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# Organization benefits - the panacea for all that ails you? A dyadic, dual-earner investigation of organization-offered benefits and their effect on individuals and their partners

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**ORGANIZATION BENEFITS – THE PANACEA FOR ALL THAT AILS YOU? A DYADIC,  
DUAL-EARNER INVESTIGATION OF ORGANIZATION-OFFERED BENEFITS AND  
THEIR EFFECT ON INDIVIDUALS AND THEIR PARTNERS**

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
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requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Psychology

by  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	8
Family-supportive Organization Perceptions.....	8
Employer-offered Work Benefits.....	9
The Beneficial Role of Family-supportive Organization Perceptions.....	14
Crossover between Partners.....	19
MATERIALS AND METHODS.....	29
Sample.....	29
Procedure.....	29
Measures.....	30
RESULTS.....	35
Analytic Strategy.....	35
Preliminary Results.....	35
Initial Model Assessment.....	37
Hypothesis Testing.....	39
Research Question Findings.....	41
Additional Findings of Interest.....	43
DISCUSSION.....	46
Organization-offered Benefits.....	46
Family-supportive Organization Perceptions as an Antecedent.....	50
Type of Couple.....	52
Theoretical Contributions.....	53
Future Research.....	54
Limitations.....	56
CONCLUSIONS.....	59
REFERENCES.....	60
APPENDIX: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL.....	70
VITA.....	71

## **LIST OF TABLES**

1. Internal Consistency Reliability Estimates and Inter-correlations for Study Variables.....	36
2. Paired Sample T-test and Effect Size Estimates for Study Variables.....	37
3. Constructs Set Free to Correlate within the Conceptual Path Model.....	38
4. Independent Samples T-test and Effect Size Estimates for Study Variables across Couple Type.....	44

## **LIST OF FIGURES**

1. The Proposed Model.....	4
2. Model with Unstandardized and Standardized Parameter Estimates.....	39

## **ABSTRACT**

In an effort to attract and retain top talent, organizations often offer and implement various organization benefits. The focus of this dissertation is on the outcomes of those offered organization benefits on employees and their partners. Three types of organization benefits were assessed: family-friendly benefits, financial and compensation benefits, and health care and wellness benefits. Additionally, the connection between the offering of these benefits with family-supportive organization perceptions was also examined. Family-supportive organization perceptions was shown to directly and indirectly link to individual-level outcomes including work-to-family conflict and psychological wellbeing. Moreover, because individuals do not exist in a vacuum (i.e., ecological systems theory), individuals and their partners were assessed concurrently. Individual family-supportive organization perceptions was shown to relate to partner perceptions of the individual's experiences. Additionally, individual experiences of benefits were shown to crossover and affect partners, specifically male partner family-friendly benefits indirectly linked to female partner wellbeing. Finally, in an effort to extend the current research on types of dual-earning couples, the effects of couple type (i.e., traditional vs. contemporary egalitarian ideal) were explored.

## INTRODUCTION

In today's labor market, the ability to recruit and retain the most capable and talented employees is of the utmost import for organizations to remain competitive (e.g., Deery, 2008). As such, organizations often implement various enticements in order to attract top talent. Such enticements include competitive compensation and increased paid time off. Increasingly though, organizations have begun to consider the importance of providing what are generally known as family-friendly benefits. Interestingly, although preliminary research suggests that organizations do not necessarily gain monetarily by making family-friendly benefits available to employees (Bloom, Kretschmer, & Van Reenen, 2011), organizations do stand to gain increased public appeal and increased commitment from employees (e.g., Miller, 2012, May; Mulvaney, 2011; Wang, Lawler, & Shi, 2011). Specifically, the cost of implementing various family-friendly practices is often offset by the gains in productivity that result (e.g., increased flextime relates to decreased lost time and absenteeism, and increased productivity; Bloom et al., 2011). Additionally, the approach of utilizing benefits to attract top talent directly reflects the finding that 60% of working adults reported that they remain with their employer because of the benefits they receive (Workforce Retention Survey; APA, 2012, August).

Further, because family-friendly workplace practices link to a variety of desirable organizational outcomes, researchers have been particularly interested in examining whether and how employees benefit from these practices. For instance, researchers have shown that family-friendly workplace practices (e.g., flextime, flexplace, dependent care support) are related to individual outcomes such as work-family conflict, job self-efficacy, job and family satisfaction, stress and strain, and physical health (Breaugh & Frye, 2007; Butler, Grzywacz, Ettner, & Liu, 2009; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2006; Mulvaney, 2011). However, additional research

shows that other, more external factors may influence the relationship between an employee and his/her employing organization.

One external factor that has emerged is the role that partners play in the formation of an employee's job attitudes. For example, Wayne, Casper, Matthews, and Allen (2013) showed that an employee's organizational commitment is influenced by the employee's partner's satisfaction with the focal employee's job and job demands. Although extant research supports that partners can and do affect each other (Wayne et al., 2013; see also, Westman, 2001), research on dyadic effects between partners (i.e., members of a couple affecting each other's work and/or family lives) comprises a relatively small amount of work-family research. Specifically, Casper, Eby, Bordeaux, Lockwood, and Lambert (2007) reported that only 13% of work-family research incorporates relationships between dyads in which one partner affects the other (i.e., crossover). Although the data from Casper et al.'s study are now 12 years old and several dyadic studies have been completed since then, a gap still remains.

In addition to the call for research on crossover relationships between members of dyads by Casper et al. (2007), Bronfenbrenner (1979) supports with his work on ecological systems theory that individuals do not exist in a vacuum and thus ought not to be assessed as such. Mainly, Bronfenbrenner argued that individuals are a product of not only their own experiences but also of those around them, and in order to more fully understand an individual, those around him/her need to be taken into consideration. Thus, given the gap in work-family literature regarding the experiences of dual-earner couples, combined with Bronfenbrenner's argument, the current dyadic study is offered as an appropriate and necessary addition to the current body of work-family literature.

Inspired by this call for research and supported by the fact that the majority (i.e., 56%) of the U.S. workforce is married (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011) and 80% of these couples are dual-earning (Matos & Galinsky, 2012), members of dual-earning couples are the primary population of interest. Dual-earning couples are dyads in which both members of the couple work outside the home for pay. Further, in the present study, dual-earning couples are of interest in order to ascertain the effect that partners and their individual work situations have on each other. To start, the relationship between an individual's family-supportive organization perceptions (i.e., the degree to which an individual believes that his employer is family-supportive; Allen, 2001), as driven by employer-offered benefits, and his psychological wellbeing is explored. Additionally this relationship is further examined to determine the influence of the individual's perceptions of his partner's organization's family-supportiveness (i.e., the degree to which an individual believes his partner's organization is family-supportive) on the individual's wellbeing. Past research supports the link between an individual's employer-offered benefits and the individual's psychological wellbeing, but the moderating effect of the individual's perception of his partner's organization's family-supportiveness remains to be determined. Also, an individual's perception of his partner's organization's family-supportiveness is offered as an extension of Allen's (2001) family-supportive organization perceptions.

As depicted in Figure 1, an individual's family-supportive organization perceptions are posited to be derived as a function of employer-offered benefits available to the individual. Next, family-supportive organization perceptions are hypothesized to directly link to individual psychological wellbeing. Thus, the degree to which benefits are related to employee wellbeing is predicted to be a function of how family-supportive the organization is perceived to be by the

employee; that is family-supportive organization perceptions mediate the relationship between benefits and employee wellbeing. However, this mediated process is argued to be influenced by the individual's reported work-to-family conflict; put another way, the individual's reported work-to-family conflict partially mediates the relationship between family-supportive organizational perceptions and psychological wellbeing.

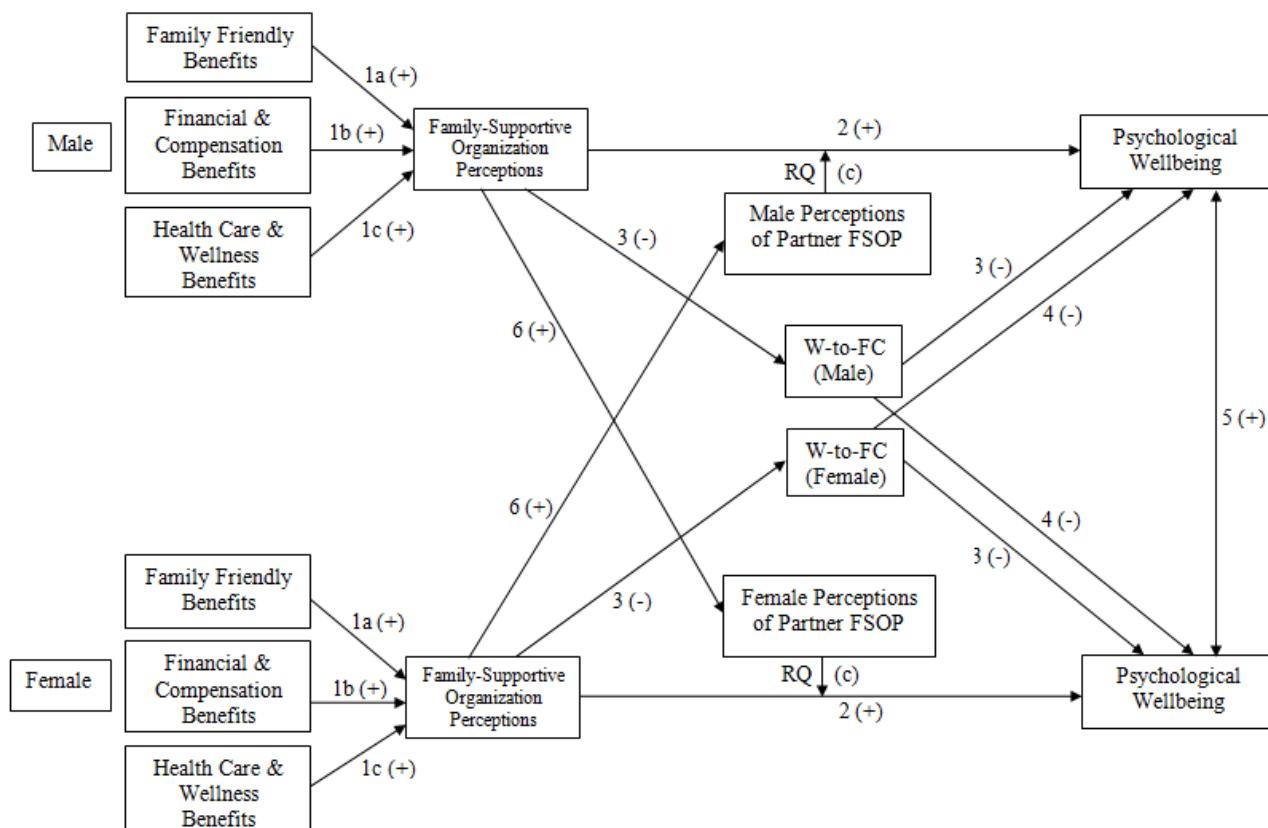


Figure 1 – The Proposed Model

Of note, propositions posited in this study are reinforced by social exchange theory (Gouldner 1960; Blau, 1964) and grounded in equity theory (Adams, 1963, 1965). In social exchange theory, it is supported that in the relationship between an employer and employee, if an employer gives the employee some benefit (e.g., family-friendly, compensation, health), then the employee will reciprocate this gesture (e.g., with increased effort, loyalty and organizational commitment; Haar & Spell, 2004; Lambert, 2000), and vice versa. However, according to

Adams (1963, 1965), an individual will be satisfied with his rewards (e.g., pay) for his efforts or inputs to the extent that the ratio between his inputs and rewards is equal to that of his referent other. As an example, if an individual perceives that her referent other (i.e., her spouse) gets more rewards than she does for the same amount of work that she does, then she will be dissatisfied with her situation.

In light of these theoretical arguments, the primary focus, and contribution, of this dissertation is on the crossover effects of benefits. Specifically, the relationship between an individual's family-supportive organization perceptions and her psychological wellbeing is argued to be moderated by the individual's perception of her partner's organization's family-supportiveness. It is hypothesized, based on equity theory (Adams, 1963, 1965), that this moderated effect exists because the individual will use her partner as a comparative standard (i.e., referent other) to determine if her rewards for her efforts are adequate. If the partner receives more rewards than the individual for equal work, then the individual will be less satisfied and content as indicated by decreased psychological wellbeing. The focus on psychological wellbeing as the outcome of interest in this study is based on work by Kossek, Kalliath, and Kalliath (2012) in which they argued that wellbeing is "a part of a dual agenda" (p. 742) such that employee wellbeing is crucial for employees and the organization, alike, to be successful. This description of wellbeing as a conveyor of success for employers and employees is further supported by the links between wellbeing and several notable outcomes including productivity, work absence due to illness, and turnover intentions (Brun, 2010). In sum, because wellbeing is valuable to employers and employees, and because it is argued to be the connection to a plethora of organizational and individual outcomes, wellbeing was selected as the outcome of interest. Moreover, the posited relationships allow the drivers of employee wellbeing,

including organizational influences such as benefits offerings, and personal influences (i.e., an individual's partner), to be more fully explored.

