer service (Friede et al., 2008; Thompson, 2004), as well as reduced work–family stressors (Spector et al., 2004). Accommodations also send signals about POS that can strengthen the employee–employer relationship and lower turnover (Gakovic & Tetrick, 2003; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). It is not clear, however, the extent to which meeting employees' work-hour preferences— whether these preferences are for additional or fewer hours—actually effects their attitudes. Although companies may not always be able to accommodate employees' preferences, a better knowledge of the implications of failing to do so will better prepare organizations as they examine the trade-offs of staffing decisions.

In this study, we focus on the issue of how employees' work-hour preferences can influence specific work and work–family attitudes. We offer that this concept, which we term work-hours fit, will more accurately represent the effects typically associated with employee work hours. After delineating the components of work-hours fit, we consider its attitudinal impact. We also examine the potential effects when there exists a lack of fit, due to working too many or too few hours. In doing so, we explore the trade-off of time versus money as two forms of resources. Within the context of strengthening the employee–organization relationship, we also discuss implications for meeting employees' socio-emotional needs as well their economic needs, and we consider work-hours fit as one means of enhancing work– family facilitation.

WORK-HOURS FIT

Conceptual Development

Work-hours fit is our overarching concept; it refers to the degree to which employees work their desired number of hours. Work-hours fit suggests that hourly employees actively manage the trade-off of time versus money and, given their work–life needs, determine the optimal point—or number of hours—that they prefer and potentially need to work. As we will explain in more detail later, the construct consists of two components. The first component, which we term congruence, is whether individuals work their desired number of hours. The second component, termed degree of misfit, represents the magnitude of the difference (if any) between an individual's desired and actual number of hours.

The consequences associated with failing to achieve work-hours fit can impact outcomes in different ways, as illustrated in Figure 1. One way is that there is simply an impact associated with congruence (i.e., where the desired hours equals the actual hours received). In this situation, any sort of deviation from the desired number of hours is perceived negatively, but the degree of deviation (i.e., degree of misfit) is of no further consequence. This type of effect is shown in Figure 1(a).

The nature of work-hours fit, though, suggests that other sorts of effects may also occur. A second type of effect, shown in the middle of Figure 1(b), is the typical sort of effect hypothesized in congruence research (cf. Edwards & Cable, 2009). This is the extent to which the difference between desired and actual hours, or degree of misfit, negatively impacts the outcome of interest. The third type of effect, shown in Figure 1(c), is where there is both a congruence effect and implications associated with the degree of misfit. In this case, not only does failure to obtain the desired number of hours have consequences in its own right, but the degree of misfit also has additional effects.

It is even possible that the nature of the relationship between desired and actual work hours is more complex than the two-dimensional conceptualizations described earlier (i.e., where the first dimension is misfit and the second dimension is the outcome). On the basis of empirical findings from other congruence research (cf. Edwards & Cable, 2009), it may be better to represent desired hours, actual hours, and the outcome three dimensionally (Edwards, 2002; Edwards & Parry, 1993). However, because the concept of work-hours fit is new, we will develop our hypotheses with the more simple (i.e., two-

dimensional) conceptualizations presented in Figure 1. Nonetheless, we will test the merits of this simplification and examine the three-dimensional model methodologically.

Theoretical Framing

Although the explicit proposal that work-hours research (regarding the impact of time worked) would benefit from taking a fit perspective, prior work–family research indicates that a substantial lack of fit with regard to preferred working hours does exist. For example, research examining preferred and actual work-hour strategies among married couples found that only 41 percent of wives and 44 percent of husbands were working a schedule they prefer (Clarkberg & Moen, 2001). A second study found that the correlation between ideal work-hours and actual work-hours was weak (correlated only .11; Valcour, 2007). Furthermore, research has shown that an employee's perceived lack of control over his or her desired work time leads to a reduced sense of overall well-being (Moen, Kelly, & Huang, 2008); for part-time employees, the presence of a discrepancy between their preferred and actual work status results in reduced use of helping behaviors with colleagues (Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001). Other studies have shown that workers are dissatisfied when their hours are either extended or reduced (Hom, 1979; Jacobs & Gerson, 1998; Negrey, 1993), leading to the conclusion that although a 40-hour workweek may often be considered the "norm," employees vary considerably in the number of hours they prefer to work (Valcour, 2007). Thus, despite arguments that companies should consider employee preferences when scheduling work hours (Thompson, 2004), there is substantial evidence that there exists a notable discrepancy between the number of hours employees desire and the number of hours they actually work. The prevalence and magnitude of this discrepancy leads us to believe that the concept of work-hours fit may be relevant for today's hourly employees and may substantially influence important employee attitudes.

The Impact of Work-hours Fit on Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived organizational support refers to the extent to which employees perceive the organization cares about their well-being (Eisenberger, Huntington, Huntington, & Sowa, 1986). Research on employment relationships and social exchange suggests that employees' perceptions of fair treatment by their organizations impact their overall performance, job satisfaction, and even well-being (Adams, 1965; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Ilies, Dimotakis, & De Pater, 2010). The idea is that, as part of an exchange partnership, employees will perform better and be more committed to their companies if they perceive that their employers invest in the work relationship (Chen, Eisenberger, Johnson, Sucharski, & Aselage, 2009; Coyle-Shapiro, Shore, Taylor, & Tetrick, 2004; Erdogan & Enders, 2007; Gakovic & Tetrick, 2003; Weng, McElroy, Morrow, & Liu, 2010). Incurring these investments sets a norm of reciprocity that encourages employees to think positively of their employment exchange and perform well in their jobs (Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005; Gouldner, 1960; Rhodes & Eisenberger, 2002; Thompson et al., 1999; Wang, Tsui, Zhang, & Ma, 2003; Weng et al., 2010).

Employees tend to form a stronger sense of POS and increased trust in the work relationship on the basis of their perceptions of how well their organizations provide for their work needs, including the need for fair treatment and positive job conditions (Rhodes & Eisenberger, 2002). This linkage suggests that the actual number of hours worked will not have a particularly strong relationship with POS, as the level of perceived support will depend on individual work preferences, which likely vary considerably (Spector et al., 2004). Supporting this view, research examining the impact of full-time and part-time work status found that the actual number of hours worked (i.e., part-time or full-time) did not impact key attitudes, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Jackofsky & Peters, 1987; McGinnis & Morrow, 1990); yet, the choice to be able to work part-time did make a difference (Krausz et al., 2000), as did experiencing predictability around part-time work status (Hom, 1979; Jackofsky & Peters, 1987; Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001). These results suggest that work preferences matter, even more so than the

actual number of hours worked, whether these hours are more or less the average workweek. We therefore offer that considering the match between desired and actual hours worked, or work-hours fit, will be a more useful measure for understanding the effect of work hours on POS.

We argue that work-hours fit should have a positive effect on employees' sense of POS. Employees hope to engage in economic exchanges with their employers whereby they work the necessary hours to earn a specific income (Rousseau, Hornung, & Kim, 2009; Shore, Tetrick, Lynch, & Barksdale, 2006). If employees are able to work their desired number of hours, they are more likely to develop a sense that their employer cares about their well-being and seeks to provide the opportunity for them to earn necessary income, as well as have the appropriate amount of non-work time to provide for their non-work lives. Getting one's desired number of hours means one is working in a way that, at least for that person's given circumstances, should maximize the balance of income factors with work–family issues. Thus, the alignment of employees' desires/needs and what the organization provides them should lead to stronger perceptions of POS. Moreover, on the basis of prior research examining employee choice and preferences (i.e., Spector et al., 2004; Stamper & Van Dyne, 2001; Thompson, 2004; Valcour, 2007), we argue that work-hours fit (or lack thereof) will be a better predictor of POS than will simply number of hours worked.

