

**Comparing the work-family interface in Chile and Colombia**

**Track: Human Resource Management**

**Key Words: Turnover intention, Family Supportive Supervisors, Perceived Organizational Support**

# **Comparing the work-family interface in Chile and Colombia**

## **Abstract**

This paper looks at the work-family interface in Colombia and Chile. Using a sample of 486, 255 -Chile and 231- Colombia employees, we look at how family supportive supervisor behaviors (FSSB) relate to one organizational outcome: turnover intention and, one individual outcome: satisfaction with work-family balance and the role that perceived organizational support (POS) might play in this relationship. Results show a negative relationship between FSSB and turnover intention and a positive relationship with satisfaction with work-family balance accentuate by POS. The negative effect of POS on turnover Intention is stronger in women than in men. No significant differences were found amongst countries.

## **Introduction**

The constant changing environment poses organizations and their people increasing competitive demands. Executives face the challenge of balancing role demands from work and family (Greenhaus & Singh 2004; Thörnquist, 2006). At the same time companies face the challenge of competition in talent attraction and retention, high levels of absenteeism, turnover intention, lack of commitment, burn out, among others (Eby, et al., 2005, van Steenbergen & Ellemers, 2009). In an attempt to reduce these problems and their consequences employers implement a series of policies and practices that could help employees at large better harmonize their family and work lives. A work –family friendly culture incorporates work-family policies such as flexible work schedules, teleworking, and care benefits for children and the elderly that aim to address the challenges of managing the two demanding roles (Allen, 2001; Anderson, Coffey & Byerly, 2002; Lapierre & Allen, 2006; Mennino, Rubin & Brayfield, 2005). Yet the question as to how effective these policies really are remains (Kelly, et al., 2008). Do they reduce turnover intention and help employees reduce work-family conflict? Do these policies and practices enhance the possibilities of satisfaction among both realms? How do employees look for support from supervisors and organization and manage their different demands?

Organizations in Latin American countries face the same challenges as their northern counterparts. But in contrast with American and European countries, research from Latin American countries on the work family area is scarce (Poelmans, O’Driscoll and Beham, 2005). Some isolated data from specific countries, such as Mexico, Brazil, Perú, Chile and Colombia, can be found in the few cross-cultural works (Idrovo, Leon &

Grau, 2012; Spector, et al., 2004; Spector et al., 2005; Shaffer et al., 2005). There are some studies from a sociological and legal perspective (Díaz, 2007; Faur, 2006), and some reports from ECLAC (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean) especially in the Women and Development Series (2012, 2011, 2004), and in the Social Policies Series (2013, 2010), all from the public policy perspective. There are other few focused in specific countries and from the organizational perspective (for Colombia: Idrovo & Leyva, 2011; Hernández & Idrovo, 2010; Otálora, 2007; Idrovo, 2006. For Argentina: Debeljuh, P. & Jáuregui, K. 2004). But as Poelmans (2005) indicates with the rise of female labour participation, the transition to dual-earner families, and the overall socio economic changes in Latin America, work-family conflicts should start calling attention from national and international organizations and researchers due to the importance that family as a strong institution still holds in Latin American labour and cultural practices (Vassolo, De Castro, Gomez-Mejía, 2011).

There is also another issue to keep in mind. Latin America is perceived as a homogenous cultural region (Oglisatri et al, 1999) and in this generalization finer analysis among the multiple countries differences might be overlooked, which in turn endangers policies implementation. The present study contributes to build the business case in favour of harmonizing work and family in the Latin American context. It focuses in the impact that the work-family interface might have for organizational and individual outcomes. It looks at how family supportive supervisor behaviours relate to one organizational outcome: turn over intention and one individual outcome: satisfaction with work-family balance and the role that perceived organizational support might play in this relationship. The study involves two Latin American countries: Colombia and Chile. The comparison among these two countries will reveal if country culture affects the relationships mentioned before or reaffirm the idea of a homogenous cultural block.