Although Adams (1963, 1965) asserted in equity theory that individuals will be less satisfied if there is a discrepancy between the ratio of efforts and rewards for the individual and his referent other (e.g., his partner), Adams did not acknowledge the possibility that not all individuals expect complete equity between their situations and those of their partners. Specifically, from a sociological perspective (see Moen & Yu, 2000), there are predominately two types of dual-earning couples: *traditional* and *contemporary egalitarian ideal* couples. These two distinct types of dual-earning couples approach the management of work and family differently. Traditional couples support more traditional gender roles, and often one individual's career takes precedence over the other. However, contemporary egalitarian ideal couples are typically more supportive of equal importance being placed on both members' careers. In the present study, the effect of differences in benefits availability between members of a couple is investigated to determine if there is any difference between traditional and egalitarian ideal couples. This assessment of different types of dual-earner couples has, to the researcher's knowledge, yet to be examined in current work-family research, but serves as an extension of equity theory as well as a potential explanation for the inconsistent results of crossover research, particularly regarding gender role issues and ideologies (Westman, Brough, & Kalliath, 2009).

Lastly, both members of the dual-earning dyads are assessed in conjunction to examine the effects that partners can have on each other (see Bronfenbrenner, 1979), particularly with regard to available benefits and family-supportive organization perceptions. Furthermore, the present study is an attempt to illustrate how offering family-friendly workplace practices and benefits truly does relate to the business case perspective. Specifically, given the effects that

partners can have on each other and consequently each other's employing organizations, employers need to be aware of the potential effects of the family-friendly benefits that they choose to offer or not offer. Overall, although the offering of family-friendly benefits may not be directly linked to outcomes such as firm performance (see Bloom et al., 2011), there is extensive support for potential strong effects on employee work-family conflict and psychological wellbeing. As such, this dissertation serves as a means to identify the effect that benefits offerings have on an individual as well as his/her partner, which to this researcher's knowledge has not yet been done.

At this point, family-supportive organization perceptions is first introduced, as family-supportive organization perceptions is the central component of the proposed model and the connection between the various benefits that employers offer and the outcomes of interest. Next, the posited mediating role of work-to-family conflict between individual family-supportive organization perceptions and psychological wellbeing is discussed. As an extension of the individual-level assessments and reflective of the call for research on dyads, the crossover of experiences from one partner to the other is expounded upon in detail. The discussion of dyadic effects includes a review of past research on dyads, but also the proposed relationships in this study. Finally, the potential effects of type of couple (i.e., traditional and contemporary egalitarian ideal) are examined.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

### **Family-supportive Organization Perceptions**

Family-supportive organization perceptions refer to an employee's perceptions regarding whether his employer is supportive and accepting of the fact that the employee has a family and does not demand that the employee place work before family in order to be effective (Allen, 2001). When formulating the concept of family-supportive organization perceptions, Allen drew on past research on perceived organizational support (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986), family-supportive supervisors, and family-supportive policies and benefits (see Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Family-supportive organization perceptions are, however, distinguished from these topics in that although family-supportive organization perceptions are related to and partially driven by family-supportive supervisors and policies (Allen, 2001), family-supportive organization perceptions are a global assessment of an individual's perceptions of whether his organization is family-supportive.

Hobfoll, Freedy, Lane, and Geller (1990) argue in their social support resource theory that social support is positively related to wellbeing and negatively related to stressors (e.g., work stressors). It follows that family-supportive organization perceptions, as the perception of social support, should be linked to a variety of favorable individual-level outcomes. Specifically, Allen (2001) showed family-supportive organization perceptions to be positively related to job satisfaction and negatively related to turnover intentions. Further, Booth and Matthews (2012) illustrated the negative relationship between family-supportive organization perceptions and work-to-family (i.e., work interfering with family) and family-to-work conflict (i.e., family interfering with work), through work and family role overload, respectively. Additionally, O'Driscoll et al. (2003) showed that family-supportive organization perceptions fully mediates

the negative relationship between family-friendly organizational policy usage and work-to-family conflict. Finally, Ratnasingam et al. (2012) indicated a positive relationship between family-supportive organization perceptions and work engagement.

Because past research supports the many ways that family-supportive organization perceptions can affect individuals, further investigation of the antecedents of family-supportive organization perceptions is needed so that organizations can understand *how* to enhance family-supportive organization perceptions within their employees. Although Allen (2001) posited that family-supportive organization perceptions are driven in part by family-friendly organization benefits (e.g., flexible work arrangements and dependent care supports), it is argued in this proposed study that family-supportive organization perceptions are driven by not only family-supportive benefits, but also other more general benefits such as compensation and health benefits. Again, by linking general benefits to family-supportive organization perceptions, this dissertation serves to offer a more comprehensive approach and to more fully explain drivers of family-supportive organization perceptions, thus enabling employers to better develop family-friendly organizations, in addition to answering the call for additional research on family-friendly organizational policies (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005). The rationale for this link and a discussion of the benefits to be assessed is next offered.

### **Employer-offered Work Benefits**

Based on a framework utilized by the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM, 2012), there exist three primary categories of employer-offered work benefits. These include 1) family-friendly workplace practices, 2) financial and compensation benefits, and 3) health care and wellness benefits. I posit that these three types of benefits drive an individual's family-supportive organization perceptions. Furthermore, it is important to note that there is no

known research within the work-family literature that has investigated all three connections. Rather, extant research links only family-friendly benefits to family-supportive organization perceptions (e.g., Allen, 2001; O'Driscoll et al., 2003). Specifically, past research has primarily functioned under the assumption that family-supportive organization perceptions are derived from family-friendly benefits. Yet, based on the notion that some non-family-friendly specific benefits can aid employees' families, it should also be expected that other benefits might be incrementally related to the development of family-supportive organization perceptions. As an example, life insurance offered through an individual's employer falls into the category of financial and compensation benefits (see SHRM, 2012), but the use of this benefit would directly assist in the care of the employee's dependents and would as such potentially link to an increase in the employee's family-supportive organization perceptions. Nevertheless, the three general types of benefits are next discussed in turn to further elucidate the connection to an employee's family supportive-organization perceptions.

### **Family-friendly Workplace Practices**

Family-friendly workplace practices are conceptualized as benefits and policies offered by organizations to assist employees in managing their work and family lives (Butler, Gasser, & Smart, 2003; Casper & Butts, 2010). Furthermore, in line with the business case for offering family-friendly work supports (see Casper & Butts, 2010), the offering of family-friendly supports is beneficial for employees and employers alike, specifically regarding increased employee commitment and public appeal when the programs are offered (Bloom et al., 2011; see also Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). Additionally, family-friendly workplace supports are an ensemble of benefits (Hammer, Neal, Newsom, Brockwood, & Colton, 2005) including policies (e.g., flextime), benefits (e.g., flexible spending accounts), and services (e.g., childcare referrals;

Neal, Chapman, Ingersoll-Dayton, & Emlen, 1993). In the present proposal, *policies*, *benefits*, and *supports* are not distinguished from each other (see Hammer, Neal et al., 2005), and the terms are used interchangeably throughout to refer to the overarching concept of family-friendly workplace benefits.

**Prevalent Family-friendly Organizational Practices.** Some of the most common family-friendly practices offered by employers include dependent care flexible spending accounts, flextime, and telecommuting on an ad-hoc basis (SHRM, 2012; see also Breaugh & Frye, 2007). Other less common benefits include childcare referrals, domestic partner benefits, and job sharing (SHRM, 2012; Hammer, Neal et al., 2005; Pedersen, Minnotte, Kiger, & Mannon, 2009).

**Associated Outcomes.** Although Shockley and Allen (2007) reported that there is inconsistency regarding outcomes of some family-friendly practices (e.g., flexible work arrangements), some of the links between family-friendly benefits and work-family related outcomes are as follows. Family-friendly policy availability has been shown to negatively relate to work-family conflict and positively relate to job satisfaction (Anderson, Coffey, & Byerly, 2002; Breaugh & Frye, 2007). Furthermore, satisfaction with scheduling flexibility was shown to positively relate to organizational commitment and negatively relate to turnover intentions (Aryee, Luk, & Stone, 1998; see also Allen, 2001). In addition to reported satisfaction, Grover and Crooker (1995) showed that individuals who simply had access to family-friendly policies reported increased organizational commitment, and decreased turnover intentions. Thompson, Beauvais, and Lyness (1999) found that although simply offering policies is beneficial regarding employee outcomes, a family-friendly culture is necessary for employees to feel comfortable actually utilizing the available benefits.

Furthermore, Sands and Harper (2007) demonstrated that use of telecommuting was positively correlated with organizational performance. Finally, in a study by Hammer, Neal et al. (2005), the investigation of family-friendly workplace supports was expanded to include dyadic experiences of family-friendly benefits. Specifically, the relationships between couples' use of family-friendly supports and work-family conflict were investigated. The results, however, were limited regarding what couples gain from benefits usage, thus resulting in a call for research to clarify the relationship between workplace benefits and outcomes for members of cohabiting dyads. Overall though, in an attempt to replicate past research, specifically Allen's work (2001) showing the positive link between family-friendly benefits and family-supportive organization perceptions, the following hypothesis is offered.

**Hypothesis 1a:** Family-friendly workplace benefits is positively related to family-supportive organization perceptions.

### **Financial and Compensation Benefits**

Financial and compensation benefits are often conceptualized as monetary pay, loan offerings, insurance provisions, and other reimbursements that are directly as a result of the work an employee does at his job (see SHRM, 2012). These types of benefits offerings can include paid holidays and leave, life insurance, loans to employees during emergencies, and bonuses. Further, although financial and compensation benefits offered by employers are intended as an exchange with the employee for services and work provided (i.e., social exchange; Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960), many financial and compensation benefits may have a spillover effect on work-family related issues. For example, life insurance for an employee offered as part of the compensation package would ultimately serve to benefit the employee's family should something happen to the employee. Also, life insurance for the employee's dependents too is a

financial and compensation benefit that, although is offered as an exchange for work, directly involves an employees' family. Moreover, in addition to paid family leave and payroll advances offered to employees, scholarships and educational loans offered by employers to be used by employees' families is a form of compensation with direct spillover to employees' families.

It follows that the offering of such benefits would encourage employees to perceive that their employers care about and promote employees' attention to and successful management of both their work and family lives (i.e., family-supportive organization perceptions; Allen, 2001). Although to this researcher's knowledge there is no extant research assessing the effect of offering financial and compensation benefits on employees' family-supportive organization perceptions, it is hypothesized, based on conceptual evidence, that the more financial and compensation benefits an individual reports, the more positive family-supportive organization perceptions the individual has.

**Hypothesis 1b:** Financial and compensation benefits is positively related to family-supportive organization perceptions.

### **Health Care and Wellness Benefits**

Health care and wellness benefits are frequently conceptualized as benefits designed to help prevent future illnesses and make current illnesses manageable, particularly financially (SHRM, 2012). Some examples of health care and wellness benefits include prescription drug coverage, dental, vision, and disability insurance, medical flexible spending accounts, information and referrals on health and wellness, and on-site fitness centers or subsidies for fitness center memberships. As with the financial and compensation benefits, many health care and wellness benefits are beneficial to and inclusive of not only the employee, but also the employees dependents (i.e., family). As an example, many employer-offered medical insurance

programs have provisions to allow for the inclusion of an employee's family on his/her health plan. Additionally, another health care and wellness benefit often offered by employers is CPR/first aid training (see SHRM, 2012). This particular benefit can be extremely valuable to employees with families, especially in the event that a member of the employee's family needs immediate help and care. Overall, the fact that employer-offered health care and wellness benefits are applicable and directed to employees and their families is support for the posited link between health care and wellness benefits and family-supportive organization perceptions. Thus, although there is no known extant literature linking health care and wellness benefits with family-supportive organization perceptions, it is offered, based on conceptual evidence, that health care and wellness benefits is positively related to family-supportive organization perceptions.