This logic leads to our first set of hypotheses. In Hypothesis 1, we broadly argue that work-hours fit will be related to POS. This effect should be evident regardless of which component (i.e., congruence or degree of misfit) of work-hours fit is examined. We expect that achieving congruence will positively impact POS, and that the degree of misfit will have negative implications. Because fit should matter more than the actual number of hours worked, we also argue that degree of misfit will be a stronger predictor of POS than will the actual number of hours worked. Thus, we hypothesize:

Hypothesis 1. Work-hours fit will be related to POS.

More specifically, this should be exhibited as follows:

Hypothesis 1a. Hours-fit congruence will be positively related to POS.

Hypothesis 1b. Degree of misfit will be negatively related to POS.

Hypothesis 1c. Degree of misfit will have a stronger (negative) impact on POS than will actual hours worked.

The Impact of Work-hours Fit on Work–Life Attitudes

Although we predict that work-hours fit has implications for POS, there are also reasons to expect significant effects beyond just employees' perceptions of their organizations' degrees of support. For hourly employees, which by 2011 represented 59 percent of the U.S. workforce (Bureau of Labor Statistics), there is a clear exchange relationship where employees are trading working hours for compensation. Balancing the trade-offs between time and money may often be quite challenging; getting one's desired number of hours means one is working in a way that, at least for that person's given circumstances, should provide ideal control over income and time. That is, additional income provides resources to support non-work commitments yet also means less time to devote to them; less income means the opposite. Because each employee's work–family needs are unique, it is likely that employees do not prefer the same hours as their peers, or even to work a supposed "typical" schedule. As noted by Spector et al. (2004, p. 123),

> an important element that has been neglected has to do with fit, specifically whether or not the individual wants to work the hours he or she works…the fact that number of work-hours fails to capture the employee's motivation to do so may explain the weak correlation with strains.

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Previous work supports this notion of work-hours fit as reflective of the time/money trade-off—in the context of work–family facilitation (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Moen et al., 2008). Research has shown that to the degree employees view their organizations as enabling their many life-roles and preferences, including that of providers, their work attitudes will strengthen (Chen, Powell & Greenhaus, 2009; Michel, Mitchelson, Pichler, & Cullen, 2010; Wang & Walumbwa, 2007). The concept is based on the idea of choice and control (Geurts, Beckers, Taris, Kompier, & Smulders, 2009). When employees are able to perform work that allows them to provide for their families and lifestyles and maximize critical resources such as their time, they will experience less job stress and work–family conflict, which in turn will have a positive impact on their emotional well-being and life satisfaction (Iverson & Maguire, 2000; Judge, Ilies, & Scott, 2006; Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006; Moen et al., 2008). In addition, if individuals can connect their work and family in a way that enables them to meet both their employment and care needs, they are likely to experience a sense of positive work–life integration or facilitation (Bailyn & Harrington, 2004; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). They will be generating resources or gains in one of their life's domains (i.e., work) that will transfer to and facilitate the well-being of another crucial domain (i.e., non-work or family; Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2007). As a result, they may be more likely to remain with their employers (Boyar, Maertz, Pearson, & Keough, 2003).

This previous work has shown that employees' attitudes strengthen when they can meet their work–life needs. Because of the notion of "preferences," we argue that work-hours fit is a driver of these attitudes (Moen et al., 2008). Specifically, to the degree employees work their desired number of hours and experience work-hours fit, they will likely experience less job stress and work–family conflict. They are also more likely to experience greater life satisfaction and lower intent to turnover. Similar to our predicted effects on POS, we argue that achieving congruence will positively impact organizational attitudes, whereas degree of misfit will have a negative effect. Stated more formally:

Hypothesis 2. Work-hours fit will be related to employees' work and life attitudes.

More specifically, we expect the following:

Hypothesis 2a. Hours-fit congruence will be negatively related and/or degree of misfit will be positively related to job stress.

Hypothesis 2b. Hours-fit congruence will be negatively related and/or degree of misfit will be positively related to work–family conflict.

Hypothesis 2c. Hours-fit congruence will be negatively related and/or degree of misfit will be positively related to intent to turnover.

Hypothesis 2d. Hours-fit congruence will be positively related and/or degree of misfit will be negatively related to life satisfaction.

Support for these hypotheses should be any of the forms of effects depicted in Figure 1; that is, each of these types of effects would be indicative of work-hours fit impacting these attitudes. Yet, we also think it important to explore the degree of misfit in greater depth, and we do so by considering the effects of both excess and lack of hours.

The Impact of Working More versus Fewer Desired Hours

An important issue to also consider is what happens when employees do not work their desired number of hours, whether working too many hours or, alternatively, too few. And comparatively, what is the impact of working too many versus too few hours? The entire idea of work-hours fit stems from the fact that employees do not have perfect control over the number of hours they work, which is especially salient for those paid by the hour. Hence, there are inefficiencies in the market that do not let individuals

freely trade their time for wages. Consequently, failure to work one's desired number of hours may not have the same effect for less-than-ideal time versus less-than-ideal income.

Working more hours than desired provides greater compensation but reduces an employee's access to time and potentially strains an employee's work–life balance (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). Alternatively, working fewer hours than desired negatively impacts the compensation sought by employees, especially for those paid through hourly wages (Jacobs & Gerson, 2006). This will free up time but may create economic hardships that have a variety of implications (Lautsch & Scully, 2007). Thus, failure to achieve work-hours fit means that, outside of the work environment, an employee is lacking either desired time or money. Given that what results from a lack of fit depends on whether desired hours are greater than or fewer than the actual hours worked, there is likely an asymmetrical relationship between working too many versus too few than the desired number of hours. As prospect theory would suggest (i.e., Fiegenbaum & Thomas, 1988; Tversky & Kahneman, 1992), gains and losses have different utility effects, and the impact of losing hours might be perceived more strongly than the impact of gaining additional ones.

Previous research on work-hours has predominantly examined working more than a "typical" workweek as a chief stressor and cause of overall decreased life satisfaction (i.e., Golden & Wiens-Tuers, 2006; Litrico & Lee, 2008; Kossek et al., 2006; Spector et al., 2004). High workloads and undesired, superfluous hours have been associated with decreased job satisfaction, increased fatigue, injury, burnout, anxiety, and depression, and increased work–family conflict and marital tension (Barnett, Gareis, & Brennan, 1999; Golden & Wiens-Tuers, 2006; Hughes & Galinsky, 1994; Iverson & Maguire, 2000), leading to lower life satisfaction (Adams, King, & King, 1996; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). In short, the negative consequences of working too many hours, for satisfaction with one's life, can easily offset its positive financial benefit. Because of these negative effects, we argue that workers faced with this

circumstance would prefer a more supportive work environment, and thus, we would also expect that additional work hours would be positively related to intent to turnover.

Alternatively, individuals can work fewer than their desired number of hours, and the consequences are quite different. For hourly employees, failure to obtain desired working hours leads to less income. Clearly, not earning one's desired or necessary income can create stress in an individual's work–life that could also lead to lower overall life satisfaction (Barnett & Gareis, 2000; Lautsch & Scully, 2007). Additionally, the lack of income may cause the individual to seek other job opportunities to obtain a more stable or desired income. We therefore expect that working fewer than the desired number of hours will also be related to two work-related and attitudinal outcomes: (decreased) life satisfaction and (increased) intent to turnover.