### **Theory and Hypotheses**

Perceived organizational support (POS) is a global belief that employees form concerning the extent to which the organization values their contributions and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al. 2004; Eisenberger et al. 1986; Shore & Shore, 1995; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Behavioural outcomes of POS include, among others: enhancing of in-role and extra-role performance and reducing turnover intention and absenteeism (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Empirical evidence suggests a strong link of supervisor support

as an antecedent of POS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Since employees attribute the actions of the organizational agent or units to the intent of the organization, they believe those actions are promoted or sanctioned by it. As Eisenberger et al state, “the actions and words of high status employees are seen as closely conveying the favourable or unfavourable orientation toward employees of the personified organization” (2004: 210). In the case of organizations that are trying to implement family friendly policies and enhance a family friendly culture, family supportive supervisor (FSS) behaviours play a key role in channelling organizational efforts. Family supportive supervisor behaviours consist of behaviors displayed by managers that aim to provide emotional and instrumental support, role modelling and creative management of work-family issues in order to facilitate employee effectiveness (Hammer et al 2009). The perception of support from supervisors in work-family issues decreases work-family conflict (Breugh & Frye, 2008; Shor, Greenhaus & Graham, 2013) and increases the use of work-family policies (Blair-Loy & Wharton, 2004; Kalev, Dobbin & Kelly, 2006) since they are perceived to act as gate keepers over the kind of family support employees receive (den Dulk & de Ruijter, 2008; McCarthy, Darcy & Grady, 2010). Since family supportive supervisor behaviors are closely related to the organizational support towards family policies and practices that employees perceived we propose the following

*H1: Family supportive supervisor behaviours will positively relate to perceived organizational support towards work-family issues.*

Perceived organizational support and turn over intention and work-family balance satisfaction

Behavioural outcomes of POS include, among others: enhancing of in-role and extra-role performance and reducing turnover intention and absenteeism (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). In relation to work-family issues the perception of family supportive organizations decreases work-family conflict (Kossek et al, 2011; Shor, Greenhaus & Graham, 2013) and turn over intention and increase job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Allen, 2001). Specifically, as Maertz et al (2007) found out when examining the mediating effects of both perceived supervisor support and perceived organizational support on turnover cognitions and their effects on turnover behaviour, perceived supervisor support influenced turnover cognitions while perceived organizational support impacted on turnover behaviors. In the same way, satisfaction with work-family balance (Valcour, 2007), a construct conceptually different from enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell,

2006), facilitation (Wayne et al, 2007), and enhancement (Ruderman et al, 2002), refers to the equal level of satisfaction with work and family roles. Organizations that are perceived to be supportive of work-family balance increase the level of satisfaction with work-family experiences, which is, in turn, associated with lower turnover intention (Kim, Las Heras, Escribano, 2013). Hence we propose the following:

*H2: Perceived organizational support will negatively relate to turnover intention*

*H3: Perceived organizational support will positively relate to work-family balance satisfaction*

*H4. Perceived organizational support will mediate the negative relationship between family supportive supervisors and turnover intention*

*H5: Perceived organizational support will mediate the positive relationship between family supportive supervisors and satisfaction with work-family balance*

## **Methods**

### **Sample and Procedure**

To test our hypothesis, data was collected from employees in organizations from Chile and Colombia over the second semester of 2012.

The same questionnaire was used in Chile and Colombia. We used the questionnaire developed by IESE, the International Family-Responsible Employed Index (IFREI). The questionnaire consists of three main sections: independent variables: policies, supervisor support, culture and individual characteristics; dependent variables: organizational outcomes (turnover intention, loyalty, commitment and POS) and individual outcomes (health, work family enrichment and satisfaction with work family balance); and demography indicators.

We used the Spanish version of the questionnaire, translated from its original English version to Spanish, using back translation (Brislin, 1986). The sample includes managers from different positions (low, middle and top) and includes companies from different sectors and sizes. Table 1 reports sample size and key variables mean scores per country.

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Insert Table 1 around here

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The final sample includes 486 employee responses: 255 from Chile and 231 from Colombia. The average age is 40 years old for both countries; the average tenure is 8 years for Chile and 9 years for Colombia. The average number of children is 2.2 in Chile and 1.3 in Colombia, and 35% of the sample sizes are women in Chile and 33% are women in Colombia.