**Hypothesis 1c:** Health care and wellness benefits is positively related to family-supportive organization perceptions.

However, it should be noted that in light of the fact that extant literature on family-supportive organization perceptions has emphasized the link between family-supportive organization perceptions and family-friendly workplace practices (Allen, 2001; O'Driscoll et al., 2003), and because family-friendly workplace practices have the strongest conceptual link to family-supportive organization perceptions, the following hypothesis is offered.

**Hypothesis 1d:** Family-friendly workplace benefits has the strongest effect on family-supportive organization perceptions of the three types of workplace benefits.

#### **The Beneficial Role of Family-supportive Organization Perceptions**

Hobfoll et al. (1990) in their social support resource theory argued that social support can be beneficial to individuals in that social support links to increases in wellbeing and decreases in

work stressors. In light of this connection between support and wellbeing, in the present study, family-supportive organization perceptions is proposed to be positively related to increased psychological wellbeing. This conceptualization of family-supportive organization perceptions as a form of social support is consistent with Lapierre et al. (2008) who described family-supportive organization perceptions as “general support for employees” regarding family matters (p. 94). Furthermore, psychological wellbeing is offered as a feeling of overall happiness, in conjunction with wellness and positive mental functioning (Schmutte & Ryff, 1997; see also Carmeli, Yitzhak-Halevy, & Weisberg, 2009; Ryff, 1989, 1995). The utilization of wellbeing in this study is an extension of Hobfoll et al.’s (1990) work, as well as a continuation of research to determine what drives wellbeing. Kossek et al. (2012) argued that wellbeing is a link to success for both employers and employees, alike, and as such, the antecedents of wellbeing merit further investigation. Additionally, wellbeing is important in a dyadic context because as will soon be discussed, partners are able to not only perceive each other’s states, but are also affected by each other (i.e., crossover theory; Westman, 2001; see also, Kenny & Acitelli, 2001 on partner perception). For example, lower levels of individual wellbeing and subsequent ability to meet the demands of individual work and family roles can have a potentially detrimental effect on the individual’s partner.

In addition to the arguments offered by Hobfoll et al. (1990) for the connection between support and wellbeing, the stressor-strain process also supports the posited link between support and wellbeing. Specifically, past research has shown support for the stressor-strain process, in that stressors present in an individual’s life (e.g., overload, role conflict) can result in increased strain (e.g., decreased job satisfaction, decreased physical wellbeing) for the individual (Cooke & Rousseau, 1984). A lack of family-supportive organization perceptions can serve as a stressor,

and can thus result in various types of strain. More specifically, if an individual perceives that her employer is not supportive regarding her work-family management and potentially demands that she attend to her work role at the expense of her family role, then this sort of stressor can promote individual strain. As such, it follows that in light of the work of Cooke and Rousseau (1984) in which they showed that stressors can have a deleterious effect on individual wellbeing, family-supportive organization perceptions is proposed to be positively related to psychological wellbeing. That is, individuals who report lower levels of family-supportive organization perceptions also report lower levels of wellbeing.

As further support for this relationship between family-supportive organization perceptions and wellbeing, Haar and Roche (2010) showed a positive relationship between family-supportive organization perceptions and life satisfaction (i.e., a form of subjective wellbeing; see Diener, 1984; Matthews, Swody, & Barnes-Farrell, 2012). Haar and Roche (2010) based their arguments on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960) such that in exchange for an organization being family-supportive, employees are more committed to the organization. Moreover, this relationship was shown to be partially mediated by individual life satisfaction, or wellbeing. In the present study, the social exchange relationship between an individual and his organization is mirrored in that the rationale for proposing the link between benefits, family-supportive organization perceptions, and wellbeing stems from a desire to understand the mechanism driving the extant links between wellbeing and organizational outcomes (e.g., turnover intentions, organizational commitment; Haar & Roche, 2010; Odle-Dusseau, Britt, & Bobko, 2012).

**Hypothesis 2:** Individual family-supportive organization perceptions is positively related to individual psychological wellbeing.

Although extant literature supports the positive relationship between family-supportive organization perceptions and wellbeing, there is a lack of explanations regarding *how* family-supportive organization perceptions can affect an individual's wellbeing (Wayne et al., 2013). Specifically, the process behind the beneficial role that family-supportive organization perceptions has in individuals' lives has yet to be fully examined. The lack of research on the processes that link variables in work-family literature is a major criticism of the field (Eby et al., 2005). In an effort to answer this call and to understand the *how* between family-supportive organization perceptions and wellbeing, the following connections are offered. Specifically, work-to-family conflict is offered as a mediator between family-supportive organization perceptions and wellbeing.

According to role theory, the more roles an individual has, the more struggles and conflict the individual will face in satisfying the demands of all his roles (see Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). This sort of conflict between roles (e.g., the work role and the family role) and role demands is known in work-family literature as work-family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). More specifically, work-family conflict exists when the demands of one domain (e.g., family) interfere with the demands of the other domain (e.g., work). Further, work-family conflict is bidirectional, meaning that both family-to-work conflict (i.e., family interfering with work) and work-to-family conflict (i.e., work interfering with family) exist (Frone, Russell, & Barnes, 1996).

When an individual perceives that her organization is family-supportive, this increase in family-supportive organization perceptions serves as an indicator of the individual's belief regarding her ability to satisfy both her desires and the desires of her employer in regard to work-family management thus resulting in decreased work-to-family conflict (see Allen, 2001; Booth

& Matthews, 2012; O'Driscoll et al., 2003). For example, if an individual believes that his organization is family-supportive, then the individual will feel more capable of successfully attending to his family-role while not jeopardizing his work-role, thus resulting in decreased conflict between work and family. Work-to-family conflict is the focus here, as opposed to family-to-work conflict, because family-supportive organization perceptions stem from the work domain, and are proposed to serve as an indicator of the extent to which an individual perceives that work must interfere with family. Although Booth and Matthews (2012) reported that family-supportive organization perceptions link to both work-to-family and family-to-work conflict, work-to-family conflict is more strongly related to wellbeing (Lapierre & Allen, 2006), and as such work-to-family conflict is of interest in this study.

The proposed negative relationship between family-supportive organization perceptions and work-to-family conflict (i.e., greater levels of family-supportive organization perceptions link to less stressors in the form of less work-to-family conflict) is subsequently proposed to link to less strain as indicated by psychological wellbeing (Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, & Semmer, 2011). Conversely, the opposite is also offered, such that lower levels of family-supportive organization perceptions are related to greater levels of work-to-family conflict and subsequent decrements in psychological wellbeing. This is based on the notion that an individual is not likely to be able to manage the expectations of her employer and family regarding the work and family roles, if the individual's employer does not support the employee's familial obligations. Overall, the role of work-to-family conflict in the family-supportive organization perceptions and wellbeing relationship is such that work-to-family conflict explains how family-supportive organization perceptions can ultimately affect an individual's psychological wellbeing. As such, the following hypothesis is offered.

**Hypothesis 3:** Individual work-to-family conflict partially mediates the relationship between individual family-supportive organization perceptions and individual psychological wellbeing.

### **Crossover between Partners**

When an individual's stress or strain from work (or family) affects his family (or work) domain, this sort of interaction across the domains is referred to as *spillover* (Lambert, 1990). For example, as job demands increase, an individual's ability to attend to needs and responsibilities associated with her family domain decrease (Grotto & Lyness, 2010). Although an individual's stress and strain from one domain (i.e., work or family) are able to spillover and affect the other domain, partners' too are able to affect one another. Specifically, when an individuals' stress or strain affects the stress or strain of his partner, this dyadic relationship is known as *crossover* (Bolger, Delongis, Kessler, & Wethington, 1989; Westman & Vinokur, 1998). An example is the positive relationship between spouses' levels of work-family conflict (i.e., as one spouse's work-family conflict increases, so does his partner's work-family conflict; Westman & Etzion, 2005).

There are three specific types of crossover: common stressors, direct, and indirect (Westman & Vinokur, 1998). *Common stressors* are described as any stressful experiences that both partners are exposed to in their shared environment, but are not attributable to one partner specifically. An example would be financial problems (i.e., stressful life events) that are shared by and affect both members of the couple. However, it is important to note that members of different types of couples (i.e., traditional and egalitarian ideal dual-earner couples) might interpret common stressors differently (e.g., the breadwinner in a traditional dual-earner couple might feel more responsible for financial issues). Nevertheless, the effect of different types of

couples is addressed later in this dissertation. *Direct crossover* is the stress of one partner directly eliciting a response in the other partner. An example would be that individual burnout is positively related to partner burnout (Westman, Etzion, & Danon, 2001). Finally, *indirect crossover* is described by negative interactions between members of a dyad on account of each members' stress and strain, which serve to increase the stress or strain of the partners. An example would be the positive relationship between individual burnout and social undermining between partners (Westman et al., 2001; Westman, Vinokur, Hamilton, & Roziner, 2004).

Research completed on crossover includes investigations regarding how an individual's work experiences such as burnout, high job demands, work engagement, and work-to-family conflict can affect the individual's partner (Bakker, 2009; Bakker, Demerouti, & Dollard, 2008; Bakker, Shimazu, Demerouti, Shimada, & Kawakami, 2011; Bakker, Westman, & Schaufeli, 2007; Hammer, Allen, & Grigsby, 1997; Hammer, Bauer, & Grandey, 2003; Hammer, Cullen, Neal, Sinclair, & Shafiro, 2005; Matthews, Del Priore, Acitelli, & Barnes-Farrell, 2006; see also, Dikkers, Geurts, Kinnunen, Kompier, & Taris, 2007). Issues with psychological health (e.g., depression, anxiety) have also been shown to crossover between partners (see Crossfield, Kinman, & Jones, 2005; Dikkers et al., 2007; Howe, Levy, & Caplan, 2004). Further, past crossover research has included investigations of both single-earner (e.g., Dikkers et al., 2007) and dual-earner couples (e.g., Chan & Margolin, 1994; Crossfield et al., 2005; Matthews et al., 2006). Additionally, longitudinal crossover effects have been explored in past research; specifically Kinnunen, Feldt, Mauno, and Rantanen (2010) investigated whether work-family conflict affects job satisfaction and parental distress over time. However, despite this firm foundation of crossover research, there are still gaps in the literature (Casper et al., 2007).

Crossover research is an expanding area of study with numerous areas for future research to address various gaps. One gap is with regard to the spillover-crossover model as offered by Bakker et al. (2008, 2009a). Bakker, Westman, and van Emmerik (2009b) recommended that future crossover research ought to include research addressing the spillover-crossover model, which states that stress from work (e.g., job demands) first spills over into an individual's family domain (e.g., in the form of work-family conflict), and then crosses over to affect the individual's partner (e.g., decreased wellbeing). Additionally though, Bakker et al. (2009b) maintain that crossover research should investigate not only the crossover of negative experiences from one partner to another, but also positive crossover (e.g., the crossover of work engagement). As such, in the present study, the spillover effects of an individual's family-supportive organization perceptions to his home domain with regard to the individual's wellbeing and work-to-family conflict are assessed to determine the crossover effects of this spillover to the individual's partner's wellbeing. The potential positive effects of family-supportive organization perceptions on the individual and additionally the individual's partner are also explored.

### **The Spillover-crossover Effect**

In the present study, the intra-individual, spillover hypothesis is offered such that family-supportive organization perceptions are positively related to psychological wellbeing, and that this relationship is mediated by the individual's level of work-to-family conflict. Although this posited relationship is reflective of the extant spillover and family-supportive organization perceptions literature, according to the spillover-crossover model (Bakker et al., 2008, 2009a), this set of relationships is incomplete. Specifically, under the spillover-crossover model, when work experiences spillover into an individual's family, or home, domain, those experiences are

likely to crossover to affect the individual's partner. In an effort to complete the spillover-crossover model, the following arguments are offered.