Differential effects

What are the differential effects of working too many or too few hours? As mentioned, hourly employees work on average 33.6 hours/week (Bureau of Labor Statistics). Their wages approximate $24/hour or $830/per week, which if an individual worked every week of the year would calculate into approximately $43K annually (Bureau of Labor Statistics). We predict that the initial utility loss will be greater for the loss of time over money. Specifically, as individuals begin to work additional hours, they will earn additional income, but they will also be forced to make accommodations to their schedules to meet their non-work responsibilities. Those who initially work fewer hours would not have to make such accommodations. Alternatively, these individuals would be forced to remove discretionary purchases from their budgets.

We contend that, initially, the loss of discretionary income would be easier to accommodate than the loss of time, which in many people's lives is so scheduled that there are little discretionary components to it. This notion is supported by research in time–pressure, which shows that lower income

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groups, especially those households run by single-parents, have the least amount of discretionary free time, whether individuals are completing unpaid work at home or are holding secondary jobs (Goodwin, Rice, Bittman, & Saunders, 2005). Indeed, this concept, termed "The Time Bind," has been explored by Hochschild (1997) and others (i.e., Maume & Bellas, 2001; Schor, 1991) and suggests that in the United States, wage earners (whether salaried or hourly) are overworked. Thus, it would be easier to remove an hour's worth of discretionary income from a budget than it would be to find an additional hour of free time.

As the gap between actual and desired hours widens, however, the effect of additional income losses for hourly employees will likely prove more difficult to manage than the effect of additional losses of time. That is, as income losses mount, hourly employees may find the consequences for their families' resources problematic (i.e., it would become increasingly difficult to meet living expenses). At the current mean of $830/week, U.S. hourly employees are earning living-wage salaries (which approximate $22/hour for a single parent household with two children and $25/hour for a dual income household with two children; Muilenburg & Singh, 2007). In addition, their amount of real wages is steadily declining (Lautsch & Scully, 2007). These statistics suggest there is only marginal slack in the budgets of the working class or those paid by the hour. In contrast, after the initial scheduling accommodations associated with working too many hours have been made, additional hours would have less of a detrimental effect. It is true that this group has little discretionary free time, but it is also true that the additional income associated with extra hours would enable these individuals to in essence "buy more time" in ways that are easier to solve than challenges associated with fewer hours and additional income losses.

Thus, we hypothesize that when employees do not work their desired number of hours, the type of "misfit"—whether too many or too few hours—will moderate the relationship between lack of hours fit and two specific employee attitudes: intent to turnover and life satisfaction. As the magnitude of the

misfit increases, the loss of income for working fewer than the desired number of hours will have a stronger effect on life satisfaction and intent to turnover, than will the loss of time due to working more than the desired number of hours. Stated more formally:

Hypothesis 3. The type of misfit will moderate the effect of the degree of misfit on intent to turnover and life satisfaction, such that the effects of working too many hours will initially be stronger, but as the degree of misfit increases, the effects of working too few hours will be stronger.

Methodologically, Hypothesis 3 should be revealed by two effects. First, there should be a main effect for working more versus fewer than the desired number of hours. That is, the effect of working more than the desired number of hours should have more negative consequences. Second, the effect of work-hours misfit should be moderated by the type of misfit. That is, the slope for degree of misfit should be stronger for those working fewer-than-desired hours than for those working more-than-desired hours.

Although research has shown that working too many hours has been associated with increased job stress and work–family conflict (i.e., Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Ng & Feldman, 2008), the effects of working too few hours on these attitudes are more ambiguous. Because working fewer than the desired number of hours increases one's access to time but decreases one's financial resources, it is unclear what effects this would have on work–family conflict and job stress. Arguably, more available time would reduce work–family conflict, although the loss of financial resources could create other problems that offset this benefit. Similarly, working fewer hours could make a job less stressful; on the other hand, productivity demands could be such that employees are still given the same workload but just given fewer hours with which to complete it. Thus, it is also unclear if job stress would increase or decrease with fewer hours. For these reasons, we make no a priori hypotheses regarding the effects of working fewer

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hours than desired on work–family conflict or job stress. We will, however, conduct exploratory analyses to examine what consequences may be present.

METHOD

Data for this study were collected using StudyResponse (www.studyresponse.com), which is a service that facilitates online research by distributing email participation requests to adult research participants. In exchange for their participation, researchers are asked to provide incentives, such as online gift certificates, and researchers who use the service are charged a licensing fee that is then used to support the website administration and operation.

As part of a larger study on worker attitudes over time, data were collected in two waves. Initially, StudyResponse limited respondents to those who were employed. Respondents included individuals employed in a wide variety of jobs, ranging in both pay and complexity. Individuals were asked to respond to the online questionnaire and were informed that they would be contacted in the future to complete subsequent surveys. The initial invitation to complete the survey was sent to 3286 individuals. The initial wave of surveys was sent in January 2007. A total of 2571 individuals completed the first survey. The second wave of surveys, to only those who had completed the first survey, was sent in April 2007. Of the 2571 who had completed the first survey, 1665 provided responses to the second survey. Finally, we only used U.S. respondents (so that all subjects were covered by the same employment laws) who were paid by the hour. Of these respondents, we had complete data for 1032 individuals.

The 3-month time lag was chosen to provide a reasonable balance between continuity of circumstance, and sufficient time for meaningful changes to occur. There is little information available

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about the "right" length of time lags in longitudinal research examining attitudinal variables (de Lange, Taris, Kompier, Houtman, & Bongers, 2004; Zapf, Dormann, & Frese, 1996); yet we do know that time lags must be long enough for the causal variables to affect their consequences (Dormann & Zapf, 2002), but not so long as to lead to an erroneous conclusion of null effects (Zapf et al., 1996). Our use of a 3-month time frame is consistent with work by Chen, Ployhart, Cooper-Thomas, Anderson, and Bliese (2011), who found that changes in attitudes had meaningful effects associated within time lags between 8 weeks and 6 months. Also, because we are specifically considering the work–life and economic effects associated with work hours, using a time frame of months is more logically appropriate to our phenomena than using a time frame of years. Thus, we argue that our time frame provides, at least on its face, an opportunity to understand how work-hours-related circumstances in one period can reasonably relate to proximal but nonetheless future attitudes.

The final sample consisted of 301 men and 731 women. The average age was 39.0 years (SD = 10.6). The sample was predominantly Caucasian (83.8 percent) but also included Asians (6.7 percent), Hispanics (2.6 percent), African-Americans (2.6 percent), and Native Americans (0.9 percent), with the remainder unidentified. Respondents came from a diverse range of industries, including education, health care, food services, law enforcement, pharmaceuticals, maintenance services, and hospitality.

Measures

Measures related to hours worked

We used a number of different measures to consider effects associated with hours worked. Respondents were asked how many hours they work in a typical week (labeled Actual Hours), in addition to how many hours they desired to work during a typical week (labeled Desired Hours).

To represent the potential effects associated with work-hours fit, we employed three different measures. First, we created a dummy variable, called Hours-Fit Congruence, coded as 1 if the amount of work desired equaled the amount of actual hours worked (otherwise, coded as 0). Second, we created a variable called Degree of Misfit, which equaled the absolute value of the difference between Actual Hours and Desired Hours. Third, we created a dummy variable called Under Hours if the amount of actual hours worked was fewer than the desired number of hours.

Attitudinal measures

We collected a number of different measures of employee attitudes. First, POS was measured with the eight-item measure described used by Settoon, Bennett, and Liden (1996). These items were originally from the short version of the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support (Eisenberger et al., 1986). A 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), was employed. Items included "My organization cares about my opinions," "My organization really cares about my well-being," "My organization strongly considers my goals and values," "Help is available from my organization when I have a problem," "My organization would forgive an honest mistake on my part," "If given the opportunity, my organization would take advantage of me" (reverse-coded), "My organization shows very little concern for me" (reverse-coded), and "My organization is willing to help me, if I need a special favor." The measure was collected in both periods and had a coefficient α of .91 at each time.