## **Measures**

***Perceived organizational support:*** to measure perceived organizational support, we used four items adapted from Eisenberger et al. (1986). Each item consists of a seven-point Likert-type response format, ranging from 1 “Strongly disagree” to 7 “strongly agree”. Items include: (1) When I have a problem, the organization tries to help me, (2) The organization is really concerned about my welfare, (3) The organization takes my opinion seriously, (4) The organization is concerned about my overall satisfaction at work.

***Family Supportive Supervisor behaviors:*** to measure supervisor Family-Supportive Supervisor behaviors, we used Hammer, et al (2009) measures. Each item consists of a seven-point scale (1= very dissatisfied to 7= very satisfied). Items include: (1) My supervisor is willing to listen to my problems in juggling work and non-work life, (2) My supervisor takes the time to learn about my personal needs, (3) My supervisor makes me feel comfortable talking to him or her about my conflicts between work and non-work, (4) My supervisor and I can talk effectively to solve conflicts between work and non-work issues (5) I can depend on my supervisor to help me with scheduling conflicts if I need it, (6) My supervisor is a good role model for work and non-work balance, (7) My supervisor thinks about how the work in my department can be organized to jointly benefit employees and the company

***Satisfaction with work-family balance:*** to measure satisfaction with work-family balance, we used Valcour (2007) measures. Each item consists of a seven-point scale (1= very dissatisfied to 7= very satisfied). Items include: (1) The way you divide your time between work and personal or family life, (2) the way you divide your attention between work and home, (3) how well your work life and your personal or family life fit together, (4), your ability to balance the needs of your job with those of your personal or family life, and (5), the opportunity you have to perform your job well and yet be able to perform home-related duties adequately.

**Turnover Intentions:** to measure turnover intentions, we used O'Reilly, Chatman, and Caldwell's (1991) measure. We changed three of the four questions into statements, for example an item was "I frequently think of quitting my job." The scale used for these questions is a seven point scale ranging from 1 to 7, where 1 correspond to "strongly disagree" and 7 correspond to "strongly agree".

**Controls:** single items were used to measure gender (male = 0, female = 1), age, tenure and number of children.

### **Data Analysis**

Our data comes from different countries; therefore it is important to achieve measurement equivalence. To prove that the relationship between our variables is stable across Chile and Colombia, we conducted a multi-group structural equation model. The multi-group structural equation model gave evidence that we can use and compare results from this instrument between Chile and Colombia. The goodness of fit measures are satisfactory for the complete model (Chi square: 804.723; df: 364; RMSEA: 0.07; CFI: 0.946; TLI: 0.944). Thus, we conclude that Chile and Colombia meet the criteria for measurement equivalence.

We tested our hypothesis in three steps. First, we test the relationship between Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors and Perceive Organizational Support (H1). Second, we test the relationship between POS and the other two variables: Turnover Intention and Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance (H2 and H3). Finally, we test the mediating effect of POS between the relationship of Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors and Turnover Intention and Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors and Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance (H4 and H5).

The software packages used for the data analysis are: MPlus 7 (Muthen & Muthen, 2007) and STATA 13 (Rabe-Hesketh & Skrondal, 2008).

### **Results**

Our respondents are embedded in a country; therefore our data contains two level of analysis: individual level and country level. To test for possible cultural level effect in the data, we calculate the variance component and intraclass correlation (ICC) for: Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors, Perceive

Organizational Support, Turnover Intention and Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance. The analysis showed that about 98% of the variance in each variable consists of between-individual variance, with about 2% of the remaining variance being between-culture variance. The ICC for Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors, Perceive Organizational Support, Turnover Intention and Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance are below the recommended value of 0.05 (Bliese and Hanges, 2004). Table 2 shows the variance component and intraclass correlation for each variable.

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Insert Table 2 around here  
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Table 3 presents descriptive statistics, correlations and cronbach alpha for the variables at the employee level.