In light of the spillover-crossover model (Bakker et al., 2008, 2009a), it is presently argued that as an individual reports lower levels of family-supportive organization perceptions, the individual will subsequently report more work-to-family conflict (i.e., spillover). Further, the higher level of individual work-to-family conflict will be associated with less psychological wellbeing for the individual's partner (i.e., crossover). Although this set of relationships is grounded in the spillover-crossover model (Bakker et al., 2008, 2009a), the proposed negative relationship between an individual's work-to-family conflict and her partner's wellbeing is further supported by Hobfoll's (1989) conservation of resources theory. Mainly, as an individual experiences more work-to-family conflict, then the individual is less able to attend to the demands of the family domain. This inability of the individual to attend to the family domain negatively impacts the partner. The individual's partner will likely need to exert more energy in the family domain to make up for the individual's deficiency. This resource drain on the partner (i.e., decreased time and energy available) due to the partner having to compensate for the individual's increased work-to-family conflict is posited to manifest itself in the form of lower levels of psychological wellbeing for the partner. Additionally, under social support resource theory (Hobfoll et al., 1990), the individual's increased levels of work-to-family conflict will likely prevent the individual from expending necessary resources in the family domain due to work demands, and this includes providing to her partner any social support. Since social support from another has been shown to be positively related with individual outcomes, including wellbeing (Doeglas et al., 1994; Love & Edwards, 2005), and in light of the spillover-crossover model, the following hypothesis is offered.

**Hypothesis 4:** Individual work-to-family conflict mediates the relationship between individual family-supportive organization perceptions and partner psychological wellbeing.

In addition to past research exploring the indirect ways in which partners can affect each other, extant research on direct crossover effects has shown that partners can affect each other via immediate transmission of feelings and experiences. Mainly, “through an empathetic reaction” partners have been shown to directly transmit their experiences to each other on a variety of variables, including relationship satisfaction and burnout (Bakker et al., 2009a, p. 26; see also, Bakker & Demerouti, 2009; Bakker et al., 2009b; Matthews et al., 2006; Westman, 2001; Westman & Etzion, 1995). Moreover, Bakker and Demerouti (2009) argue from a social learning perspective (see Bandura, 2001) that individuals observe and empathize with their partner’s experiences to the point that the individuals ultimately feel and experience the partners’ sentiments along with them. From these arguments, it is concluded that partners’ psychological wellbeing are positively related to one another. Specifically, as an individual experiences lower levels of wellbeing, so too does his partner.

**Hypothesis 5:** There is a positive reciprocal relationship between partners’ psychological wellbeing.

### **Perceptions of Partner’s Organization’s Family-supportiveness**

As another form of crossover, not only do individuals evaluate their organizations’ family-supportiveness, the individuals’ partners also develop their own perceptions of how supportive the individuals’ organizations are of their family. According to Festinger in his social comparison theory (1954), in an effort to understand and evaluate oneself and one’s situation, individuals will often compare themselves to others. For example, individuals perceive and

evaluate not only the family-supportiveness of their own organization, but also that of their partner's organization, and can use this information to assess and appraise the two.

An individual's perception of his partner's organization's family-supportiveness is described here as an individual's belief regarding whether his partner's organization is family-supportive. Additionally, these beliefs are proposed to be derived from the individual's partner's family-supportive organization perceptions. Wayne et al. (2013) showed that individuals form opinions regarding their partner's work situation based on their own interpretations of their partners' work life. Specifically, Wayne et al. found that an individual will be more committed to her partner's organization if the partner experiences less work-to-family conflict, thus enabling the partner to be more active and engaged in the home domain, and if the individual perceives that her partner is satisfied with and committed to his organization. Thus in the present study, an individual develops perceptions of her partner's organization as family-supportive if the partner perceives his own organization to be family-supportive. For example, a wife will make judgments whether her husband's employing organization is family-supportive in part based on what the husband says about his organization (as indexed in terms of his family-supportive organization perceptions reports). Based upon the theoretical and empirical findings, the following hypothesis is offered.

**Hypothesis 6:** An individual's perception of his/her partner's organization's family-supportiveness is positively related the partner's reported family-supportive organization perceptions.

Further, beyond simply the formation of an individual's perceptions of his partner's organization's family-supportiveness, these perceptions have implications for the individual and his experiences and management of his own work-family interface. Specifically, it is posited that

the more family-supportive an individual perceives his partner's organization to be, the weaker the relationship between the individual's own family-supportive organization perceptions and his own psychological wellbeing. In other words, the more family-supportive an individual believes his partner's organization to be, the less the individual's own family-supportive organization perceptions positively relates to his wellbeing. For example, if a wife perceives her husband's organization to be family-supportive, then she is less likely to perceive her own organization's family-supportiveness to be satisfactory, resulting in less of a positive effect of her own family-supportive organization perceptions on her wellbeing.

This posited deleterious relationship resulting from partner interaction (i.e., indirect crossover) is based on propositions associated with equity theory. In particular, in equity theory (Adams, 1963, 1965, see also Festinger, 1954 on social comparison theory), an individual is satisfied with the outcomes and rewards of her efforts to the extent that her outcomes and rewards for efforts are equivalent (i.e., in equal proportion) to the outcomes and rewards for efforts that the individual's referent other receives. As the sample for the present study consists of members of cohabiting dual-earning couples, it follows that an individual's referent other is her partner with whom she is very familiar and aware (see Kenny & Acitelli, 2001 on partner perceptions). The rewards in question for work are the benefits an individual receives from her employing organization, and the associated family-supportive organization perceptions that result. Thus, for members of dual-earning couples in which both members of the couple work outside the home for pay, the possible perception that one member of the couple is receiving more rewards as indicated by increased family-supportive organization perceptions for his efforts than the other member can be particularly problematic. Mainly, an individual assessing her partner's organization's family-supportiveness in relation to her own organization's family-

supportiveness serves to color how the individual perceives her own good fortune, or level of family-supportive organization perceptions.

Another way to consider the hypothesized relationships is from a social support resource theory perspective (Hobfoll et al., 1990). To start, if an individual has many resources available to him, then the contribution of any single one resource is less important. So for example, if an individual reports that his organization is family-supportive (i.e., increased family-supportive organization perceptions), and the individual perceives that his partner's organization is family-supportive, then the positive relationship between the individual's family-supportive organization perceptions and his wellbeing will be weaker. In other words, the individual does not need to depend on the social support from his employer as much, because he perceives that there are other forms of support available (i.e., the partner's organization is family-supportive too). Additionally, in line with Hobfoll et al., there is only so much support an individual can draw from a source of support before it is depleted. By having more sources, the individual is less likely to deplete any one source. Thus, the importance of any one source is lessened.

**Research Question 1a:** Individual perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness moderates the positive relationship between individual family-supportive organization perceptions and individual psychological wellbeing such that higher levels of perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness are associated with a weaker positive relationship between the individual's family-supportive organization perceptions and wellbeing.

**The Effect of Couple Type.** In the current literature on dual-earning couples, there exists a discussion of two types of couples (e.g., Turk, 2012). The first type of couple is labeled a *traditional couple*, or sometimes more generally referred to as a neotraditional couple. Dyads

falling into this category are described as couples in which one member of the couple contributes more to the couple than the other member (Moan & Yu, 2000). Consequently, in these types of couples, one member (typically the male) takes the role of the breadwinner (i.e., the primary earner) within the dual-earning couple. Additionally, men and women in more traditional dual-earner couples embody more traditional gender roles; such that, the woman takes on more of the responsibilities of the home domain than the man.

The second type of couple is called a *contemporary egalitarian ideal couple*. Members of a contemporary egalitarian ideal couple typically perceive both members of the couple to be contributing equally to the couple/family unit (Moen & Yu, 2000). This equal contribution associated with contemporary egalitarian, dual-earning couples includes relatively equal contribution financially speaking, as well as with regard to attending to the responsibilities and tasks associated with the home domain. Contemporary egalitarian men often take a more active role in child-rearing and household chores (see Kendall, 2007).

With regard to the moderated relationship offered above (i.e., Research Question 1a), a few discrepancies between couple types seem likely. Essentially, it is posited that the deleterious moderating effect on the relationship between an individual's family-supportive organization perceptions and his psychological wellbeing by his perception of his partner's organization's family-supportiveness is stronger for contemporary egalitarian couples than traditional couples. Specifically, because those in a contemporary egalitarian couple perceive themselves to be equal contributors to the couple/family unit, they are likely to perceive any discrepancy between perceived level of family-supportiveness by the individual partners' organizations in a more negative light. More to the point, the members' of contemporary egalitarian couples financial inputs to the couple/family are considered to be equivalent (i.e., both contribute equally to the

couple/family); as such, the additional rewards and compensations from their employers too should be the same (e.g., they should perceive equivalent family-supportive organization perceptions). Conversely, in a traditional couple, one member of the couple contributes more to the whole than the other member, and thus acts as more of the breadwinner in the dual-earning couple. Based on this, discrepancies in perceived family-supportive organization perceptions between partners are likely to be tolerated more for members of traditional couples as a function of the already tilted contributions of the partners.

**Research Question 1b:** The moderating effect of an individual's perception of his/her partner's organization's family-supportiveness on the relationship between an individual's family-supportive organization perceptions and his/her psychological wellbeing is stronger for contemporary egalitarian couples than traditional couples.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Sample

Participants were 300 members of heterosexual, cohabiting, dual-earning dyads (i.e., 150 couples). To be included in the present study, both partners had to work a minimum of 20 hours a week (males:  $M = 48.42$ ,  $SD = 13.36$ ; females:  $M = 38.78$ ,  $SD = 11.04$  hours per week), and had to be at least 18 years of age (males:  $M = 42.90$ ,  $SD = 12.68$ ; females:  $M = 40.99$ ,  $SD = 12.54$  years of age). Additionally, combined, the members of each couple worked an average of 87.19 hours per week ( $SD = 18.21$ ).

The average number of years that the couples have been living together was 15.46 ( $SD = 12.32$ ). Approximately 81% of participants identified themselves as Caucasian, and 75% of couples had a combined household income of more than \$75,000. Also, 42% of participants indicated that they had at least one child under the age of 18 living at home, and 21% indicated that they assist with the care of a dependent adult. Approximately 20% of men reported working in management, business, or financial operations related occupations, 33% worked in professional and related occupations, 10% worked in sales and related occupations, and another 29% worked in more traditional “blue collar” (e.g., production, installation, maintenance) or service occupations. Approximately 19% of women worked in management, business, or financial operations related occupations, 24% worked in professional and related occupations, 17% worked in education, 14% worked in sales and related occupations and another 14% worked in office and administrative support occupations.

### Procedure

Data were obtained by asking both members of a dyad to independently complete a web-based survey. Each set of surveys from the dyads was linked through the use of an assigned

identification number. Each member of the dyad received an email notification requesting that they complete the anonymous survey. The proposed method enabled the members of the dyads to complete the survey independently of each other. The dyads were a convenience sample collected via a snowball technique. This technique has previously been used successfully to examine similar issues (Booth & Matthews, 2012, April).

A total of 80 undergraduate students served as recruiters of the dyads. Prior to recruiting couples, the undergraduate student recruiters were trained in appropriate recruitment methods. The undergraduate recruiters were asked to e-mail the survey link to both members of cohabiting, dual-earning dyads. When the undergraduate students sent out the survey to the dyads that they were recruiting, they sent the same link, with the same code to both members of an individual dyad. This method allowed both surveys from a dyad to be linked. Each couple received a unique code. Students received nominal course extra credit for their participation and on average recruited 1.88 couples. IP addresses and time stamps were reviewed to ensure that student recruiters did not complete the surveys themselves. When students were suspected of completing the survey themselves as indicated by duplicate IP addresses and successive time stamps on completed surveys, those responses were removed from the data set to maintain the integrity of the data.

### **Measures**

In the Society for Human Resource Management's employee benefits research report (SHRM, 2012), benefits offerings by organizations were listed and a percentage of organizations that offer the individual benefits was supplied. This percentage associated with the individual benefits was used to determine inclusion in the present study. When determining the benefits to be included in the present research, a cut-off score was set at 15%. After this first benefits list

reduction, pilot data ( $N = 261$ ) were collected to again reduce the benefits lists. Based on the pilot data, a cut-off score of at least 20% of respondents reporting that their employer offered the benefit was used.

**Family-friendly Benefits.** Family-friendly workplace benefits (men:  $\alpha = 0.66$ ; women  $\alpha = 0.67$ ) was assessed with seven items from the Society for Human Resource Management's employee benefits research report (SHRM, 2012). The included benefits were cited to be used by between 17% and 73% of organizations in the SHRM report. The majority of the benefits were used by 30% or more of organizations. The inclusion of benefits cited as used by less than 20% of organizations is reflective of extant research on family-friendly benefits (Allen, 2001; Cunningham, 2009; Glass & Finley, 2002; O'Driscoll et al., 2003). Specifically, extant research on family-friendly benefits repeatedly includes several specific benefits that are reported to be used by less than 20% of organizations, and in an effort to be inclusive of the most commonly cited family-friendly benefits, the cut-off criteria was decreased.