Second, we used Keller's (1984) four-item measure to capture respondents' levels of Job Stress. Using the same 5-point scale, the measure was collected at both periods. The items include "I experience tension from my job," "Aspects of my job are a source of frustration to me," "There is no strain from working in my job" (reverse-coded), and "I never feel pressure in my job" (reverse-coded). The measure had acceptable reliability. Specifically, at period 1, the coefficient α of the measure was .82; it was .85 at Time 2.

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Third, Work–Family Conflict was measured with three items, adapted from prior scales created by Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian (1996) and Bacharach, Bamberger, and Conley (1991). The items included "The demands of my work interfere with my home, family, or social life," "The time I spend at work detracts from my family and social life," and "Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans in other areas of my life." Coefficient αs for the measure were .90 at both Times 1 and 2.

Fourth, we collected information on respondents' level of turnover intention. Intent to Turnover was measured with three items on a 5-point scale, which included "I am thinking about leaving my organization," "I am planning to look for a new job," and "I don't plan to be in my organization much longer" (Kelloway, Gottlieb, & Barham, 1999). This measure had high reliability, with coefficient αs for the measure equaling .95 at both Times 1 and 2.

Finally, Life Satisfaction was measured using Diener, Emmons, Larsen, and Griffin's (1985) five-item scale. Using the same 5-point scale, individuals were asked to rate their agreement with the following: "In most ways, my life is close to my ideal," "The conditions of my life are excellent," "I am satisfied with my life," "So far, I have gotten the important things I want in life," and "If I could live my life over, I would change almost nothing." The coefficient αs for the measure were .90 and .87 at Times 1 and 2, respectively.

Data Analysis

When considering variables across time, it is important to ensure that we are examining the effects specifically associated with our independent variables and not spurious effects that may be associated with both our dependent and independent variables. Thus, for each of our analyses, we included the lagged dependent variable as a control (i.e., we controlled for the attitudinal measure at Time 1 when predicting the attitude at Time 2).

Including the lagged dependent variable partials out the stable effects associated with the dependent variable that may also be associated with the independent variables of interest (Sturman, 2007). Certain individual characteristics (e.g., age, gender, personality, disposition, and occupation) may relate to both our dependent variables (i.e., POS, Job Stress, Work–Family Conflict, Life Satisfaction, and Intent to Turnover) and to our independent variables (i.e., Actual Hours, Desired Hours, Hours-Fit Congruence, and Degree of Misfit). Any effects associated with these variables are thus partialed out in the analyses, and therefore any effects associated with our independent variables of interest will be independent of the impact of individual characteristics. Although such an approach does not provide us with insight into the effects these characteristics may have, it allows us to focus our analyses on the relationships discussed in our study and provides a conservative test of our hypotheses. In addition, to more precisely examine the effects of work-hour fit on our attitudinal measures hypothesized in H2 and H3, we also controlled for POS (from Time 1) in our models.

A second concern is that one of our key independent variables, Degree of Misfit, is an absolute value of a difference score. Despite the logical appeal of this measure, the use of such measures has been questioned because of concerns with unrealistic assumptions, conceptual ambiguity, and loss of information (Edwards, 1994, 2002; Edwards & Parry, 1993). Thus, although our hypotheses involve predictions associated with difference scores, we will test the appropriateness of our assumptions using the polynomial regression method prescribed by Edwards (Edwards, 2002; Edwards & Parry, 1993). Because of the complexity of the associated results and difficulty in interpretation (Edwards & Parry, 1993), we will also use three-dimensional response surface graphs when appropriate to help represent the nature of any relationships we may find.

Before conducting the polynomial regression, it is important to specify the functional forms of the models we will test. We will test all of our hypotheses with a series of models, with each series being conducted for each dependent variable. As we have an a priori expectation of the model's form (i.e.,

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absolute difference between desired and actual hours), we will follow the confirmatory approach to

polynomial regression (cf. Edwards, 2002). The first step in each of these series will be the basic model

with our control variables:

$$Z = B_0 + Bs*(\text{control variables})$$

(1)

The second model is our constrained model, which involves testing if the dependent variable is related to

the hypothesized absolute difference between Desired Hours (HD) and Actual Hours (HA). The variable

C represents the dummy variable Hours-Fit Congruence. This mode is thus as follows:

$$Z = B_0 + Bs*(\text{control variables}) + B_1*C + B_2*|H_D - H_A|$$

(2)

As fully explained by Edwards (2002), the constrained model makes a number of assumptions that are

often invalid. We thus next test an unconstrained model. In this model, the variable U represents the

dummy variable Under Hours (i.e., it equals one if $HD > HA$).

$$Z = B_0 + Bs*(\text{control variables}) + B_1*C + B_2*H_D + B_3*H_A + B_4*U + B_5*U*H_D + B_6*U*H_A$$

(3)

Finally, we tested a higher order model, which is used to ensure we do not underestimate the complexity

of the joint effects of the model's components on the outcomes (Edwards, 2002).

$$Z = B_0 + Bs*(\text{control variables}) + B_1*C + B_2*H_D + B_3*H_A + B_4*U + B_5*U*H_D + B_6*U*H_A$$
$$+ B_7*C*H_D + B_8*H_D^2 + B_9*H_D*H_A + B_{10}*H_A^2 + B_{11}*C*H_D^2 + B_{12}*U*H_D^2$$
$$+ B_{13}*U*H_D*H_A + B_{14}*U*H_A^2$$

(4)

Another concern with the paper is the potential effects of common method variance. The nature of our

research question necessitated that we collect attitudinal data, and thus, a common method was inevitable

in our study. That said, we sought to address this concern in a number of ways. First, the data do come

from multiple periods, and the independent variables for our hypotheses are collected at a different time

than our dependent variables. Second, the types of measures we are using are conceptually different. That

is, asking about the number of actual and desired hours involves different thought processes and is

measured on a different scale, than the attitudinal variables, thus reducing the potential effects of common

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method bias. Third, all of our analyses employ several independent variables. Research does show that potential effects of common method variance decrease as the number of independent variables in the analysis increase (Siemsen, Roth, & Oliveira, 2010). Altogether, although still a potential point, these steps help mitigate concerns that our common method may provoke.

RESULTS

Summary statistics of the variables used in our analyses are reported in Table 1. The correlations reveal some interesting findings. First, the association between Desired Hours and Actual Hours is .50. Although there is still notable variance between these two variables, the value is much higher than that reported by other research (i.e., Valcour, 2007). Nonetheless, only 23 percent of the sample (238 employees) reported getting their desired number of hours. In the sample, 142 individuals (14 percent) worked fewer than desired hours, whereas 652 (63 percent) reported working more than the desired number of hours. Those working more than the desired number of hours had an average Degree of Misfit of nearly 12.8 hours (SD = 8.3); those working fewer than desired hours did so by an average of 9.4 hours (SD = 6.6).

[TABLE 1]

Our first set of analyses involved a simple examination of the relationship between work-hours fit and POS. Results support the first hypothesis that work-hours fit is positively related to POS. Specifically, Hours-Fit Congruence was positively related to POS at Time 2 ($r = .15$, $p < .05$), supporting Hypothesis 1a. Similarly, a t-test revealed that those who worked their desired number of hours had higher levels of POS at Time 2 than those who did not have their preferences met (means of 3.66 vs. 3.37; $t = 4.91$; $p < .0001$). Additionally, although the relationships between Actual Hours worked and Degree of

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Misfit on POS at Time 2 were both significantly negative (rs = −.11 and −.16 respectively), the effect of the latter was stronger (p < .05), thus supporting Hypotheses 1b and 1c. In all, results provide support for our global Hypothesis 1 that work-hours fit is related to POS.