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We expected a positive relationship between Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors and Perceived Organizational Support (H1). The regression in table 4 confirms this hypothesis. Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors has a positive significant effect over Perceived Organizational Support ( $\beta = .445$ ,  $SE = 0.030$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

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Table 4 confirms our second hypothesis that Perceived Organizational Support has a significant and negative effect on Turnover Intention ( $\beta = -.841$ ,  $SE = 0.060$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Also, this regression shows that gender has a positive and significant effect on Turnover Intention, hence the negative effect of Perceived Organizational Support on Turnover Intention is stronger in women than in men ( $\beta = -.578$ ,  $SE = 0.162$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

The regression in table 4 also confirms our third hypothesis that Perceived Organizational Support has a significant and positive effect on Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance ( $\beta = .302$ ,  $SE = 0.046$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

Hypothesis 4 and 5 predict that Family Supportive Supervisor has both direct effect and indirect effect through Perceived Organizational Support on Turnover Intention and Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance. We tested the proposed model (Figure 1).

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Insert Figure 1 around here  
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As shown in Figure 2, all the proposed relationships of Family Supportive Supervisor among Turnover Intention and Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance, mediated by Perceived Organizational Support were significant and consistent with our prediction. We obtained the indirect effect and total effect of the relationship between Family Supportive Supervisor among Turnover Intention and Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance from the estimates in SEM.

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### **Discussion, Limitations and Future Research**

The previous results offer confirmation of the important role that Perceived Organizational Support and Family Supportive Supervisors play in outcomes such as turnover intention (organizational) and satisfaction with work-family balance (individual). Decreasing the first one and increasing the second one are results consistent with previous research done in American and European organizational contexts (Kossek et al, 2011; Maertz et al, 2007; O'Neill et al, 2009). This paper becomes one of the first to offer data from organizations and managers from Latin American countries and contributes to the literature in the work-family interface.

The model stresses the weight of supervisors' behaviours in enhancing or diminishing employees' perception of organizational support for family supportive practices. And this becomes critical when organizations do not have formal policies (Bagger & Li, 2011), which is the case of Latin American organizations (Idrovo,

León & Grau, 2012). In Latin American businesses, the existence and compliance of formal policies that try to harmonize work and family are significant fewer than in Spain, for example. But they still manage to develop family friendly cultures within with the help of informal but constant behaviours from collaborators and managers at large. One of the implications of this study for businesses and managers lies precisely in underlining the importance of the supervisor's role, not only in helping to create a family-friendly culture but regarding one specific organizational outcome: turnover intention, an outcome that can create problems and cost the organization money if it is not managed properly.

Another key result is the stronger effect that Perceived Organizational Support has on turnover intention in women. This finding is not surprising at all considering that in Latin American countries, as almost everywhere else in the world women still carry over their shoulders domestic and caring responsibilities. They represent 52% of the labour force in Latin America (Atal, Ñopo, & Winder, 2009) and the unpaid work they do at home doubles that of the men (Jain, 2013). Their willingness to leave their companies if they perceive that their efforts to balance work and family are not appreciated or approved and sometimes might even be a burden in scaling the corporate ladder is more than understandable. But here lies another risk for organizations because women in Latin America have achieved higher levels of education than men (UNESCO, 2012) and businesses would be losing their most talented personnel and failing to attract half of the talent pool available. Therefore, managing well the work-family interface becomes of utmost importance for organizations.

There is also another finding worth mentioning: the similarity in terms of the model of both countries, Colombia and Chile. Results are consistent with the argument for a strong cultural homogeneity of Latin America. However we caution against a simplistic generalization. In this case similarities among Colombia and Chile could be emphasized by the economic, political and social circumstances they are going through. Comparison with other countries such as Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, México, Guatemala or Venezuela might offer different results (Susaeta et al, 2013). Further research among countries on how organizations manage the work-family interface is needed.

There are some limitations to this research. The first one comes from the design of the study. It does not allow for conclusions regarding causality; in other words we cannot establish causal links among the

variables involved in the model. A second one is the origin of our data. The measures are self-reported and the risk of common method bias is there. Finally, our sample is made up of managers of different levels in the corporation but limited to two cities: Bogota (Colombia) and Santiago de Chile (Chile). Generalizations of the findings must be done with caution. More research is needed in different cultural settings (e.i. other cities from the same countries; other levels of the organizations, etc.) for testing the model and for deriving more acute recommendations for managerial practices.