Sample benefits include flextime and dependent care flexible spending accounts. Responses were on a 3-point scale (1 = My employer does not offer this benefit, 2 = My employer offers this benefit, but I do not use it, 3 = My employer offers this benefit, and I use it or intend to use it in the future).

**Financial and Compensation Benefits.** Financial and compensation benefits (men:  $\alpha = 0.80$ ; women  $\alpha = 0.73$ ) were assessed with eight items from the Society for Human Resource Management's employee benefits research report (SHRM, 2012). The included benefits were cited to be used by between 15% and 97% of organizations in the SHRM report. Sample benefits include paid family leave and loans to employees for emergency/disaster assistance. Responses were on a 3-point scale (1 = My employer does not offer this benefit, 2 = My employer offers

this benefit, but I do not use it, 3 = My employer offers this benefit, and I use it or intend to use it in the future).

**Health Care and Wellness Benefits.** Health care and wellness benefits (men:  $\alpha = 0.87$ ; women  $\alpha = 0.84$ ) were assessed with seven items from the Society for Human Resource Management's employee benefits research report (SHRM, 2012). The included benefits were cited to be used by between 33% and 94% of organizations in the SHRM report. Sample items include health/medical insurance for self and dependents, and a 24-hour nurse line. Responses were on a 3-point scale (1 = My employer does not offer this benefit, 2 = My employer offers this benefit, but I do not use it, 3 = My employer offers this benefit, and I use it or intend to use it in the future).

**Family-supportive Organization Perceptions.** Family-supportive organization perceptions (men:  $\alpha = 0.86$ ; women  $\alpha = 0.87$ ) was assessed with six items from Allen (2001) and validated by Booth and Matthews (2012). A sample item is "Work should be the primary priority in a person's life." Responses were on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all, to 5 = a great deal). All items were reverse coded so that higher values indicate increased family-supportive organization perceptions.

**Perceptions of Partner's Organization's Family-supportiveness.** Perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness (men perceptions of partner's organization:  $\alpha = 0.93$ ; women perceptions of partner's organization:  $\alpha = 0.93$ ), which is based on family-supportive organization perceptions, was assessed with six items adapted from Allen (2001; see also, Booth & Matthews, 2012). Participants were instructed to think about their partners' employers when responding. A sample item is "It is assumed that the most productive employees are those who put their work before their family life." Responses were on a 5-point scale (1 = not

at all, to 5 = a great deal). All items were reverse coded so that higher values indicate increased perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness.

**Psychological Wellbeing.** Psychological wellbeing (men:  $\alpha = 0.85$ ; women  $\alpha = 0.83$ )

was assessed with 12 items from the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12; Goldberg, 1992). A sample item is "How frequently in the past two weeks have you lost much sleep over worry?" Responses were on a 5-point scale (1 = never, 5 = always). Some items were reverse coded so that higher values indicate increased psychological wellbeing.

**Work-to-family Conflict.** Work-to-family conflict (men:  $\alpha = 0.72$ ; women  $\alpha = 0.69$ ) was assessed with three items from Carlson, Kacmar, and Williams (2000), and validated by Matthews, Kath, and Barnes-Farrell (2010). A sample item is "I have to miss family activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work responsibilities." Responses were on a 7-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, to 7 = strongly agree). Higher response values indicated increased work-to-family conflict.

**Type of Couple.** Type of couple (i.e., traditional or contemporary egalitarian ideal) was determined via the use of three sets of questions. First, participants were asked generally in which category they and their partners best fit (i.e., male breadwinner, female breadwinner, or equally divided responsibilities). Second, participants were asked how much money they earn, and what the total household income is for their family unit. Third, participants were asked what percent they contribute to the total household income. These three sets of questions were used to triangulate to which type of couple the couples best align. Generally though, the question in which participants indicated which type of couple their couple best matches was used for classification of couples. When the male and female partners in a couple did not agree ( $n = 36$ ) on type of couple, they were classified based on the standard offered by Nock (2001) such that

couples in which partners each contribute between 40-59% of the total income are classified as egalitarian. Conversely, couples in which one member of the couple earns more than 60% of the household income were classified as having a breadwinner, either male or female dependent on which member meets the 60% standard. In total, 63 couples were classified as male breadwinner, and 87 were classified as egalitarian ideal.

Of note, generally, it is assumed in traditional dual-earner couples that the male is the primary breadwinner (Roehling & Moen, 2003; see also Kitterød & Lappegård, 2012; Moen & Yu, 2000; Raley, Mattingly, & Bianchi, 2006), but it is possible that the female is the primary breadwinner. Instances of the female as the primary breadwinner were few in the present sample (n= 6 couples). In an effort to reduce error, these couples were excluded from the primary analyses, and because there were so few female breadwinner couples, follow-up analyses were not done.

## **RESULTS**

### **Analytic Strategy**

Because the data in the present study are dyadic, responses were analyzed using Kashy and Kenny's (2000) actor-partner interdependence model (APIM). The APIM was appropriate for the purposes of this study because the APIM takes into account the fact that an individual in a dyad is able to affect not only his own ideas and notions (actor affect), but also those of his partner as well (partner affect). Thus, within a dyad, the members influence and affect both themselves and each other, creating non-independent data (Campbell & Kashy, 2000; Kenny & Ledermann, 2010). Therefore, consistent with previous dyadic studies (see Badr, 2004; Campbell, Simpson, Kashy, & Rholes, 2001; Matthews et al., 2006), the APIM was used in this study to sufficiently account for the interdependence of the data.

Furthermore, the responses of the members of the dyads were linked with their respective partner via the participant codes (men – Partner 1; women – Partner 2), and then the model was assessed using the statistical package AMOS 20 (Arbuckle, 2011). Additionally to analyze the mediated, indirect relationships, maximum likelihood bootstrapping within AMOS 20 was used. Of note, prior to analyzing the data, all variables with the exception of the outcome variables of male and female psychological wellbeing were centered via grand mean centering. By centering the data, the interpretability of the results was improved. This approach is in line with the recommendations of Kenny (2013).

### **Preliminary Results**

Reliability estimates and inter-correlations for study measures are reported in Table 1. Both partners were less likely to report experiencing work-family conflict when they reported higher levels of family-supportive organization perceptions (males:  $r = -.49$ ,  $p < .01$ ; females:  $r =$

$-.51$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Additionally, when individuals reported higher levels of family-supportive organization perceptions, they also reported higher levels of wellbeing (males:  $r = .28$ ,  $p < .01$ ; females:  $r = .37$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Of further interest, a positive relationship was also observed between male's family-supportive organization perceptions and his partner's wellbeing (male perceptions to female wellbeing:  $r = .20$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Conversely, female family-supportive organization perceptions was not related to male wellbeing ( $r = -.04$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

Table 1 – Internal Consistency Reliability Estimates and Inter-correlations for Study Variables

	Correlations																
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
<b>Control Variables</b>																	
1. Number of children	-																
2. Average age of couple	-.14	-															
3. Household income	.12	.50**	-														
<b>Male Partner</b>																	
4. Family-supportive organization perceptions	-.02	.01	.08	(.86)													
5. Work-to-family conflict	.22**	-.09	-.21*	-.49**	(.72)												
6. Perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness	.07	.03	-.02	.31**	-.07	(.93)											
7. Wellbeing	-.11	.18*	.13	.28**	-.53**	.02	(.85)										
8. Family-friendly benefits	.07	.00	.19*	.17*	-.20*	.08	.00	(.66)									
9. Health care and wellness benefits	-.01	-.01	.20*	-.04	-.18*	-.05	.20*	.32**	(.87)								
10. Financial and compensation benefits	.01	-.07	.23**	.01	-.14	-.06	.16*	.41**	.75**	(.80)							
<b>Female Partner</b>																	
11. Family-supportive organization perceptions	-.05	.08	.07	.16*	-.13	.44**	-.04	.01	.01	-.04	(.87)						
12. Work-to-family conflict	.07	-.07	.00	-.12	.13	-.25**	-.03	-.04	-.02	.06	-.51**	(.69)					
13. Perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness	-.14	.03	.00	.47**	-.39**	.14	.15	.16*	.00	-.03	.41**	-.28**	(.93)				
14. Wellbeing	-.13	.08	.17*	.20*	-.13	.12	.18*	.04	.00	.07	.37**	-.44**	.33**	(.83)			
15. Family-friendly benefits	.00	.10	.03	-.03	-.02	.06	.01	.24**	.13	.14	.11	-.09	.09	-.03	(.67)		
16. Health care and wellness benefits	-.07	.11	.09	.00	-.04	-.06	-.05	.12	.36**	.27**	.08	-.09	.07	.11	.20*	(.84)	
17. Financial and compensation benefits	-.04	.03	.12	-.07	.01	-.09	-.03	.07	.30**	.35**	.12	.06	.02	.22**	.23**	.68** (.73)	

Internal Consistency Reliability Estimates are reported along the diagonal. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

In Table 2, the results of a series of paired sample t-tests are reported. Male partners consistently report having access to and utilizing more health care and wellness benefits ( $M= 2.17$ ,  $SD= .62$ ) and financial and compensation benefits ( $M= 2.09$ ,  $SD= .54$ ) compared to female partners ( $M= 1.83$ ,  $SD= .61$  &  $M= 1.84$ ,  $SD= .48$ , respectively). The effect sizes for these results were moderate to large (see Field, 2005).

Table 2 - Paired Sample T-test and Effect Size Estimates for Study Variables

	Male Partner		Female Partner		t	<i>r</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Family-supportive organization perceptions	3.58	0.82	3.72	0.80	-1.67	0.14
Work-to-family conflict	2.68	0.87	2.57	0.86	1.14	0.09
Perceptions of partner's organization's family supportiveness	3.49	0.95	3.49	0.94	0.02	0.00
Wellbeing	3.86	0.57	3.83	0.54	0.46	0.04
Family-friendly benefits	1.68	0.47	1.61	0.48	1.48	0.12
Health care and wellness benefits	2.17	0.62	1.83	0.61	6.09**	0.45
Financial and compensation benefits	2.09	0.54	1.84	0.48	5.31**	0.40

*r* = Pearson *r* effect size estimate. *df* = 149. \* *p* < .05, \*\* *p* < .01.

### Initial Model Assessment

A path model within AMOS 20 (Arbuckle, 2011) was used to test the conceptual model (Figure 1). To evaluate model fit four measures of model fit were calculated:  $\chi^2$ , CFI, RMSEA, and SRMR. A non-significant  $\chi^2$  indicates good model fit; however,  $\chi^2$  is sensitive to correlation size such that increased strength of correlations is often associated with worse fit (Kenny, 2012). A CFI value of .95 or higher, a RMSEA value of .06 or lower, and a SRMR value of .08 or lower are indicative of good model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Of note, because of the potential for systematic relationships to exist that were not originally offered, modification indices were examined.

Prior to assessing the model, average age of the couple, number of children, and household income as reported by each couple were set free to correlate with work-to-family conflict for both men and women; although this was not specifically hypothesized, it is consistent with past research (Hammer, Kossek, Bodner, & Crain, 2013; Lapierre & Allen, 2006). Additionally, all nine exogenous variables (i.e., male and female family-friendly benefits, male and female financial and compensation benefits, male and female health care and wellness benefits, age, number of children, and household income) were set free to correlate. Finally, the

product terms associated with the hypothesized moderation of perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness on the relationship between individual family-supportive organization perceptions and psychological wellbeing were correlated. The inclusion of this correlation makes conceptual sense given the fact that the product terms are a function of individual family-supportive organization perceptions and perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness which inherently overlap.

The model demonstrated good fit [ $\chi^2(101) = 139.04, p < .01, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .07$ ]. Moreover, as will now be discussed, five of the six hypotheses were at least partially supported. Results for the constructs that were set free to correlate can be found in Table 3. Of note, b and beta weights for the hypothesized relationships are both reported in Figure 2, but for reading ease, only betas are reported in text.