In Hypothesis 2, we examined the impact of work-hours fit on work–life attitudes. Tables 2 and 3 show the regression analyses for the five series of polynomial regression models created to test this hypothesis. Table 2 shows the base model (which includes the lagged dependent variable, POS from Time 1, and Actual Hours) and the constrained work-hours fit model (where we examine both Hours-Fit Congruence and Degree of Misfit). Table 3 shows the results for the unconstrained regression model and the fit statistics for the unconstrained and higher order models. Results of the regression analyses largely support the hypothesis, but more generally, the results support the overarching idea that work-hours fit has beneficial attitudinal outcomes.

[TABLE2]

[TABLE3]

Specifically, Hours-Fit Congruence was not related to Job Stress, but Degree of Misfit was positively related (B = 0.0083, p < .01), partially supporting H2a. Alternatively, Hours-Fit Congruence was negatively related to Work–Family Conflict (B = −0.15, p < .05), yet Degree of Misfit was not related, partially supporting H2b. Both Hours-Fit Congruence and Degree of Misfit were related to Intent to Turnover (B = −0.13, p < .05 and B = 0.0094, p < .05, respectively), fully supporting H2c, and only Hours-Fit Congruence was related to Life Satisfaction (B = 0.088, p < .05), partially supporting H2d. Note again that these effects were discovered even after controlling for number of hours worked, POS (from T1), and the lagged dependent variable. Thus, taken together, these results largely support Hypothesis 2 that work-hours fit is related to employee's work and life attitudes.

In examining whether the type of misfit moderated the effects of Degree of Misfit (Hypothesis 3), we found mixed support. Although working fewer than the desired number of hours was ostensibly positively related to Life Satisfaction (B = 0.21, p < .05), it also had a more negative effect per hour of lack of fit on Life Satisfaction (B = −0.19, p < .05). Thus, working 1 hour fewer than desired was of no notable benefit, and working two or more hours fewer than desired had a net negative effect on life satisfaction. Additionally, although there are many instances where using congruence measures with absolute differences are unsupported (Edwards, 2002; Edwards & Parry, 1993), in the prediction of Life Satisfaction, neither the unconstrained model nor the higher order model was better fitting than the constrained model (Table 3).

In the prediction of Intent to Turnover, though, the effects of working fewer versus more than the desired number of hours were not significantly different. It is also worth noting that, in the prediction of Intent to Turnover, the constrained model fit the data adequately. Neither the unconstrained model nor the higher order model was better fitting, again suggesting that absolute difference scores of hours worked are appropriate for predicting Intent to Turnover.

For Job Stress, our results also showed that greater deviations from work-hours fit was significantly related to greater levels of Job Stress (B = 0.0082, p < .01). Interestingly, the effect of Degree of Misfit was stronger for those working fewer than the desired number of hours than for those working more (B = 0.018, p < .05). Thus, each additional hour of misfit (for those working fewer than their desired number of hours) had a total predicted effect of increasing Job Stress by 0.0262 (i.e., 0.008 + 0.018).

The polynomial regression for Job Stress did show that the higher order model fit better than the constrained model. The plot of this relationship is shown in Figure 2. The conclusions arrived at though do not change when considering the plot. Although there appears to be some non-linearity (i.e., diminishing returns) in the effect of Degree of Misfit for those working more than their desired number of

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hours, the graph shows that deviation from Hours-Fit Congruence is associated with greater levels of job stress. Additionally, we examined whether the line of congruence (i.e., where desired hours equals actual hours) yields a minimized score. This can be tested by examining if the line is statistically significantly different from being flat (cf. Edwards, 2002); this specifically means testing if the slope of the surface at the point $X = 0$ is zero, as well as if the curvature of the line is also zero. Tests revealed that at Desired Hours = Actual Hours = 0, the slope of the line was not significantly different from zero ($p = .60$), and the curve of the line was not significantly different from zero ($p = .50$). Thus, supporting the overarching theme of this paper, the extent to which workers achieve work-hours fit leads to desirable employment outcomes.

In the prediction of Work–Family Conflict, the regression model that examined potential moderating effects was not significantly better fitting than the less full model. It did show, however, that those working fewer than their desired number of hours had lower Work–Family Conflict than those working more than the desired number of hours; having Work-Hours Congruence, however, still resulted in the lowest level of Work–Family Conflict. Note that as with Job Stress, the unconstrained model was not better fitting than the constrained model; however, the higher order model was better fitting (Figure 2). We tested if the line of congruence leads to a minimized level of work–family conflict. Again, the slope of the line at Desired Hours = Actual Hours = 0 was not significantly different from zero ($p = .44$), and the curve of the line was not significantly different from zero ($p = .42$)

Overall, these results show that having Desired Hours equal Actual Hours does indeed lead to positive employment outcomes. For Life Satisfaction and Intent to Turnover, the constrained model fits the data well, suggesting that considering the absolute deviation of misfit is an appropriate means to consider work-hours fit. For Job Stress and Work–Family Conflict, although a higher order model does fit the data better than the constrained model, the line of congruence still yields the best employment outcomes, again showing the importance of achieving work-hours fit. Finally, our results also show that

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although there were no significant differences for working more versus fewer than the desired hours for Intent to Turnover, there are different consequences for the type of work-hours misfit for Life Satisfaction (and Work–Family Conflict and Job Stress), thereby providing partial support for Hypothesis 3.

DISCUSSION

The results of our study indicate that work-hours fit is a more accurate way to predict employee attitudes than simply considering the number of hours worked. Work hours are important in the modern workforce, and examining them in conjunction with preferences produces several insights. Our findings showed that less than a quarter of respondents (23 percent) were working their desired number of hours, and more than half who were not (63 percent) were working more than they desired. This was, on average, almost 13 more hours per week than preferred. In addition, those working fewer hours than they preferred did so by more than a typical full work day (9.4 hours). These results confirm prior work that suggests that some employees are working much more than preferred, whereas others are working much fewer (Reynolds, 2003). Fundamentally, this paper points to the relevant issue faced by the more than half of the U.S. workforce: Work-hour preferences matter, and meeting them impacts the sustainability of the employee–organization relationship. Although we do not expect that employers will necessarily be able to satisfy all of their hourly employees' preferences, our study helps demonstrate the implications of failing to accommodate them.

Implications for Research on Employment Relationships

Research on employment relationships seeks to uncover the factors that can strengthen the employee–organization relationship, specifically those that aid the norm of reciprocity embedded in social exchange (Coyle-Shapiro & Conway, 2005; Coyle-Shapiro & Kessler, 2002; Rousseau et al., 2009; Zhao,

Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007). Because employees perform better when they perceive a sense of support from their employers, it makes sense to understand ways employers can best respond to their employees' needs, especially one so central to their reasons for working (Michel et al., 2010). Our results suggest that one important signal of support is the degree to which organizations meet employee work-hour needs. In fact, this is the only study that we know of that considers the impact of employee preferences on POS. Both dimensions of work-hours fit (Hours-Fit Congruence and Degree of Misfit) were associated with POS, and the Degree of Misfit had a stronger association with POS than simply the number of hours worked. When organizations are able to match their schedules to these preferences, employees seem to perceive that their organizations care about their well-being, related to both their financial and quality of life needs. Thus, it is probable that simply paying attention to and providing the work-hours that employees prefer strengthens the socio-emotional work bond between employees and their organizations and, through increasing POS, likely encourages employees to reciprocate with positive behaviors and attitudes.