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## TABLES & FIGURES

**Table 1: Sample Size and Mean Score on the Main Variables per Country**

Country	Employees	Tenure	Average Age	% of Women	Average n° of Kids
Chile	255	8	40	35%	2.2
Colombia	231	9	40	33%	1.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>8.48</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>1.8</b>

**Table 2: Variance component and intraclass correlation for each variable**

	Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors	Perceived Organizational Support	Turnover Intention	Satisfaction with work-life Balance
Between-individual variance	97.3%	0.0%	0.6%	0.7%
Between-culture variance	2.7%	100%	99.4%	99.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
ICC (1) culture	0.03	0.00	0.01	0.01

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics**

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Alpha Coefficient	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors	4.58	0.07	0.95	1.00							
2 Perceived Organizational Support	5.20	0.06	0.91	.56**	1.00						
3 Satisfaction with work-family balance	5.05	0.06	0.94	.34**	.29**	1.00					
4 Turnover Intentions	3.72	0.89	0.88	-.47*	-.55*	-.23*	1.00				
5 Gender	1.36	0.02		-.034	-.03	-.04	-.11*	1.00			
6 Age	40.15	0.42		.04	-.03	-.03	.05	.17**	1.00		
7 Tenure	8.24	0.37		.04	-.04	.03	.08*	.15**	.48**	1.00	
8 Kids	1.74	0.07		.001	.07	.01	-.04	-.20*	-.47*	-.27*	1.00
9 Culture (country)				-.12*	-.04	-.07	.07	.00	.04	-.06	-.30*

\*P<0.1

\*\*P<0.001

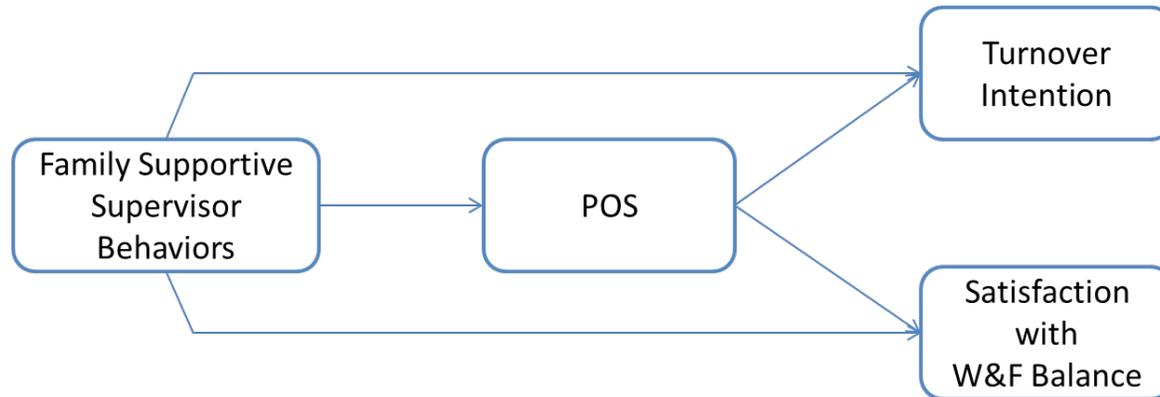
**Table 4: Regression results**

	Perceived Organizational Support		Turnover Intention		Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance	
	$\beta$	$T$	$\beta$	$t$	$\beta$	$T$
Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors	.445	14.85**				
Perceived Organizational Support			-.840	-13.85**	.302	6.47**
Gender	.009	.09	-.578	-3.55**	-.099	-.79
Age	-.002	-.31	.006	0.58	-.009	-1.14
Tenure	-.007	-.99	.0159	1.45	.012	1.40
Kids	.039	.277	-.012	-.22	-.027	-.61
R-squared	.317		0.313		.0895	

\*p < 0.05

\*\*p < 0.01

**Figure 1: Theoretical Model of effect of Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors on Turnover Intention and Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance**



**Figure 2: Final model effect of Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors on Turnover Intention and Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance**