Table 3 - Constructs Set Free to Correlate within the Conceptual Path Model

	Number of children	Average age of couple	Household income	Male FFB	Male FCB	Male HWB	Female FFB	Female FCB	Female HWB	Male work-to-family conflict	Female work-to-family conflict	Male FSOP	Male PFSOP	Female PFSOP	Female product term
Number of children			.16							.21**	.03				
Average age of couple	-1.91										-.98	-.03			
Household income		7.14**									-.14*	.03			
Male FFB	.05	-.08	.09*		.11**	.09**	.05**	.02	.04						
Male FCB	.03	-.55	.13*		.25**	.04	.09**	.09**							
Male HWB	.04	-.22	.12*				.04	.09**	.14**						
Female FFB	.00	.55	.02					.05**	.06*						
Female FCB	-.02	.17	.06						.20**						
Female HWB	-.04	.82	.06												
Female FSOP												.25**	.26**		
Female PFSOP													.21**		
Male PFSOP												.18**			
Male product term												-.10	-.09	.34**	

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Note: FFB = Family-Friendly Benefits; FCB = Financial and Compensation Benefits; HWB = Health Care and Wellness Benefits; FSOP = Family-supportive Organization Perceptions; PFSOP = Perceptions of Partner's Organization's Family-supportiveness

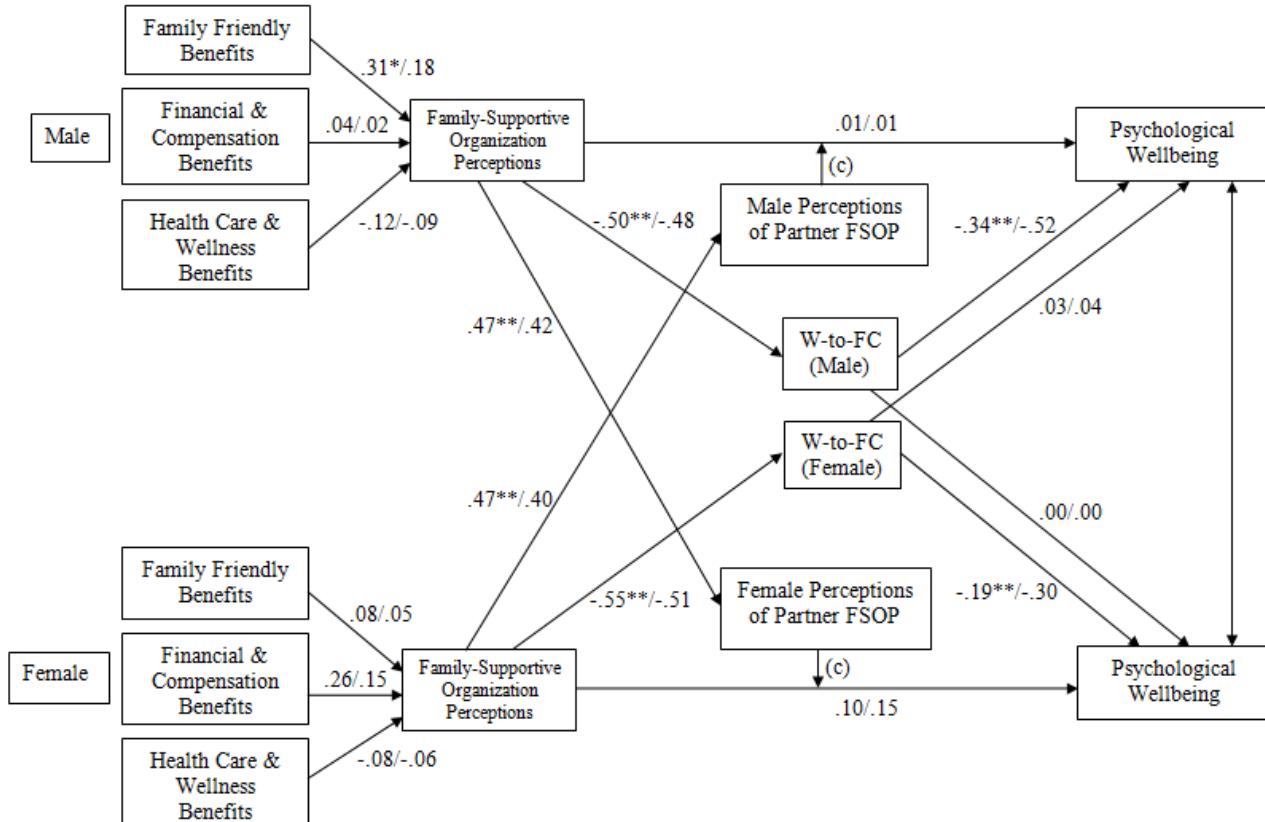


Figure 2 – Model with Unstandardized and Standardized Parameter Estimates

### Hypothesis Testing

In Hypothesis 1, family-friendly benefits, financial and compensation benefits, and health care and wellness benefits were each proposed to be positively related to family-supportive organization perceptions, with family-friendly benefits having the strongest link. This hypothesis was not supported for female partners, but was partially supported for male partners. Specifically, for female partners, neither family-friendly benefits, financial and compensation benefits, nor health care and wellness benefits were significantly related to her family-supportive organization perceptions ( $r=.11, p>.05$ ;  $r=.12, p>.05$ ;  $r=.08, p>.05$ , respectively). For male partners, although financial and compensation benefits and health care and wellness benefits did not significantly relate to his family-supportive organization perceptions ( $r=.01, p>.05$ ;  $r=-.04$ ,

( $p > .05$ , respectively), family-friendly benefits did significantly relate to his family-supportive organization perceptions ( $r = .17, p < .05$ ).

In Hypothesis 2, it was predicted that family-supportive organization perceptions would positively relate to psychological wellbeing for both male and female partners. At the bivariate level, this relationship was supported (males:  $r = .28, p < .01$ ; females:  $r = .37, p < .01$ ), but within the context of the model, this hypothesis was not supported for either male or female partners ( $\beta = .01, p > .05$ ;  $\beta = .15, p > .05$ , respectively).

In Hypothesis 3, work-to-family conflict was posited to partially mediate the relationship between individual family-supportive organization perceptions and individual psychological wellbeing. As predicted, family-supportive organization perceptions was negatively related to work-to-family conflict (male partners:  $\beta = -.48, p < .01$ ; female partners:  $\beta = -.51, p < .01$ ), and work-to-family conflict was negatively related to psychological wellbeing for both partners (male partners:  $\beta = -.52, p < .01$ ; female partners:  $\beta = -.30, p < .01$ ). To test the mediational portion of Hypothesis 3, maximum likelihood bootstrapping in AMOS 20 was used; further, standard errors and confidence intervals (95%) were estimated (5,000 samples were drawn). For male and female partners, this hypothesis was partially supported. Specifically, the relationship between family-supportive organization perceptions and psychological wellbeing was *fully mediated* by individual work-to-family conflict for both partners (male partners:  $.17$ ; 95% C.I.=  $.10/.29$ ; S.E.=  $.05, p < .01$ ; female partners:  $.10$ ; 95% C.I.=  $.05/.18$ ; S.E.=  $.03, p < .01$ ).

Furthermore, in Hypothesis 4, individual work-to-family conflict was proposed to mediate the relationship between individual family-supportive organization perceptions and partner psychological wellbeing. This relationship was not supported for either male partners or female partners. The indirect effect of male family-supportive organization perceptions on

female wellbeing was .05 (95% C.I.= -.01/.11; S.E.= .03,  $p > .05$ ), and the indirect effect of female family-supportive organization perceptions on male wellbeing was -.01 (95% C.I.= -.06/.05; S.E.= .03,  $p > .05$ ). Moreover, neither male nor female work-to-family conflict related to partner psychological wellbeing. Specifically, female work-to-family conflict did not relate to male psychological wellbeing ( $\beta= .04, p > .05$ ). In addition, male work-to-family conflict did not relate to female psychological wellbeing ( $\beta= .00, p > .05$ ).

In Hypothesis 5, a positive reciprocal relationship was posited to exist between partners' psychological wellbeing. This relationship was supported. As indicated by the positive relationship between the error terms associated with male and female psychological wellbeing (covariance = .05,  $p = .01$ ), there exists a positive reciprocal relationship between male and female wellbeing.

Next, in Hypothesis 6, an individual's perception of his/her partner's organization's family-supportiveness was proposed to positively relate to the partner's reported family-supportive organization perceptions. This relationship was fully supported for both male and female partners. Male perceptions of female partner's organization's family-supportiveness was positively related to female family-supportive organization perceptions ( $\beta= .40, p < .01$ ). Female perceptions of male partner's organization's family-supportiveness was positively related to male family-supportive organization perceptions ( $\beta= .42, p < .01$ ).

### **Research Question Findings**

In Research Question 1a, it was hypothesized that individual perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness moderate the positive relationship between individual family-supportive organization perceptions and individual psychological wellbeing. In order to test for the moderating effect of an individual's perception of his/her partner's organization's

family-supportiveness, the product of perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness and individual family-supportive organization perceptions was regressed onto individual psychological wellbeing in the model. Because there was not a significant relationship between the product term and individual psychological wellbeing, the proposed moderation was not supported for either male or female partners. Specifically, the product of male perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness and male family-supportive organization perceptions did not relate to male psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = .04, p > .05$ ). Moreover, the product of female perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness and female family-supportive organization perceptions did not relate to female psychological wellbeing ( $\beta = -.06, p > .05$ ).

In Research Question 1b, the previously tested moderation relationship was proposed to differ based on type of couple (i.e., traditional couples vs. contemporary egalitarian ideal couples). To test for whether the moderated relationship varied based on type of couple, the moderated relationships were set equal for traditional and egalitarian couples, and this model in which the moderated relationships were set equal across couple type was compared against the fit of the original model. The results showed no significant difference in fit between the original model and the model in which the moderated relationships were set equal across couple type. In other words, the difference between the goodness of fit of the models was compared, and setting the moderated relationships equal across couple type did not lead the model to have a worse fit than the original model ( $\Delta\chi^2(6) = 2.33, p > .05$ ). Thus, these results are indicative of no difference in the moderated relationship across couple type.

### **Additional Findings of Interest**

Building on Hypotheses 2 and 3, an indirect relationship was observed between male partner family-friendly benefits and his psychological wellbeing (.06; 95% C.I.= .01/.14; S.E.= .03,  $p = .01$ ). Additionally, an indirect relationship was observed between male partner family-friendly benefits and female partner psychological wellbeing (.02; 95% C.I.= .00/.05; S.E.= .01,  $p = .05$ ). Also, the indirect relationship between female partner financial and compensation benefits and female partner psychological wellbeing was approaching significance (.05; 95% C.I.= .00, .15; S.E.= .04,  $p = .055$ ). These indirect effects were tested via maximum likelihood bootstrapping with AMOS 20.

Building on Hypothesis 6, an indirect relationship was observed between male family-friendly benefits and female perceptions of partner's organizations family-supportiveness (.14; 95% C.I.= .03/.35; S.E.= .08,  $p = .01$ ). Additionally, an indirect relationship was observed between female financial and compensation benefits and male perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness (.12; 95% C.I.= .00/.29; S.E.= .07,  $p = .05$ ).

An additional finding of interest was the observed indirect relationship between male family-friendly benefits and male work-to-family conflict (-.16; 95% C.I.= -.35/-0.03; S.E.= .08,  $p = .01$ ). Also of interest is the finding that the indirect relationship between female partner financial and compensation benefits and female partner work-to-family conflict is approaching significance (-.14; 95% C.I.= -.31/.01; S.E. = .08,  $p = .067$ ).

### **Exploratory Analyses**

Although the specific moderated relationship did not differ across couple type as was proposed in Research Question 1b, the entire model was analyzed to see if it differed across couple type. Similar to before, the relationships for traditional couples and egalitarian couples

were set equal to each other, and fit was compared to the original model in which no differences across couple type were investigated. All paths proposed in the model were set equal across couple type, not just the posited moderated relationships. The results showed that there was a worsening of fit when the relationships were set equal across couple type as compared to the fit of the original model ( $\Delta\chi^2(20) = 44.61, p < .01$ ). The result (i.e., making the paths equal across couple type worsens the fit of the model) indicates that the model does actually vary across type of couple. Of note, mean level differences across couple type were tested for, but no differences were found (see Table 4).

Table 4 - Independent Samples T-test and Effect Size Estimates for Study Variables across

#### Couple Type

	Male Partners						Female Partners					
	Egalitarian Couple Males		Breadwinner Couple Males				Egalitarian Couple Females		Breadwinner Couple Females			
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	r	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t	r
Family-supportive organization perceptions	3.57	0.89	3.60	0.72	0.23	0.02	3.71	0.87	3.74	0.69	0.27	0.02
Work-to-family conflict	2.67	0.97	2.69	0.72	0.15	0.01	2.63	0.88	2.49	0.83	-0.99	0.08
Perceptions of partner's organization's family supportiveness	3.43	0.94	3.58	0.96	0.95	0.08	3.52	1.02	3.45	0.82	-0.43	0.04
Wellbeing	3.81	0.63	3.93	0.46	1.28	0.10	3.85	0.56	3.81	0.50	-0.40	0.03
Family-friendly benefits	1.65	0.48	1.73	0.47	1.01	0.08	1.59	0.48	1.64	0.47	0.71	0.06
Health care and wellness benefits	2.14	0.62	2.21	0.63	0.69	0.06	1.82	0.61	1.83	0.61	0.08	0.01
Financial and compensation benefits	2.08	0.52	2.11	0.57	0.31	0.03	1.85	0.49	1.82	0.47	-0.46	0.04

r = Pearson r effect size estimate. df = 148. \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01.