Yet, meeting work-hour preferences goes further than just strengthening POS. Research in employment relationships (i.e., Tsui, Pearce, Porter, & Tripoli, 1997) has offered that organizations benefit from adopting a mutual investment approach with employees, characterized by high levels of contributions in both socio-emotional and economic exchanges (Wang et al., 2003). Not to be forgotten, the economic exchange of resources is the foundation on which socio-emotional exchanges are created (Song, Tsui, & Law, 2009). Our findings imply that employee work-hour preferences contribute to both forms of exchange. Although work-hours fit does not have an economic component to it, per se, meetings employees' preferences does enable employees to not only earn necessary levels of income but also better meet their work–life demands. Indeed, our results show that both Hours-Fit Congruence and Degree of Misfit influence intent to turnover even after controlling for prior POS and prior levels of intent to turnover. Thus, fit effects are occurring beyond POS in ways that potentially could sever employment

relationships. We offer that this notion of Work-Hours Fit is crucial to how and why hourly employees build long-term relationships with their organizations.

One way to extend these results would be to further explore the specific ways in which work-hours fit contributes to different forms of employee exchanges. For example, what are the components of congruence or fit (economic or socio-emotional), and how do both simultaneously impact both forms of exchanges? Would the economic benefit related to work-hours fit have effects beyond simply strengthening POS and the socio-emotional exchange? Our results suggest this may be the case.

Implications for Research on Work–Family Facilitation

Our findings also have implications for research on work–family facilitation. Work–family facilitation is a perspective that examines the positivity embedded in an individual's work–life (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; McNall, Masuda, & Nicklin, 2010). This concept offers that work and non-work are interdependent and complementary, and it specifically considers how one domain (in this case, work) can impact a second (in this case, non-work life; Wayne et al., 2007). Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, and Grzywacz (2006) identified four potential gains that these domains can provide to one another: developmental, affective, capital, and efficiency. They argue that facilitation occurs when one of these gains (from one domain) accrue to and enhances the overall system supporting the other domain.

Researchers have used this framework to show how organizational designs such as flextime and compressed workweeks can provide greater control over how individuals can integrate their life domains (McNall et al., 2010; Moen et al., 2008). Our study builds from this concept to specifically show how work-hours fit leads to positive outcomes. Our finding that Hours-Fit Congruence positively impacts life satisfaction suggests that individuals who are able to work the hours they prefer experience a positivity about their lives. The implication is that congruence enables individuals to maximize their time/money resources in satisfying ways. Yet, for those working more than the desired number of hours, we did not

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find that Degree of Misfit had a similar effect. That is, if one ended up receiving more hours than desired, the degree to which preferences were not met did not further influence satisfaction levels. Hours-Fit Congruence was also found to negatively effect work–family conflict, whereas Degree of Misfit positively impacted job stress. When individuals are able to work the hours they prefer, they are working in such a way that best fits all the components of their lives, thereby minimizing conflict. And when the amount or Degree of Misfit increases, so too does their stress around their jobs. Interestingly, and not surprisingly, both Hours-Fit Congruence and Degree of Misfit were related to turnover intentions, suggesting that fundamentally, obtaining desired work-hours influences the degree to which employees wish to remain with their employers.

Our findings take the concept of fit further to shed light on the impact of working too many hours versus too few. Prior work has been inconsistent in examining this issue, as some research found that working too many hours is associated with a host of negative outcomes (i.e., increased work–family conflict, intent to turnover, and lower life satisfaction; Golden & Wiens-Tuers, 2006; Kossek et al., 2006; Spector et al., 2004), whereas other studies found a similar result for working too few hours (Barnett & Gareis, 2000; Lautsch & Scully, 2007). In examining the moderating effects of type of misfit, we found that job stress is actually higher and life satisfaction lower with increases in the Degree of Misfit. It may be the case that employees are viewing reduced hours as a signal that their future employment is in jeopardy, which in turn causes stress about work and life. Not surprisingly, though, work–family conflict increases with over-hours misfit, suggesting that the loss of time creates challenges with work–family facilitation that outweigh the financial gains in resources. Regardless of type of misfit, though, our findings indicate that Hours-Fit Congruence is the more important issue to consider when examining the impact on employee attitudes.

Through matching employee preferences, and thereby examining the issue of time versus money as resource trade-offs, this paper offers one mechanism through which employees' work–family needs

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are—or more to the point, are not—being met. Our results support the notion that an employee's control over this important job feature can potentially optimize the trade-off of resources (Ilies et al., 2010; Kossek et al., 2006; Moen et al., 2008). One way to extend this finding is to explore the specific ways in which work-hours fit facilities this trade-off process. Specifically, which of the four gains (developmental, affective, capital, and efficiency) does it accrue and how? It could be the case that matching work-hour preferences increases employees' abilities to obtain necessary capital resources and/or improve their efficiency in how they handle the multiple roles in their lives. On the other hand, it could also result in affective gains (as individuals' overall stress levels are lowered) and even developmental gains (as individuals gain greater perspective in the meaning of their work and work/lives). Exploring the important role that work-hour preferences play in shaping employee attitudes represents a springboard to better understand the types of resource-decisions hourly employees are making and how these decisions strengthen their satisfaction with their work–lives.

<u>Practical Implications</u>

In support of Coyle-Shapiro and Shore's (2007) call to build practical recommendations from research on employment–organization relationships, we develop some specific applications of our findings. Although prior work (i.e., Friede et al., 2008; Moen et al., 2008; Thompson, 2004) has espoused the importance of considering employee preferences when developing work schedules, this paper empirically demonstrates some of the benefits of doing so. As companies consider potential changes to how work is organized, it is important to understand the implications of these decisions on more than just labor costs. Although many companies routinely consider employee preferences when scheduling, inquiring about desired levels of work hours and related work practices may intrinsically improve employee–employer relations in addition to company output. Managers often confront the dilemma of whether to hire supplemental workers and incur increased overhead costs or to schedule overtime hours. Furthermore, in times of economic downturns, decision makers face the predicament of whether to save

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money by laying off workers or reducing hours. Our findings suggest that decision makers must consider the full consequences of both options. For example, human resource initiatives such as flextime and job sharing may be one means to help address the needs of those working more than their desired number of hours (Brummelhuis & Van Der Lippe, 2010; Sherwyn & Sturman, 2002), but depending on the extent to which hours are reduced, there may be more negative consequences than initially expected.

It is worth noting that, in our methodological approach, through partialing out the effects of the prior level of POS and controlling for the level of the lagged dependent variable, we provided very conservative tests of our hypotheses. This approach gives us a high degree of confidence that the statistically significant results associated with the measures of work-hours fit are not attributable to characteristics of the sample or other unmeasured variables. However, it is likely that characteristics of work-hours fit are somewhat stable over time (i.e., desired and actual hours do not change randomly), and thus, any such stable effects would also have been partialed out in our analyses. The result of this approach is that it tends to make effect sizes appear relatively small. Thus, to better describe the managerial implications of our findings, we conducted additional analyses and examined the effect sizes associated with work-hours fit in a less specified model. These analyses, available upon request, generally show that work-hours fit has a moderate effect. For example, an analysis of the Degree of Misfit on Life Satisfaction, without controlling for prior POS or prior life satisfaction, yielded a standardized β of -0.19 ($p < .0001$). Effect sizes on the other dependent variables were similar: 0.18 on Intent to Turnover, 0.28 on Work–Life Conflict, and 0.18 on Job Stress (all at $p < .001$). For the sake of brevity, we do not report all of these additional analyses, as they can also be derived from the summary statistics in Table 1. That said, in general, we did find that there are moderate effect sizes associated with the work-hours fit variables.

In sum, we do show important effects associated with work-hours fit, and in addition to statistical significance, supplemental analyses indicate that the effects are of practical significance. The importance

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of achieving work-hours fit notwithstanding, we also recognize that it certainly may not always be possible to accommodate worker preferences. Nonetheless, this concept of congruence is powerful. Managing the fit between desired and assigned work-hours may be an easy way to improve employees' work–family integration and facilitation, while addressing the labor and financial needs of the organization. At a minimum, we know that employee work-hours fit can strengthen employee attitudes in positive ways that benefit both individuals and the companies who hire them.

Limitations and Future Research

The conclusions of our study need to be tempered by the inherent limitations of this research. Although StudyResponse has been used elsewhere (such as Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006), we have little information on the nature of the original sample and the reasons individuals chose to participate in the survey. The nature of how this survey was administered and how we performed our analyses helps overcome some of these issues. Using a lagged dependent variable and controlling for the prior level of POS do help rule out many alternative explanations for our findings. Nonetheless, our use of a 3-month time lag, although consistent with prior longitudinal research involving employee attitudes (e.g., Chen et al., 2011), may be considered arbitrary, and other researchers may argue that a different time lag would be more appropriate.

Furthermore, the makeup of this sample compared with that of any given organization's set of employees may differ; consequently, the generalizability of the sample is unclear. For example, our paper is focused on the U.S. employment context. Because workplace laws associated with work hours can vary substantially across countries, it was necessary to focus our investigation on a single country's situation. Although the theoretical premise that congruence between desired work hours and actual work hours is important, it is likely that effects may vary on the basis of the level of protections and social services

within a given employment context. This sort of multinational investigation could be a fruitful line of future research.

In addition, our paper also focuses exclusively on employees paid by the hour. Salaried employees (or more specifically, employees exempt from the Fair Labor Standard Act) do not face the same financial implications associated with working fewer hours. As such, we would not expect our study to apply to such employees. Salaried employees may also be more likely to have access to work–life balance policies (e.g., paid leave and day-care benefits) in ways that could mitigate the effects of a mismatch of work-hour preferences. Although hourly employees do constitute the majority of the U.S. workforce, it is important to make clear that our implications are limited to this specific population.

Finally, although we consider the discrepancy in actual versus preferred hours worked in a given week, we do not delve further into preferences regarding the timing of those hours, as is considered in research examining shift work. Given our finding that work-hour congruence matters, it is a logical extension to propose that matching preferences for when hours are scheduled may also have important consequences. Although this question was beyond the scope of our study, it too would be a potentially useful area for future research and represents another way to extend the findings of this paper. That said, the consistent result that work-hours fit has effects beyond those of simply the number of hours worked does give us confidence regarding our conclusion that it is important to consider congruence, especially when examining implications associated with the economic and time-based trade-offs of work and life.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study indicate that work-hours fit is a better predictor of work-related and life-related attitudes than simply the number of hours worked. In support of the employee–organization

relationship, as well as to strengthen work–family facilitation, this paper provides empirical support for the importance of considering employee preferences for their working hours. Our findings show that work-hours fit can lead to a host of benefits. Given current economic conditions and trends, it is likely that many hourly workers face the trade-off consequences implied by this study. Although companies may have to reduce work hours to respond to their economic needs, our results suggests that this should be performed while either trying to accommodate employee preferences or at least proceeding with the knowledge of the type of effects on employee attitudes they should expect. Perceived organization support, job stress, work–family conflict, intent to turnover, and life satisfaction are relevant factors for work–life today; strengthening or reducing these attitudes through meeting work-hours preferences can lead to the type of advantage today's organizations need to be successful.

Figure 1. Effects associated with work-hours fit and the lack of work-hours fit. (a) Effects associated with work-hours congruence. (b) Effects associated with degree of misfit. (c) Effects associated with work-hours congruence and degree of misfit.

a: Effects Associated with Work-Hours Congruence
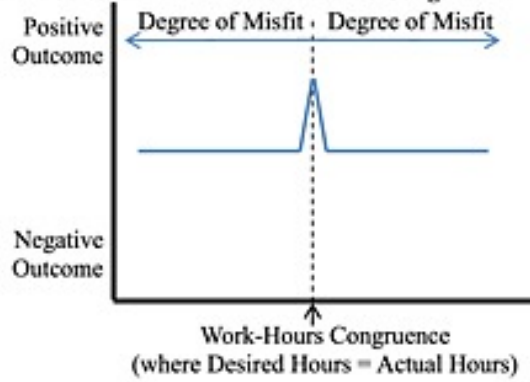
b: Effects Associated with Degree of Misfit
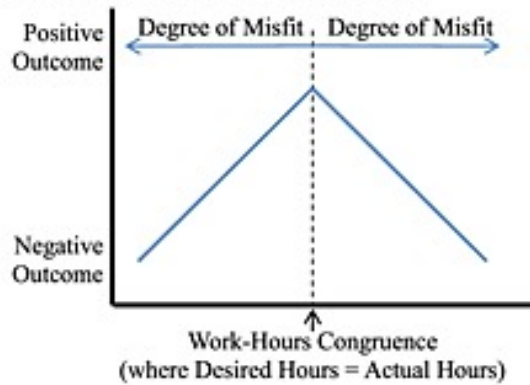
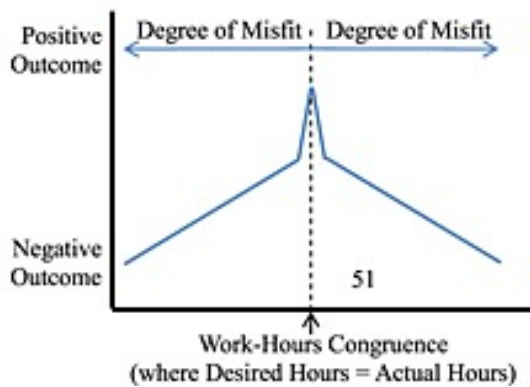c: Effects Associated with Work-Hours Congruence and Degree of Misfit