Some notable differences across couple type are as follows. First, for egalitarian couples, female financial and compensation benefits relates to female family-supportive organization perceptions ( $\beta = .29, p < .05$ ), but this relationship does not hold for traditional couples ( $\beta = -.11, p > .05$ ). Second, for egalitarian couples, male family-supportive organization perceptions links to female perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness ( $\beta = .56, p < .01$ ), but again, the same does not hold for traditional couples ( $\beta = .18, p > .05$ ). For egalitarian couples, male work-to-family conflict is negatively related to male wellbeing ( $\beta = -.65, p < .01$ ), but this is

not true for traditional couples ( $\beta = -.17, p > .05$ ). Additionally, for egalitarian couples, female work-to-family conflict is negatively related to female wellbeing ( $\beta = -.43, p < .01$ ), but this is not true for traditional couples ( $\beta = -.15, p > .05$ ). Moreover, for egalitarian couples, female perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness was related to female wellbeing ( $\beta = .24, p < .01$ ), but this relationship does not hold for traditional couples ( $\beta = .10, p > .05$ ).

## **DISCUSSION**

To start, with this dissertation I am able to contribute to the current work-family literature particularly regarding dual-earning couples. Specifically, because not only were mean level variations regarding benefits experiences across gender exposed, but also, the role of type of couple in experiences and perceptions of organization benefits and family-supportiveness was expounded upon. In an effort to elaborate on each of these key contributions, the following discussion is organized such that first the role of benefits is presented, then family-supportive organization perceptions and perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness are discussed, and finally the findings and contributions I offer in this dissertation regarding type of couple (i.e., traditional or egalitarian) are covered. After the discussion of the major contributions, some limitations of the present study are offered, and subsequently, final remarks are presented.

### **Organization-offered Benefits**

Although the three types of benefits did not link to family-supportive organization perceptions as expected, the observed relationships do offer some interesting insight. Specifically, family-friendly benefits, financial and compensation benefits, and health care and wellness benefits were each posited to be positively related to family-supportive organization perceptions, and family-friendly benefits was posited to have the strongest link to family-supportive organization perceptions (see Allen, 2001). For males, only family-friendly benefits related to family-supportive organization perceptions, and for females, none of the relationships held true in the overall model, but for females in egalitarian couples, financial and compensation benefits related to family-supportive organization perceptions. These findings regarding the drivers of family-supportive organization perceptions are particularly interesting given the on-

going debates about whether use or availability of benefits should be the focus of study (see Butts, Casper, & Yang, 2013; Lapierre & Allen, 2006), and past research showing that family-friendly benefits link to family-supportive organization perceptions (Allen, 2001).

With regard to the issue of whether availability or use of benefits should be the focus of investigation, the results of the present study may lead one to believe that although benefits play a role in whether an individual will report family-supportive organization perceptions, benefits are not likely the panacea for all family-friendly related concerns. As such, the debate about use or availability is potentially too narrow and does not necessarily direct organizations and researchers to what they should be concerned with regarding family-supportive organization perceptions. More to the point, the findings of this study support that if an organization wants to increase its family-supportiveness, benefits are a good start. Specifically, for males, family-friendly benefits were positively related to family-supportive organization perceptions, and additionally, benefits indirectly related to wellbeing and experiences of work-to-family for many participants through family-supportive organization perceptions. Nevertheless, it seems there is more to the puzzle, because for some participants, particularly the female members of the male breadwinner couples, benefits did not directly or indirectly relate to any investigated outcomes. Now, that said, this study is limited in what can be ascertained regarding the other drivers of family-supportive organization perceptions, but I would encourage future researchers to answer this call and explore other avenues.

Concerning past research which argues that family-supportive organization perceptions is driven in part by family-friendly benefits (Allen, 2001), the findings of this dissertation that this relationship is true only for males is useful for researchers and organizations alike. Specifically, the notion that gender may play a role in how individuals perceive and utilize the different types

of benefits has not been a focus of research on family-supportive organization perceptions. Nevertheless, this finding is of interest in that previously, employers might anticipate that employees do not have preferences for specific benefits so long as benefits are available, and that no distinction is necessary regarding gender differences, but that may no longer be the case. Of note, some may argue that the reason family-friendly benefits links to family-supportive organization perceptions for men only is because men more often than women have higher paying jobs and jobs that provide them with more benefits (Hegewisch, Williams, & Henderson, 2011), thus leading to increased family-supportive organization perceptions. Given that the earning gap between men and women is narrowing (Hegewisch et al., 2011) combined with the fact that in this study there was not a mean level difference between men and women regarding family-friendly benefits reported, the possibility remains that men and women do perceive and use benefits differently. Employers should consider this possibility when crafting their benefits offering programs in an effort to better meet the needs of all employees.

As an aside, the finding that male family-friendly benefits related to family-supportive organization perceptions is in line with the arguments posed under the new male mystique in that according to Aumann, Galinsky, and Matos (2011) males are experiencing increasing levels of work-family conflict. Mainly, it makes conceptual sense that family-friendly benefits link to male family-supportive organization perceptions, because males are becoming more aware of the demands that both work and family can place on an individual (i.e., the new male mystique). As such, it follows that males are also more sensitive to and receptive of benefits that are designed specifically to meet family needs.

Another way of interpreting the finding that only male family-friendly benefits related to family-supportive organization perceptions is in light of the recent findings of Brescoll, Glass,

and Sedlovskaya (2013). Brescoll et al. found that managers were more willing to grant flextime (a family-friendly benefit) to male employees as opposed to female employees. One explanation for this relationship that was offered is that managers viewed a woman asking for flextime as allowing her family life to take over her work role, and males were viewed as trying to be more dedicated to their careers. This type of differential treatment based on gender is likely apparent to female employees, and as such, females are less likely to take advantage of policies such as flextime, thus adding support for the findings in the present study that family-friendly benefits linked to family-supportive organization perceptions for males, but did not for females.

Of note, although family-friendly benefits did not link to family-supportive organization perceptions for females, for women in egalitarian couples financial and compensation benefits related to family-supportive organization perceptions, but this too makes conceptual sense. Historically, females are the primary caretakers of the home and children (Roehling & Moen, 2003; see also Kitterød & Lappégård, 2012; Moen & Yu, 2000; Raley et al., 2006), but in recent times, women are more and more becoming members of the workforce. One could argue that women are working in part to gain money for the family unit to better attend to the needs of the family and children, in lieu of staying at home. Thus, it follows that women view financial and compensation benefits as indicators of family-supportiveness. Females in egalitarian couples are likely to focus on financial and compensation offerings from their employer as a means to attend to their family responsibilities, and any employer that facilitates this by offering more financial and compensation benefits would subsequently be viewed as more family-supportive. In sum, as mentioned, in order for employers to best meet the needs of their employees, they need to recognize the findings in this dissertation that not all employees respond to the same offerings,

and consideration of these differences could equate to increased family-supportive organization perceptions.

Aside from the links found between benefits and family-supportive organization perceptions, male family-friendly benefits were determined to be indirectly related to both male and female wellbeing, such that increased male family-friendly benefits was related to increased male and female wellbeing. This finding is a major contribution to both the benefits literature as well as the crossover literature. Specifically, benefits offerings has long been found to aid the individual experiencing the benefit (Butts et al., 2013), but the crossover of male benefits to female wellbeing adds additional substance to the finding that benefits offerings can help the individual. Mainly by crossing-over and aiding the partners as well as the individuals, family-friendly benefits can facilitate the formation of stronger, more stable family units for employees, and consequently, this strong family foundation can ultimately lead to more dependable employees (see Matthews et al., 2006; Wayne et al., 2013).

### **Family-supportive Organization Perceptions as an Antecedent**

At the intraindividual level, family-supportive organization perceptions was found to relate to individual psychological wellbeing via the mediator of work-to-family conflict. Although this finding is more confirmatory in nature than novel, these results are an answer to the call in work-family literature for more complex analyses, specifically examination of processes such as mediation (Casper et al., 2007). Furthermore, this finding is also an extension of the findings of Booth and Matthews (2012) who found that family-supportive organization perceptions is related to work-to-family conflict via work overload. In this dissertation, the next step in that set of relationships is offered and supported, and given the current call for links to tangible outcomes, this result is particularly valuable (Casper et al., 2007).

In addition to the intraindividual relationships examined, family-supportive organization perceptions were also posited to relate to partner psychological wellbeing via individual work-to-family conflict, but this mediational relationship was not supported for either males or females. Although this is not ideal, this lack of an interindividual relationship across partners is informative from the perspective that as a field, we are constantly trying to understand gender differences, but have yet to be completely successful (Casper et al., 2007; Eby et al., 2005). These findings serve as another clue in deciphering the riddle of gender differences, and thus are an excellent addition to that body of research.

Regarding an individual's perception of his/her partner's organization's family-supportiveness, individual family-supportive organization perceptions were shown to strongly relate to partner perceptions of the individual's organization's family-supportiveness. This finding adds to the literature on crossover (e.g., Westman, 2001). More specifically though, this relationship extends the partner perceptions literature (e.g., Kenny & Acitelli, 2001) by supplying more support for the proposition that partners are able to accurately perceive their partners and their partner's experiences.

Perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness was hypothesized to moderate the relationship between individual family-supportive organization perceptions and individual psychological wellbeing, but this relationship did not hold true for males or females. That said, this moderation relationship was further posited to function differentially for traditional couples and for egalitarian couples, but again, this set of relationships also failed. Although the original hypothesized relationships were not supported in the model, there were some very interesting findings regarding differences across couple type. As such, those differences are elaborated next.

### **Type of Couple**

Although the moderation relationship that was posited to differ across couple type (i.e., Research Question 1b) did not vary by couple, the entire model did vary based on couple type. Some interesting findings regarding this difference include the result that for egalitarian couples (and not traditional couples), male family-supportive organization perceptions linked to female perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness. This differential relationship between egalitarian and traditional couples is a valuable contribution to the partner perception literature, because this finding is evidence that success in perceiving one's partner's experiences is in part dependent upon couple type. More to the point, females in egalitarian couples were more successful in identifying their partner's work experiences than were females in traditional couples. A potential explanation for this relationship stems from the similarity component of the partner perception literature such that individual's that perceive themselves to be similar to their partner are able to accurately describe their partner's experiences (Kenny & Acitelli, 2001). Further, it follows that a female in an egalitarian couple would be more similar to her partner, because both partners are contributing equally to the couple unit, as opposed to the female partners in the traditional couples who are not the breadwinners and thus, are not likely to experience the same level of work demand that their male partners do.

Finally, the finding that male work-to-family conflict negatively related to male wellbeing for only egalitarian couples is particularly intriguing. Specifically this finding that only egalitarian males, not traditional breadwinner males, experience negative repercussions in the form of lower levels of wellbeing for having work-to-family conflict is additional support for the offered differences between egalitarian and traditional couples, despite the fact that egalitarian and traditional males did not report differing levels of work-to-family conflict.

Mainly, members of egalitarian couples by definition view themselves as equal contributors to the couple/family both financially and with regard to attending to the needs of the family (Kendall, 2007; Moen & Yu, 2000). Further, when an egalitarian male experiences work-to-family conflict, it follows that this inability to appropriately attend to the family domain on account of work demands will link to lower wellbeing, because the egalitarian male is struggling to meet all of his responsibilities. A traditional couple male, conversely, would not be expected to have these negative experiences on account of work interfering with his family life, because traditional couple males do not view the family responsibilities as theirs, but rather those of their partner. In sum, these findings regarding differences across couple type are a major contribution of this dissertation because they serve as encouragement to future researchers to delve further into the role of couple type on relationships between dual-earners, which to this point has been relatively unresearched particularly in the work-family area.