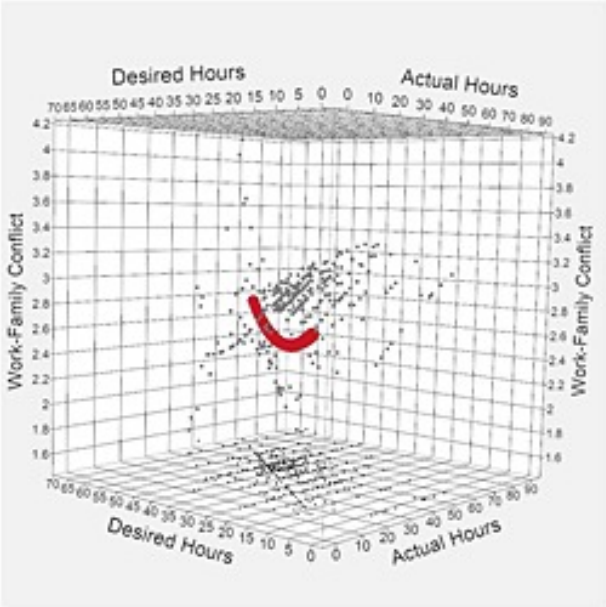**Figure 2.** Plots for higher order models of job stress and work–family conflict.
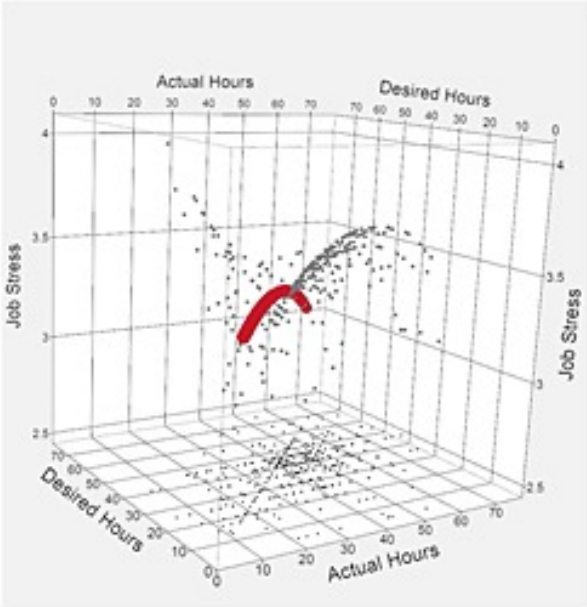
TABLE 1. Summary statistics.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1. Desired Hours (T2)	33.40	9.90	—														
2. Actual Hours (T2)	40.17	11.74	.50	—													
3. Hours-Fit Congruence (T2)	0.23	0.42	.14	−.20	—												
4. Degree of Misfit (T2)	9.35	8.76	−.31	.37	−.58	—											
5. Under Hours	0.14	0.34	.12	−.45	−.22	.00	—										
6. Perceived Org. Support (T1)	3.44	0.81	−.01	−.11	.15	−.19	.00	(.91)									
7. Perceived Org. Support (T2)	3.44	0.79	−.02	−.11	.15	−.16	.01	.74	(.91)								
8. Life Satisfaction (T1)	3.12	0.89	.02	−.03	.13	−.16	−.07	.41	.36	(.90)							
9. Life Satisfaction (T2)	3.16	0.90	.00	−.08	.17	−.19	−.03	.39	.45	.75	(.87)						
10. Intent to Turnover (T1)	2.68	1.22	.03	.04	−.11	.09	.05	−.58	−.46	−.36	−.31	(.95)					
11. Intent to Turnover (T2)	2.65	1.20	.01	.10	−.17	.18	.00	−.46	−.56	−.30	−.36	.63	(.95)				
12. Work–Life Conflict (T1)	2.83	1.05	.03	.20	−.22	.25	−.04	−.32	−.32	−.21	−.22	.36	.28	(.90)			
13. Work–Life Conflict (T2)	2.80	1.06	.02	.26	−.24	.28	−.09	−.27	−.36	−.20	−.28	.26	.35	.65	(.90)		
14. Job Stress (T1)	3.48	0.78	−.05	.06	−.14	.15	.00	−.25	−.26	−.48	−.45	.23	.19	.27	.23	(.82)	
15. Job Stress (T2)	3.43	0.															

N = 1032. Correlations greater than .06 are significant at p < .05. Coefficient alphas are reported, when appropriate, on the main diagonal.

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TABLE 2. The effects of working more than the desired number of hours.

	Life Satisfaction			Intent to Turnover			Job Stress			Work–Family Conflict		
Intercept	0.71 (0.11)***	0.71 (0.11)***	0.70 (0.13)***	1.61 (0.24)**	1.61 (0.24)***	1.64 (0.25)***	1.37 (0.16)***	1.39 (0.16)***	1.42 (0.18)***	0.85 (0.17)**	0.93 (0.17)***	1.07 (0.19)***
Lagged dependent variable (T1)	0.72 (0.023)***	0.71 (0.023)**	0.71 (0.029)***	0.54 (0.029)**	0.54 (0.029)**	0.54 (0.029)*	0.60 (0.027)***	0.59 (0.027)***	0.59 (0.027)***	0.61 (0.025)**	0.60 (0.026)***	0.60 (0.026)***
POS (T1)	0.098 (0.025)***	0.091 (0.025)***	0.088 (0.025)***	−0.20 (0.044)**	−0.17 (0.044)***	−0.17 (0.044)***	−0.029 (0.026)	−0.017 (0.026)	−0.014 (0.026)	−0.078 (0.032)*	−0.065 (0.032)*	−0.067 (0.032)*
Actual Hours	−0.0033 (0.0016)*	−0.0020 (0.0017)	−0.0025 (0.0020)		0.0033 (0.0026)	0.0027 (0.0031)	0.0015 (0.0017)	−0.00081 (0.0018)	−0.0013 (0.0022)		0.0097 (0.0023)***	0.0070 (0.0027)**
Hours-Fit Congruence		0.088 (0.053)*	0.13 (0.057)*		−0.13 (0.084)*	−0.15 (0.089)*		−0.021 (0.059)	−0.073 (0.062)		−0.15 (0.072)*	−0.18 (0.077)**
Degree of Misfit		−0.0028 (0.0027)	0.0000 (0.0030)		0.0094 (0.0043)*	0.0094 (0.0043)*		0.0083 (0.0030)**	0.0082 (0.0029)**		0.0057 (0.0037)	0.0058 (0.0036)*
Under Hours			0.21 (0.096)*			−0.074 (0.099)			−0.097 (0.070)			−0.15 (0.085)*
Interaction of Under Hours and Degree of Misfit			−0.19 (0.0082)*			0.0088 (0.013)			0.018 (0.0090)*			−0.0076 (0.011)
R^2	0.574**	0.578*	0.580*	0.411**	0.420**	0.421	0.355***	0.363**	0.367*	0.442***	0.450***	0.452

Note: Coefficients above are the regression coefficients with their standard errors reported below them in parentheses. POS (T1) is perceived organizational support from Time 1. Statistical significance of the R2 statistics represents statistical significance over the previous step (for the first step, over the null model; for the next steps, over the prior regression model).
*$p < .05$;
** $p < .01$;
*** $p < .001$.

TABLE 3. Polynomial regression results of attitudinal dependent variables.

Dependent variable	Unconstrained equation							Model F-ratios		
	Desired	**Actual**	**Congruence**	**Under**	**Congruence * Actual**	**Under * Actual**	**Under * Desired**	**ΔR^2**	**F_c**	**F_H**
Life Satisfaction	0.0016	−0.013	0.43*	0.44*	−0.0083	0.016*	−0.022**	0.00	1.65	1.44
Intent to Turnover	−0.010*	−0.0088*	−0.78*	−0.37	0.017*	−0.023*	0.028*	0.00	2.18	1.03
Job Stress	−0.0056*	0.0045	0.016	−0.30	−0.0025	−0.029**	0.030**	0.00	0.15	3.28**
Work–Family Conflict	−0.0064	−0.014***	0.067	−0.15	−0.0068	−0.0051	0.0074	0.00	0.63	4.02***

Note: If the desired number of hours equals the actual number of hours, then "Congruence" = 1, otherwise 0. If the desired number of hours is greater than the actual number of hours, then "Under" equals 1, otherwise 0. All results above are for regressions predicting the noted dependent variable (at Time 2). The regressions also include the lagged dependent variable (i.e., from Time 1) as an independent variable. Perceived Organizational Support (from Time 1) is also a control variable in all regressions except the first regression reported above. The column FC contains the F-ratios for the test of constraints imposed by the algebraic difference score. The column FH contains the F-ratios for the test of the higher order terms, which includes Desired2, Desired * Actual, Actual2, Congruence * Actual2, Under * Desired2, Under * Desired * Actual, and Under * Actual2.
* $p < .05$;
** $p < .01$;
*** $p < .001$.

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