### **Theoretical Contributions**

With this dissertation, I am able to extend the research supporting several theories. First, Hobfoll et al.'s (1990) social support resource theory is supported such that, I found that benefits via family-supportive organization perceptions (a form of social support; see Lapierre, 2008), did in fact link to increased wellbeing for the individual who reported the benefit, as well as for the partners of some of those individuals. Specifically, having more support resources available linked to decreased individual stressors and negative experiences. Further, the significant crossover of the positive experiences associated with an individual's benefits to his/her partner is in direct support of crossover theory (Westman & Vinokur, 1998). In particular, with these findings, I am able to add support for Bakker et al.'s (2009b) spillover-crossover model in which an individual's work experiences are posited to spillover to the family domain, and subsequently

crossover to affect the partner. Additionally, Bakker et al. argued that we should focus on positive experiences associated with work spilling-over to the family domain and subsequently crossing-over to the partner as opposed to focusing on only negative experiences spilling-over. In this study, I was able to successfully answer this call by showing that positive experiences (i.e., benefits via family-supportive organization perceptions) follow the spillover-crossover model.

Although I was not able to show support for Festinger's social comparison theory (1954) or Adams's equity theory (1963, 1965) due to the fact that the moderation effects that these theories were linked to were not significant, I would caution future researchers to not simply ignore these theories as potential explanations. Mainly, in the model, family-supportive organization perceptions did not significantly link to individual wellbeing for either men or women. As such, it was unlikely that perceptions of partner's organization's family supportiveness was going to successfully moderate this relationship. Thus, I would encourage future researchers to continue to consider the effects of social comparison on the way an individual perceives their own circumstances, because I do not believe that I was able to fully discount that perspective with this dissertation.

### **Future Research**

Throughout this discussion, I have mentioned several possible avenues for future research. Specifically, I encourage future researchers to further explore what other drivers there are of family-supportive organization perceptions, aside from strictly looking at the role of benefits. Additionally, given the novel findings regarding differences across couple type, I encourage work-family researchers to try to incorporate couple type into their studies in an attempt to tease apart the effects of couple type. In addition to these future research recommendations and the others made throughout, I also argue that future researchers need to

consider the effects of these findings at the organization level. In work-family, we often struggle with linking our findings to organization-level outcomes (Casper et al., 2005) such as productivity and turnover, but I urge future researchers to consider this path. Because the number of dual-earning couples is on the rise in the U.S. (Matos & Galinsky, 2012), the effects of individuals on their partners and their partners' work lives is a valid research vein, but more than that, if we as a research community can link individual experiences to partner work outcomes, we could open the door for a discussion of large scale, cross-organization endeavors to meet the needs of our populace. Mainly, more research supporting that individual work experiences affect partner work outcomes would ideally serve as fuel to encourage a community and nationwide endeavor to educate employers and employees on ways to attend to the needs of not just the employees, but the employees' families, because employees and employers alike would benefit.

Some beginning steps toward these large-scale endeavors include future research on the role of family-supportive supervisor behaviors in promoting an individual and his/her partner to view the individual's employer as family-supportive. Past researchers have shown that family-supportive supervisor behaviors (i.e., behaviors of supervisors that directly support subordinates' family lives) relate to outcomes such as turnover intentions, job satisfaction, and stress (Hammer et al., 2013). Additionally, the role of family-supportive supervisor behaviors across couple type would be an interesting area of research. Arguably, family-supportive supervisor behaviors would be more strongly felt by members of egalitarian dual-earner couples than traditional. In egalitarian dual-earner couples, both members of the couple work and both contribute equally to the family domain (Kendall, 2007). Thus, it follows that having supervisors who are supportive of one's family domain would be crucial to work-family management. More specifically, in traditional dual-earner couples, the breadwinner would not necessarily need an extremely family-

supportive supervisor, because the breadwinner has a partner who is typically going to attend to the family domain, thus leaving the breadwinner free of that demand on his/her time.

As one final future research idea, I strongly encourage future researchers to ascertain the effects of type of breadwinner within the larger discussion of types of dual-earner couples. In this dissertation, I was unable to explore the differences between female breadwinner dual-earner couples and male breadwinner dual-earner couples due to having too few female breadwinner couples in my sample. That said though, this area of research is becoming more and more a necessity in part because findings have shown that in roughly 13% of families, the male is the primary caregiver of the children (Day & Lamb, 2004; Halford, 2006; Parke, 2004). Although it is likely that in many of these families, the male partner does not work outside of the home for pay, the possibility remains that he does, thus creating an increasing number female breadwinner dual-earning couples.

### **Limitations**

Although I am able to offer many contributions to the body of work-family literature specifically focused on dual-earner couples with this dissertation, there are some limitations that need to be addressed. To start, this study was completed via a self-report methodology, and was cross-sectional in design. Despite the issue of common method bias associated with the use of self-report measures (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), in this particular study, self-report measures were a necessity (see Lance, Dawson, Birklebach, & Hoffman, 2010). Specifically, in this dissertation I focused predominately on the effect of an individual's perceptions on both himself and his partner. Thus, there was no alternative to using a self-report methodology to answer the questions proposed. In addition to the issue of using a self-report methodology, the area of work-family is moving toward completing more studies with a

longitudinal design (Casper et al., 2007), but this study is not longitudinal. That said however, in the work-family area along with the call for more longitudinal studies, there is a call for studies utilizing more complex designs and offering more intricate relationships (e.g., mediation and moderation; Casper et al., 2007), and I answer this call with this dissertation. I utilized both mediation and moderation, and I assessed the results via path analysis in AMOS.

In addition to these limitations, some of the internal consistency reliability estimates in this study did not meet the standard of .70 (Nunnally, 1978). With regard to the benefits measures that did not meet the exact standard, this was actually anticipated. The benefits measures are designed to include the entire construct domain (i.e., be content valid) in as few items as possible (see Burisch, 1984 on the benefits of shorter measures), and when that is the case, occasionally some internal consistency is sacrificed due to the domain being very wide (see Tavakol & Dennick, 2011 on internal consistency). Additionally, concerning the work-to-family measure that did not meet the .70 standard, this too was anticipated. Because the work-to-family conflict measure is a three-item measure, and each item is designed to assess a different pressure that makes up the construct domain (Matthews et al., 2010), the internal consistency estimate for the measure is understandably going to be a bit lower than the norm.

Another limitation of this dissertation is that majority of the sample are Caucasian couples making more than \$75,000 per year combined. The issue with this is that these characteristics of the sample limit the generalizability of the results to other dual-earner couples. That said, I would note that couple income was controlled for in the model, such that any significant relationships between variables are able to be argued to be independent of household income. Nevertheless, I would encourage future researchers to utilize other demographics to determine if these relationships are consistent across racial and cultural bounds.

Finally, the same measure was used for female and male family-supportive organization perceptions, in addition to that the family-supportive organization perceptions measure was adapted to be used to assess male and female perceptions of partner's organization's family-supportiveness. This issue again brings up concerns of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), but according to Lance et al. (2010), this is not likely a big problem. Specifically, Lance and colleagues noted that although the use of similar measures can result in inflated relationships between variables, the simultaneous increase in measurement error due to using the same measure offsets any benefit gained, thus making the use of similar measures a relative non-issue.

## CONCLUSIONS

With this dissertation I offer several contributions to the body of work-family literature. Specifically, in this dissertation, the effect of benefits offered by an employer are investigated, and the effect on the individual employee and his/her partner is illuminated. Further, via this study, I am able to add to the crossover literature, because individual experiences were shown to crossover to effect partner experiences. Moreover, the process, or path, that this crossover takes and antecedents of this process are offered and explored. In addition to expanding current research veins, this dissertation serves as the beginning of a new research vein in work-family research. Mainly, the differential relationships that were examined regarding couple type are a profound next step for research on dual-earners. Although I potentially raised more questions than I answered concerning couple type, the fact stands that with this dissertation I showed that couple type is a worthwhile research endeavor, and future researchers ought to explore the issue more. Finally, this dissertation has practical application in that although the benefits did not relate as strongly to family-supportive organization perceptions as anticipated, these findings are support for the notion that practitioners need to be cautious of placing too much emphasis on simply supplying their employees with benefits and allowing them to use them in an effort to be more family-supportive. Benefits are start, but as previously mentioned, they do not seem to be the panacea for everything, and employers should challenge themselves to seek alternative means to be family supportive aside from simply making benefits available and encouraging employee use.

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## APPENDIX

### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

#### Application for Exemption from Institutional Oversight

Unless qualified as meeting the specific criteria for exemption from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight, ALL LSU research/projects using living humans as subjects, or samples, or data obtained from humans, directly or indirectly, with or without their consent, must be approved or exempted in advance by the LSU IRB. This Form helps the PI determine if a project may be exempted, and is used to request an exemption.

- Applicant, Please fill out the application in its entirety and include the completed application as well as parts A-F, listed below, when submitting to the IRB. Once the application is completed, please submit two copies of the completed application to the IRB Office or to a member of the Human Subjects Screening Committee. Members of this committee can be found at <http://research.lsu.edu/CompliancePoliciesProcedures/InstitutionalReviewBoard%28IRB%29/Item24737.html>

- A Complete Application Includes All of the Following:
  - (A) Two copies of this completed form and two copies of parts B thru F.
  - (B) A brief project description [adequate to evaluate risks to subjects and to explain your responses to Parts 1&2]
  - (C) Copies of all instruments to be used.
  - \*If this proposal is part of a grant proposal, include a copy of the proposal and all recruitment material.
  - (D) The consent form that you will use in the study (see part 3 for more information.)
  - (E) Certificate of Completion of Human Subjects Protection Training for all personnel involved in the project, including students who are involved with testing or handling data, unless already on file with the IRB. Training link: (<http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>)
  - (F) IRB Security of Data Agreement: (<http://research.lsu.edu/files/item26774.pdf>)



Institutional Review Board  
Dr. Robert Mathews, Chair  
131 David Boyd Hall  
Baton Rouge, LA 70803  
P: 225.578.8092  
F: 225.578.5983  
[irb@lsu.edu](mailto:irb@lsu.edu)  
[lsu.edu/irb](http://lsu.edu/irb)

1) Principal Investigator: <input type="text" value="Suzanne M. Booth"/>	Rank: <input type="text" value="Graduate Student"/>
Dept: <input type="text" value="Psychology"/>	Ph: <input type="text" value="337-304-3023"/>
E-mail: <input type="text" value="sbooth5@tigers.lsu.edu"/>	
2) Co Investigator(s): please include department, rank, phone and e-mail for each <small>*If student, please identify and name supervising professor in this space</small> <input style="height: 100px; width: 100%;" type="text"/>	
<small>IRB# E8194 LSU Proposal # _____</small> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Complete Application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Human Subjects Training	
3) Project Title:	Organization benefits - the panacea for all that ails you? A dyadic, dual-earner investigation of organization-offered benefits and their effect on individuals and their partners
4) Proposal? (yes or no)	<input type="checkbox"/> No      If Yes, LSU Proposal Number <input type="text"/>
Also, if YES, either <input type="radio"/> This application completely matches the scope of work in the grant OR <input type="radio"/> More IRB Applications will be filed later	
5) Subject pool (e.g. Psychology students)	Cohabiting, working adults (18 years of age and older) <small>*Circle any "vulnerable populations" to be used: (children &lt;18; the mentally impaired, pregnant women, the ages, other). Projects with incarcerated persons cannot be exempted.</small>
6) PI Signature	<span style="margin-left: 10px;">Date</span> <span style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px;"><i>3/15/13</i></span> <span style="margin-left: 10px;">(no per signatures)</span>
** I certify my responses are accurate and complete. If the project scope or design is later changes, I will resubmit for review. I will obtain written approval from the Authorized Representative of all non-LSU institutions in which the study is conducted. I also understand that it is my responsibility to maintain copies of all consent forms at LSU for three years after completion of the study. If I leave LSU before that time the consent forms should be preserved in the Departmental Office.	
Screening Committee Action: Exempted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not Exempted <input type="checkbox"/> Category/Paragraph <u>2</u>	
Signed Consent Waived?: Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Reviewer <u>Mathews</u> Signature <span style="margin-left: 10px;">Date <u>3/19/13</u></span>	

## VITA

Suzanne M. Booth-LeDoux is a native of Lake Charles, Louisiana. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in psychology with a minor in sociology from McNeese State University in December 2008. Suzanne earned a Master of Arts degree in psychology from Louisiana State University in May 2011. Her research pursuits include research on social support, occupational health, and the work-family interface particularly with regard to dual-earning couples. She resides in Baton Rouge, Louisiana with her husband Jared LeDoux and her two stepsons, Cameron and Carson. Suzanne is a member of the psychology department faculty at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana.