

The Moderating Effect of Work-Linked Couple Relationships and Work–Family Integration on the Spouse Instrumental Support-Emotional Exhaustion Relationship

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Based on boundary theory and conservation of resources theory, we argue that employees with a spouse in the same occupation or workplace (referred to as work-linked couples) enhance the effectiveness of spousal instrumental support in reducing emotional exhaustion. In the first study of nurses ($n = 103$), we found that work-linked couples have more highly integrated work and family roles than participants whose spouses did not share an occupation or workplace. In a second study of working adults ($n = 484$), we found that work-linked couples have a stronger relationship between spouse instrumental support and the reduction of emotional exhaustion; this moderated relationship was mediated by their work–family integration. We discuss the implications of these findings for the study of work and family roles, social support, and emotional exhaustion, and provide suggestions for future research.

Keywords: work–family integration, social support, emotional exhaustion, spouse support

The seminal research by Hall and Hall (1979) examined the “two-career couple” and how to manage life when the woman enters the workforce. In the three decades since their work, research examining the links between work and family among dual-career employees has flourished (e.g., Carlson & Grzywacz, 2008; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2007; Janning, 2006; Kossek, Lautsch & Eaton, 2005; Voyten, 2008), especially in the stress and burnout

literature (cf., Elloy & Mackie, 2003). Like all workers, as demands on both spouses in dual-career couples soar, high levels of strain emerge. Social support plays a critical role in alleviating job strains like emotional exhaustion (Carlson & Perrewé, 1999; Halbesleben, 2006). Spouse support is particularly important for dual-career employees because it has been associated with outcomes, such as well being, family satisfaction, and less work–family conflict (e.g., Aryee, Luk, Leung, & Lo, 1999; Aycan & Eskin, 2005; Parasuraman, Greenhaus, & Granrose, 1992; Saleh et al., 2007).

As the number of dual-career couples has increased (Gilbert, 1993), researchers have given greater attention to the influence of the nature of work done by one’s spouse (Janning, 2006). Interest has developed in a subset of dual-career employees that work in the same occupation or the same organization as their spouse (cf., Marshack, 1994; Moen & Sweet, 2002; Wood & Duck, 1995) and how their experiences differ from those who do not share a workplace or occupation with their spouse. In the literature, employees in this type of relationship have been referred to as married coworkers (Janning, 2006), copreneurs (Marshack, 1994), coworking cou-

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ples (Moen & Sweet, 2002), and same-career couples (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2007; Halbesleben & Zellars, 2006). With each of these labels, the authors were referring to sharing both workplaces and occupations; however, these terms do not seem to capture both situations (e.g., the terms married coworkers and coworking couples put the focus on sharing a workplace). As a result, we refer to those in this situation as work-linked couples. The idea of work linkages with families is consistent with the work on work-family linkages discussed by Edwards and Rothbard (2000) as it focuses attention on how work serves as a link between family and work roles for couples. Work-linked couples can be linked by their work in one of three ways: sharing only an occupation (e.g., both are nurses but at different hospitals), sharing only a workplace (e.g., both work at the same hospital, but one as a nurse and one as a sonographer), or sharing both an occupation and a workplace (e.g., both are nurses at the same hospital).

While the literature concerning work-linked couples is relatively new, some interesting patterns have emerged. Taking a sociological perspective, Janning (1999, 2006; Janning & Neely, 2006) has examined the work-family integration of work-linked couples and the extent to which the work role and family role are indistinguishable. It is suggested that work-linked couples have more integrated roles and are in a better position to be supportive of each other's work endeavors. Her qualitative study (Janning & Neely, 2006) of 26 married couples found that spouses who worked in the same workplace had more conversations about work while at home. In a similar vein, Moen and Sweet (2002) found high levels of spillover (both positive and negative) between work and family roles in couples who worked for the same company; they interpret this finding as meaning that the boundary between work and family is highly integrated for work-linked couples. It is interesting to note that while the different forms of work linkages are conceptually different (e.g., Janning, 2006, has noted that sharing a workplace means sharing *physical* space whereas sharing an occupation means sharing *mental* space), the findings of these studies tend to suggest that outcomes for these couples do not differ if spouses share a workplace versus sharing an occupation; however, sharing both does seem to have added benefit (Janning, 2006).

The purpose of this research is to extend the previous research about work-linked couples by examining the impact that working in the same workplace or occupation as one's spouse has on an important resource for dealing with stress (i.e., spouse instru-

mental support) and emotional exhaustion. In examining these relationships, this paper makes two contributions to the literature on the work-family interface. First, by examining spouse workplace and occupation, we add to the limited knowledge of an understudied population in the research (work-linked couples; Janning, 2006). As more organizations adopt recruitment and selection strategies supportive of work-linked couples (Jaksic, 2008; Schiebinger, Henderson, & Gilmartin, 2008; Wolkenbreit, 1997), research on this group has important implications for managers; studies of work-linked couples' support and strain represent a first step in that direction.

Second, our study holds implications for the integration of boundary theory (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000) and conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1988, 2001) by examining the relationship between work-linked couples' resources (i.e., spouse instrumental support) and work-related strain (i.e., emotional exhaustion). From a boundary theory perspective, work-linked couples offer an opportunity to test the theory among individuals with unique boundaries between their work and family roles. The boundary theory literature has thus far supported the positive aspects of work-family integration (e.g., Kreiner, 2006). By integrating boundary theory with conservation of resources theory, we advance the literature on the work-family boundary, its impact on employee resources, and the utilization of resources across boundaries to improve work-related well-being (in the form of reduced emotional exhaustion). To that end, we develop a model for the role of spouse workplace, spouse occupation, and work-family integration in the relationship between spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion (see Figure 1).

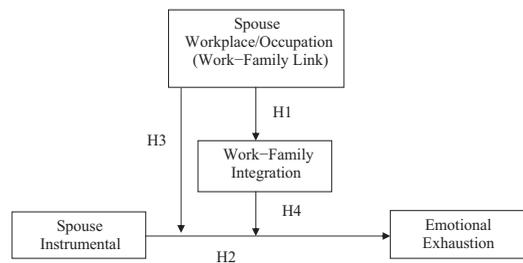


Figure 1. Conceptual model linking spouse workplace, spouse occupation, work-family integration, spouse instrumental support, and emotional exhaustion.

Theoretical Foundations

Work and Family Roles Among Work-Linked Couples: Applying Boundary Theory

Boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000) helps explain the unique work–family role boundaries of work-linked couples by focusing on the manner in which employees manage transitions between life roles. As we attempt to bring order to our roles, we create psychological boundaries, or mental fences (Nippert-Eng, 1996a; Zerubavel, 1991), to better manage the expectations and obligations of a role. The commonly studied roles of work and home (or family) are defined by the boundaries surrounding those roles (Nippert-Eng, 1996b). For example, many employees have different physical spaces defined by work (e.g., their office) and home in order to maintain a boundary between these roles. Further, many employees use time to differentiate their work and family roles (e.g., working on specific days of the week and at specific times of the day).

The nature of the boundaries surrounding roles differs depending on the person in the role (Nippert-Eng, 1996a, 1996b); for example, individuals vary in the “thickness” of their boundaries or the extent to which one role is allowed to impact another role (Hartmann, 1997). This suggests the existence of a continuum of role boundary differentiation, from segmented roles to integrated roles (Ashforth et al., 2000). Boundary theory suggests that two components of boundaries, flexibility and permeability, determine the degree of segmentation versus integration. The first, flexibility, refers to one role that can be enacted in another role (Voydanoff, 2008). In other words, if one’s work role is flexible, it may not be unusual to enact another role (e.g., family) simultaneously or to move between roles repeatedly during a day in order to meet the demands of one role while remaining in another role (Bulger, Matthews, & Hoffman, 2007). Work-linked couples may experience greater flexibility in roles, in large part because the people who appear in one role (e.g., work) also appear, either physically or psychologically, in another role (e.g., family; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2007; Janning, 2006).

Permeability of the boundary refers to the extent to which one can be “physically located in the role’s domain but psychologically and/or behaviorally involved in another role” (Ashforth et al., 2000, p. 474; see also Voydanoff, 2008). Nippert-Eng (1996a) noted that the more similar roles are, the more per-

meable the boundary between them. Thus, work-linked couples’ work–family boundaries should be more permeable because their roles are more similar and because, as Janning (1999) documented, work-linked couples have more symbolic and relational representations of a permeable boundary between work and family.

Situations of high flexibility and permeability of boundaries represent a situation of highly integrated roles (Ashforth et al., 2000). Taken together, the above arguments suggest that work-linked couples should experience higher levels of work–family role integration than couples without a work link. Thus, we expect that sharing a workplace and/or occupation contributes to the integration of the work–family boundary. Based on the findings of Janning (2006), we do not expect differences based on whether one shares a workplace or an occupation; however, we do expect those who share both a workplace and occupation to have higher integration because of even greater flexibility and permeability of roles.

Hypothesis 1a: Employees who share a workplace (but not an occupation) with their spouse will experience greater work–family role integration than employees who do not share a workplace with their spouse.

Hypothesis 1b: Employees who share an occupation (but not a workplace) with their spouse will experience greater work–family role integration than employees who do not share an occupation with their spouse.

Hypothesis 1c: Employees who share both occupation and a workplace with their spouse will experience greater work–family role integration than employees who do not share an occupation with their spouse or share only a workplace or an occupation.

Moving Resources Across Role Boundaries

According to boundary theory, when roles are highly integrated, it becomes easier to cross role boundaries. While this has often been framed negatively (e.g., the abundant research on work–family conflict; Ahrentzen, 1990; Desrochers, Hilton, & Larwood, 2005), integration of roles could also lead to positive outcomes such as work–family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974). Greenhaus and Powell (2006) define work–family enrichment as “the extent to which ex-

periences in one role improve the quality of life in the other role” (p. 73). The notion that family based resources, particularly support from family, could move across the work–family boundary with positive work-related outcomes has been widely supported in the empirical literature (cf., Adams, King, & King, 1996; Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997; Voydanoff, 2001).

According to boundary theory, this utilization or reinvestment in the other role may be difficult if the transition from roles is challenging (which is the case when roles are segmented; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Alternatively, individuals with highly integrated roles (i.e., work-linked couples) may transfer resources more easily across role boundaries (Ashforth et al., 2000; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2007).

Conservation of Resources Theory

While boundary theory helps explain the processes underlying role boundaries and the transfer of resources across boundaries, it does not necessarily explain which resources should move across boundaries or why the movement of resources across boundaries is important. For that foundation, we turn to Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1988, 1989). The central tenant of COR theory is that people are motivated to obtain and maintain resources that help them attain goals. Therefore, as individuals acquire resources, they are able to use those resources to enrich their lives. Accordingly, COR theory suggests that the threat of or actual loss of resources causes people to engage in efforts to avoid further loss (Hobfoll, 2001). A critical resource that individuals develop and acquire to ameliorate the depletion of other resources is social support (Halbesleben, 2006; Leiter, 1990). Social support involves the exchange of resources between individuals with the aim of helping the person receiving the support (van Daalen, Willemsen, & Sanders, 2006; Winnubst, 1993). In this study, we focus on instrumental support, the availability of tangible resources via other people (Beehr & Glazer, 2001).

Researchers have long realized the importance social support plays in reducing strain (Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999). Consistent with COR theory, supportive elements at work, as well as family, add to the pool of personal resources that ultimately aid the process of stress resistance (Hobfoll, 2001; Hobfoll & Freedy, 1993). Over time, support from family allows employees to meet demands and guard against further resource depletion, manifested as strain (Wright & Hobfoll, 2004).

Spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion, a form of work-related strain, is characterized by energy loss and the feeling that one’s emotional resources have been depleted (Cordes & Dougherty, 1993). Individuals are likely to experience emotional exhaustion when they feel they no longer have the necessary resources to handle the stressors confronting them (Hobfoll, 1989; Lee & Ashforth, 1996). We focus exclusively on emotional exhaustion because it is widely seen as the “core” dimension of job burnout (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Maslach, 1982; Shirom, 2003).

It is typically believed that instrumental support will impede emotional exhaustion, as it provides the resources needed to cope with stressful work events (Greenglass, Fiskebaum, & Burke, 1996; Koniarek & Dudek, 1996; Thompson, Kirk, & Brown, 2005). While there is evidence of an inverse relationship between the broader concept of family support and emotional exhaustion (Halbesleben, 2006; Lapierre & Allen, 2006), spouse instrumental support has not received a great deal of empirical attention (Aryee et al., 1999).

We argue that spouse instrumental support, as a resource, will be negatively associated with emotional exhaustion. There has not been a great deal of empirical attention given to the role that spouse instrumental support plays in reducing emotional exhaustion; however, such a relationship is consistent with the notion of resource enrichment across roles, whereby resources from one domain (family) help to address issues in another domain (work) (cf., Rothbard, 2001; see also Barnett & Hyde, 2001). While not a direct test of the proposed spouse instrumental support-emotional exhaustion relationship, Neal and Hammer (2007) reported that for employees caring for children and their aging parents, the quality of the spousal role was a significant predictor of work-related well-being, even more than quality of work role. This finding and the enrichment perspective of roles suggest that spouse instrumental support should help reduce emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesis 2: Spouse instrumental support will be negatively associated with emotional exhaustion.

Work-Linked Couples and Spouse Instrumental Support

Silberstein (1992) has noted that spouses in the same field speak positively of spouse support and the benefits arising from “understanding each other’s

work and from the camaraderie that comes from shared professional interests” (p. 83). This suggests that working with one’s spouse, either linked through the same workplace or occupation, may increase the effectiveness of spouse instrumental support by attenuating the negative relationship between spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion.

Spouse instrumental support reflects assistance that is task-focused (Brown, Westbrook, & Challengalla, 2005). Examples of spouse instrumental support include assistance by running errands or taking on additional responsibilities for one’s spouse. Spouse instrumental support is relevant to the current study because it is most likely to differ based on whether an employee works in the same workplace or occupation as his or her spouse. COR theory argues the relevance of the support in addressing the source of strain is important. Resources only hold value if they can be utilized appropriately (Hobfoll, 1998). One might imagine a situation of having countless riches, only in the wrong currency. In order for spouse instrumental support to truly be effective in addressing stressors (and thus, lower strains such as emotional exhaustion), it must fit with the employee’s context (Himle, 1991; Podsakoff, Todor, & Schuler, 1983).

Work-linked couples are in a better position to provide spouse instrumental support because they may have a better understanding for their spouses’ demands at work due to greater familiarity with the challenges the spouse is facing. Work-linked couples are likely to have a deeper appreciation of the work component of their spouse’s life and, therefore, may be able to offer more useful spouse instrumental support. In particular, work-linked couples may be more adept at helping each other with task-related activities and technical advice, including activities at home. Someone working at the same organization as his or her spouse may understand that a specific time of year is particularly busy for his or her spouse and offer more assistance at home during this period, allowing the spouse to focus more on work. Therefore, the spouse instrumental support that is developed by work-linked couples is likely to be more relevant and, thus, more effective than in couples without a work link in addressing work demands and reducing strain (even if the help occurs in the home; Sieber, 1974).

We will note that at this point in our hypothesis development, we are no longer considering the combined effects of sharing both the same workplace and same occupation. We have taken this approach for three reasons. First, while there is literature to sup-

port the idea that outcomes may differ when both workplace and occupation are shared (as opposed to only sharing workplace or occupation; Janning, 2006), there is nothing in the literature to suggest that the combination of workplace and occupation should impact the relationship between other variables. Second, by not combining the two work-links, we are in a better position to empirically determine the unique effect of each type of work-link. Combining the work links would make it more difficult to interpret the individual impact of sharing a workplace versus sharing an occupation. Finally, our findings indicate that the combination of same workplace and same occupation do not lead to higher work-family integration and, thus, do not seem to actually impact the variables in the study in a unique manner.

Hypothesis 3a: Working in the same workplace (but not the same occupation) will moderate the relationship between spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion such that the relationship between spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion will be stronger among those who share a workplace.

Hypothesis 3b: Working in the same occupation (but not the same workplace) will moderate the relationship between spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion such that the relationship between spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion will be stronger among those who share an occupation.

The Role of Work-Family Integration

The argument we propose thus far suggests that the relationship between spouse instrumental support and exhaustion should be moderated by working in the same workplace or occupation as one’s spouse, where the negative relationship between spouse instrumental support and exhaustion is greater for work-linked couples. This reasoning was built largely on the assumption that work-linked couples would have more integrated roles than those who do not share a workplace or occupation with their spouse. Thus, if we combine the logic linking spouse occupation and workplace with spouse instrumental support and exhaustion with the logic leading to Hypothesis 1 (linking sharing an occupation and/or workplace with one’s spouse and its impact on work-family integration), it would suggest that work-family integration is the process by which sharing a workplace or occupation impacts the spouse instru-

mental support-emotional exhaustion relationship. In other words, while sharing an occupation or workplace with one's spouse moderates the spouse instrumental support-emotional exhaustion relationship, moderated effect occurs because work-linked couples tend to have more integrated work and family roles.

As discussed earlier, boundary theory and conservation of resources theory predict that high levels of work-family integration allow support resources to transfer from family to work (Ashforth et al., 2000; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974). This suggests that because it will be easier to obtain resources from the family role to be utilized in the work role, the negative relationship between spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion should be enhanced among those with high work-family integration. Thus, we expect that work-family integration moderates the relationship between spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesis 4: Work-family integration moderates the relationship between spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion such that high levels of work-family integration enhance the negative relationship between spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion.

Taken together, these hypotheses suggest a mediated moderation model (see Figure 1). As argued earlier, work-linked couples will experience greater work-family integration (H1a, 1b, and 1c) than couples without a work link. We expect both sharing a workplace or occupation with one's spouse (H3a and H3b) and work-family integration (H4) will moderate the relationship between spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion; however, we believe that the moderation effect of sharing a workplace or occupation with one's spouse works through (or is the result of) the higher level of work-family integration found in work-linked couples (H1a and H1b). Thus, based on theory as well as our prior hypotheses, we propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 5: The moderating effect of working in the same workplace or occupation with one's spouse (H3a, H3b) on the spouse instrumental support-emotional exhaustion relationship will be mediated by the effect of work-family integration (H4).

We tested the model in two studies. In Study 1, we provide an exploratory test of Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and

1c, establishing a relationship between spouse workplace and occupation and work-family integration among a sample of nurses. In Study 2, we provide a full test of the model using data from participants in a variety of work settings using two data collection points. We present the method and results from each study and then integrate them in the discussion section.

Study 1: Method

Participants and Procedure

The participants were 103 registered nurses from a 116-bed community hospital in the Midwestern United States. The sample included 89 women and 14 men. They had an average organizational tenure of 9.38 years ($SD = 7.35$) and an average age of 41.12 years ($SD = 9.94$). Most were of Caucasian descent (69%). A slight majority (52%) had children living at home. Comparison with the demographic make-up of the organization suggests that the sample is highly consistent with the organization's nurse population (e.g., no significant differences in gender, age, tenure, and race).

Paper surveys were distributed in employees' mailboxes; upon completion, they were returned directly to the first author via business reply mail. One hundred fifty surveys were distributed and 103 complete surveys from married participants were returned for a final response rate of 69%.

Measures

Spouse workplace and occupation. We asked each married participant about the workplace and occupation of their spouse. Options included "Does not work outside the home," "Works in the same occupation as you, in the same company as you," "Works in the same occupation as you, in a different company as you," "Works in a different occupation from you, but in the same company as you," "Works in a different occupation from you, and in a different company as you" allowing us to differentiate between spouses that worked in the same or different occupation and the same or different workplace. Of the 103 participants, 20 (19%) indicated that they worked in the same occupation and same company as their spouse; 15 (15%) indicated they worked in the same occupation but in a different company; and 16 (15%) indicated they work in a different occupation but in the same company as their spouse. The remaining 52 participants were categorized as not having a

work link; their spouse worked but in a different occupation and different company.

In this study, we test the main effects of both same-occupation and same-workplace situations. While previous theoretical work has not been clear regarding whether differences in these forms of married coworker arrangements should be expected, analyzing them separately is consistent with past research (Janning, 2006, 2009) and is appropriate for emerging research. Thus, in the analysis, we coded the participants to contrast *same occupation* (1) versus *different occupation or different workplace* (0). We also coded each participant for *same workplace* (1) versus *different workplace or different occupation* (0).

Work-family integration. Work-family integration was measured using the Work-Family Integration-Blurring Scale (WFIBS) of Desrochers et al. (2005). It is a three-item scale (e.g., “It is often difficult to tell where my work life ends and my family life begins”). We adapted one item slightly; specifically “In my life, there is a clear boundary between my career and my role as a parent” was adapted to read “In my life, there is a clear boundary between my career and my family role” since it was assumed that not all participants would be parents. Participants indicated their agreement with each item on a five-point, Likert-type scale from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5). Higher scores indicated higher integration of the work-family role boundary. Desrochers et al. (2005) reported adequate internal consistency of the scale (.73) and evidence for the construct validity of the scale, finding that it was significantly correlated with measures of work-family conflict, hours worked, distractions while working at home, and work-family transitions. In the present study, the internal consistency reliability coefficient (Cronbach’s alpha) was .76.

Control variables. Following the design of Desrochers et al. (2005), we controlled for gender, age, children at home, and hours worked per week.

Study 1: Results

The mean levels of work-family integration by married coworker groups are reported in Table 1 (because the control variables were not significantly related to work-family integration in our study, we report nonadjusted means). We tested Hypothesis 1 using a general linear modeling approach where we dummy coded spouse workplace (0 = *different workplace and occupation*; 1 = *same workplace*) and spouse occupation (0 = *different occupation and*

Table 1
Mean (Standard Deviation) Levels of Work-Family Integration by Spouse Workplace and Occupation

	Same workplace	Different workplace
Same occupation	4.49 (.84) N = 20	3.86 (.58) N = 15
Different occupation	4.09 (.49) N = 16	2.62 (.51) N = 52

occupation; 1 = *same occupation*). We compared the same workplace and same occupation with the group that did not share either workplace or occupation. This was done in order to truly compare the effect of married coworker situations to situations where there is no overlap in either occupation or workplace. After entering control variables in step 1, we entered the main effects of spouse workplace and spouse occupation in the second step (see Table 2). We found a significant main effect for spouse workplace ($\beta = .52, p < .01$), suggesting that those participants who share a workplace with their spouse experience significantly greater work-family integration. Similarly, we found a significant main effect for spouse occupation ($\beta = .46, p < .01$), suggesting that those participants who share an occupation with their spouse experience significantly greater work-family integration (see Table 2).

In step 3 of the analysis, we examined the two-way interaction between spouse occupation and spouse workplace on work-family integration. This test examined the potential interaction effect between spouse occupation and spouse workplace such that sharing both would yield a unique, interactive effect beyond the main effects of each. That interaction was not significant ($\beta = .10, ns$) and adding the interaction led to a nonsignificant increase in R^2 (see Table 2). Thus, Hypothesis 1c was not supported.

These findings support Hypothesis 1a and 1b that sharing a workplace or occupation with one’s spouse is associated with greater work-family boundary integration compared to not sharing either a workplace or occupation. Hypothesis 1c was not supported, suggesting that it is the existence of a link that is associated with higher work-family integration but not necessarily the number of links (e.g., two links, work and occupation, is not necessarily better than just one link). With the links between spouse workplace, spouse occupation, and work-family integration established, we tested the full mediated moderation model from Figure 1 in Study 2.

Table 2
Study 1 Multiple Regression Results: Spouse Workplace and Spouse Occupation as Predictors of Work–Family Integration

	Step 1		Step 2		Step 3	
	β	(Std error)	β	(Std error)	β	(Std error)
Sex	.02	.01	.02	.01	.02	.01
Age	.05	.02	.04	.02	.04	.02
Children at home	.02	.01	.01	.01	.04	.03
Hours per week	.05	.03	.05	.03	.05	.03
Spouse workplace			.52**	.13	.37**	.10
Spouse occupation			.46**	.16	.36**	.08
Spouse workplace \times Spouse Occupation					.10	.09
R^2	.02		.21		.22	
ΔR^2			.19**		.01	

Note. N = 103. Dependent variable = work–family integration. Spouse Workplace (0 = no work link, 1 = same workplace); Spouse Occupation (0 = no work link, 1 = same occupation); Sex (0 = male, 1 = female); Children at Home (0 = no children at home, 1 = children at home).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Study 2: Method

Participants and Procedure

The data were collected with the assistance of 94 undergraduate business students as part of a research experience assignment in an organizational behavior course. The students recruited up to six working adults to complete two online surveys. The first survey included measures of marital status, spouse instrumental support, work–family integration, emotional exhaustion, and controls (i.e., demographics and coworker support). The second survey, conducted two months after the first survey, confirmed the workplace and occupation of the spouse and measured exhaustion. While there was no theoretical rationale for a 2-month lag between surveys, we utilized the lag in order to introduce temporal separation between variables in the model with the goal of reducing common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

Given the nature of the study, the students were asked to specifically target married, cohabiting participants (they were not asked to specifically recruit work-linked couples). They were asked to recruit only one half of the married couple (e.g., only the husband or the wife, but not both). As an incentive to participate in the surveys, the participants entered into a drawing for tickets to local arts events. A total of 558 individuals were asked to complete the first survey; 541 participants submitted surveys for an initial response rate of 97%. For the purposes of this study, only the participants who indicated that they

were married and who had a spouse that worked were retained for analysis, leaving a potential sample of 519. Responses from eight participants were not analyzed because of incomplete data, leaving a final usable sample of 511 participants; a response rate (from the initial 558 requests for surveys) of 92%.

All 511 participants were contacted via e-mail to complete a second round survey. A total of 489 participants responded to the second round survey; of those 487 provided complete data. We dropped one of the 487 surveys because both spouses had answered the survey. In order to maintain the independence of the data, we used the data from the first of the spouses to respond to the survey and dropped the other spouse's data. We matched the data from the two surveys by asking the participant to provide his or her name on the survey (this was also used for verification purposes described below); participants were assured that their data would remain confidential and the names were deleted from the database once the matching occurred. In the second round survey, one person's marital status had changed (i.e., no longer married), and two participants no longer worked in the same occupation as their spouse; their data were dropped from further analysis. The final sample size for Study 2 was 484, leaving a final response and retention rate across the two data collections of 87%.

To ensure that the surveys were completed by the working adults, we randomly selected 75% of the surveys after each round of data collection and directly contacted the participant to verify their partic-

ipation. All of the contacted participants verified that they had completed the survey.

The final sample included 225 males and 259 females with a mean age of 39.62 years. The participants had been working for their current organization for a mean of 10.88 years and most (77%) were Caucasian. They worked in a primarily lower or middle management positions ($n = 288$, 60%), though front-line ($n = 124$, 26%) and executive/ownership ($n = 59$, 12%) were also represented. A wide variety of industries were represented, with education (22%), health care (20%), government (17%), financial services (15%), and manufacturing (10%) most highly represented. The participants primarily lived and worked in the upper Midwestern United States (92%).

Measures

Spouse workplace and occupation. As in Study 1, we asked each married participant about the workplace and occupation of their spouse. Of the 484 participants, 67 (14%) indicated that they worked in the same occupation and same workplace as their spouse; 48 (10%) indicated they worked in the same occupation but in a different workplace; and 41 (8%) indicated they work in a different occupation but in the same workplace as their spouse. The remaining 328 participants were categorized as in a couple without a work link. In the analysis, we coded the participants to contrast *same occupation* (1) versus *no work link* (0). We also coded each participant for *same workplace* (1) versus *no work link* (0).

We acknowledge that this coding procedure excluded participants in the analyses who shared both a workplace and occupation. As we noted in the introduction, we took this approach to disentangle the effects of each type of work link and because the combination of the two links appeared not to have a significant effect on work-family integration in Study 1.

Work-family integration. As in Study 1, work-family integration was measured using the three-item Work-Family Integration-Blurring Scale (WFIBS) of Desrochers et al. (2005) with the adaption of one item noted previously. This was assessed at Time 1.

Spouse instrumental support. At Time 1, we assessed spouse instrumental support using an adapted version of the Family Support Inventory for Workers (King, Mattimore, King, & Adams, 1995). This measure was used in order to provide a more comprehensive measure of perceived social support. The measure includes 15 items to assess instrumental

support; a sample item is, "If my job gets very demanding, my family members will take on extra household responsibilities." The items were adapted so that references to family were changed to spouse. For example, the sample item above was changed to "If my job gets very demanding, my spouse will take on extra household responsibilities." The items were scored on a five point Likert-type scale from *strongly disagree* (1) to *strongly agree* (5) with higher scores indicating greater spouse instrumental support.

Emotional exhaustion. Emotional exhaustion was measured using the emotional exhaustion subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Scale (MBI-GS; Schaufeli, Leiter, Maslach, & Jackson, 1996). The items were scored on a seven-point frequency scale from *never* (0) to *every day* (6). This measure was completed at both Times 1 and 2.

Control variables. Based on a review of the literature, we identified six additional variables that may covary with spouse instrumental support and/or emotional exhaustion and, thus, were treated as control variables in the analysis. We controlled for sex, age, organization tenure, education level, and race because of their potential relationships with support resources in the workplace.

Coworker support has a significant negative relationship with emotional exhaustion (Halbesleben, 2006). We controlled for coworker instrumental support because in a same-career setting, the spouse may be considered a coworker, potentially confounding coworker, and spouse support for those employees. The social support measure of Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison, and Pineau (1975) was utilized to measure perceived instrumental support from each participant's coworkers. The scale included two items; a sample item is, "How much does each of these people go out of their way to do things to make your life easier for you?" Each item was followed by target people, including coworker, and was scored on a five-point scale from *not at all* (1) to *very much* (5). Finally, to take advantage of the longitudinal nature of our design, we controlled for Time 1 emotional exhaustion.

Study 2: Results

The descriptive and reliability statistics and correlations for all Study 2 variables are displayed in Table 3. All measures achieved acceptable reliability.

The model we have proposed represents a mediated moderation model; that is, the moderation effect of work-family links is mediated by work-family integration. To test the model, we employed the

Table 3
Study 2 Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Sex	0.53	0.41	—											
2. Age	39.62	9.06	-.08	—										
3. Tenure	10.88	7.02	-.17*	.39***	—									
4. Race	1.56	1.01	-.05	-.08	-.03	—								
5. Education	3.91	1.25	-.19**	.15*	-.08	.00	—							
6. Work–family integration	2.58	0.98	.09*	.06	.00	.03	.04	(.81)						
7. Time 1 emotional exhaustion	2.99	1.16	.08*	.04	.01	.02	.04	-.24**	(.94)					
8. Spouse workplace	0.08	.07	.01	.03	.04	.02	.04	.41**	-.34**	—				
9. Spouse occupation	0.10	.09	.05	.00	-.01	.01	.04	.37**	-.36**	.05	—			
10. Coworker instrumental support	3.45	1.19	-.02	.01	.06	.03	.00	.10*	-.21**	.03	.05	—		
11. Spouse instrumental support	3.20	0.98	-.06	.02	.05	.01	.00	.26**	-.19**	.30**	.29**	.11*	(.92)	
12. Time 2 emotional exhaustion	2.85	1.05	.09*	.00	.05	.06	-.02	-.34**	.49**	-.35**	-.40**	-.21**	-.18**	(.93)

Note. N = 484. Internal consistency estimates (Cronbach's alpha) appear in parentheses along the diagonal. Spouse Workplace (0 = different occupation and workplace, 1 = same workplace); Spouse Occupation (0 = different occupation and workplace, 1 = same occupation); Sex (0 = male, 1 = female); Education (0 = some high school, 1 = high school graduate, 2 = some college/vocational or technical degree, 3 = college graduate, 4 = some graduate studies, 5 = graduate degree); Race (0 = White/Caucasian, 1 = non-White/Caucasian). * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

procedures outlined by Edwards and Lambert (2007) by utilizing a path analysis framework that employs a series of regression equations. Their approach improves upon more traditional methods for testing mediated moderation (e.g., Baron & Kenny, 1986; Muller, Judd, & Yzerbyt, 2005) by testing the direct, indirect, and total effects of the moderator variable in a nested form.¹

The regression results from each model are displayed in Table 4. We tested three nested models. The Edwards and Lambert (2007) approach is built from a mediated model. Model 1 was a mediated model where work–family integration was treated as a mediator to the spouse instrumental support-exhaustion relationship (with the work–family links included as predictors of exhaustion, essentially as control variables). Model 2 was the predicted mediated moderation model that included the mediating effect of work–family integration on the interaction between work–family links and spouse support in predicting exhaustion. It adds the interaction between work–family interaction and spouse support in predicting exhaustion and paths from each work–family link to work–family integration. Finally, Model 3 adds the direct interaction between work–family links and spouse support in order to test both the direct and indirect (mediated) effects of the moderator. In theory, the direct effect of work–family link as a moderator should not be significant since it essentially “working through” work–family integration. Following current recommendations (Mooney & Duval, 1993; Shrout & Bolger, 2002), we used bootstrapped estimates from 10,000 samples to create construct bias-corrected confidence intervals for all significance tests. It is possible to compare the nested models by computing a generalized R^2 and comparing the models with Q and W statistics (see Pedhazur, 1982; Tepper, Henle, Lambert, Giacalone, & Duffy, 2008). The Q statistic allows for a comparison of the generalized R^2 to its maximum value of 1 (which would indicate that the two models are not different in terms of generalized R^2). The W statistic is a conversion of the Q statistic that is on a chi-squared distribution, thus allowing for a significance test of the Q value.

As indicated in Table 4, the models accounted for 12% of the variance in work–family integration ($p < .01$). Model 1 explained 49% of the variance in emotional exhaustion ($p < .01$) while Models 2 and 3

¹ To conserve page space, we do not report how we derived each regression equation (for an example, see Tepper, Henle, Lambert, Giacalone, & Duffy, 2008). These are available from the first author.

Table 4
Study 2 Path Analytic Tests of Hypothesized Mediated Moderation Model and Alternative Models

Path estimated	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Spouse support → Work-family integration	.25**	.25**	.25**
Spouse support → Emotional exhaustion	-.16**	-.16**	-.14*
Work-family integration → Emotional exhaustion	-.30**	-.30**	-.25**
Spouse workplace → Emotional exhaustion	-.32**	-.30**	-.29**
Spouse occupation → Emotional exhaustion	-.37**	-.31**	-.28**
WFI × Sp. workplace → Emotional exhaustion		.34**	.32**
WFI × Sp. occupation → Emotional exhaustion		.28**	.25**
Spouse workplace → Work-family integration		.47**	.43**
Spouse occupation → Work-family integration		.51**	.46**
Spouse ins. support × Sp. workplace → Emotional exhaustion			.11
Spouse ins. support × Sp. occupation → Emotional exhaustion			.09
$R^2_{\text{Work-Family Integration}}$.12**	.12**	.12**
$R^2_{\text{Emotional Exhaustion}}$.49**	.68**	.69**
$R^2_{\text{Generalized}}$.55**	.72**	.73**

Note. N = 484. Spouse Workplace (0 = no work link, 1 = same workplace); Spouse Occupation (0 = no work link, 1 = same occupation). Table values are path estimates for each respective model test. Model 1 is the simple mediation model (where work-family integration is the mediator). Model 2 is the hypothesized mediated moderation model. Model 3 includes the indirect moderating effect of the work-family links. WFI = Work-Family Integration.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

accounted for 68% of the variance in emotional exhaustion ($p < .01$). Comparisons of the models reveal that the generalized R^2 for Model 2 ($R^2_{\text{Generalized}} = .72$) was significantly different from the generalized R^2 for Model 1 ($R^2_{\text{Generalized}} = .57$; $Q = .63$, $W = 223.16$, $d = 1$, $p < .01$). This suggests that the mediated moderation model provides better fit compared to a more simple mediation model; in other words, the addition of the interaction between work-family links and work-family integration increases the variance in emotional exhaustion explained significantly. Additionally, the generalized R^2 for Model 2 ($R^2_{\text{Generalized}} = .72$) was significantly different from the generalized R^2 for Model 3 ($R^2_{\text{Generalized}} = .73$; $Q = .97$, $W = 13.78$, $d = 1$, $p < .01$). This finding suggests that the direct moderating effect of spouse instrumental support and work-family links is adding to the predictive power of the model. However, when we examine the significance of those paths (see Table 1, column for Model 3), we find that they are not significant. In this case, the W statistic may have indicated a significant difference due to very high R^2 values and a large sample size.²

Next, we examined the path estimates for the hypothesized model (Model 2 in Table 2). Spouse instrumental support was associated with work-family integration ($b = .25$, $p < .01$). It was also negatively associated with emotional exhaustion ($b = -.16$, $p < .01$), supporting Hypothesis 2. Sharing a workplace with one's spouse was significantly negatively re-

lated to emotional exhaustion ($b = -.30$, $p < .01$) as was sharing an occupation with one's spouse ($b = -.31$, $p < .01$). Work-family integration was also significantly negatively related to emotional exhaustion ($b = -.30$, $p < .01$). Finally, the interaction between work-family integration and sharing a workplace with one's spouse was significantly related to emotional exhaustion ($b = .34$, $p < .01$). The same held true for the interaction between work-family integration and sharing an occupation with one's spouse ($b = .28$, $p < .01$).

Based on the results from the hypothesized model, we calculated the simple effects for same workplace couples versus couples with no work link and same occupational couples versus with no work link (see Table 5). Analysis of these simple effects suggests that for same workplace participants the path from spouse instrumental support to work-family integration was significant ($p = .25$, $p < .01$), and the path from work-family integration and emotional exhaustion was also significant ($P = -.50$, $p < .01$), as was the indirect effect of spouse instrumental support on emotional exhaustion ($P = -.13$, $p < .05$). For same

² This was, in turn, partially explained by including Time 1 emotional exhaustion as a control variable. When we tested the models without Time 1 emotional exhaustion, the R^2 for emotional exhaustion in the models is much lower and the difference between Models 2 and 3 is no longer significant.

Table 5

Direct and Indirect Effects of Spouse Instrumental Support on Emotional Exhaustion by Married Coworker Arrangements in Study 2

Path	P_{MX}	P_{YM}	Direct Effects (P_{YX})	Indirect Effects ($P_{YM} P_{MX}$)	Total Effects ($P_{YX} + P_{YM} P_{MX}$)
Simple paths for same workplace couples	.25**	-.50**	-.29**	-.13*	-.42**
Simple paths for same occupation couples	.25**	-.58**	-.31**	-.15*	-.39**
Simple paths for couples without a work link	.25**	-.10*	-.08	-.03	-.10*

Note. $N = 484$. P_{MX} = path from spouse support to work–family integration; P_{YM} = path from work–family integration to emotional exhaustion; P_{YX} = path from spousal support to emotional exhaustion.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

occupation participants, the path from spouse instrumental support to work–family integration was significant ($p = .25, p < .01$), and the path from work–family integration and emotional exhaustion was also significant ($P = -.58, p < .01$), as was the indirect effect of spouse instrumental support on emotional exhaustion ($P = -.15, p < .05$). For the participants not in work-linked couple, the path from spouse instrumental support to work–family integration was also significant ($p = .25, p < .01$), and the path from work–family integration and emotional exhaustion was significant ($P = -.10, p < .05$), though again much lower than the same path among same occupation participants. For different occupation participants, the indirect effect of spouse instrumental support on emotional exhaustion was not significant ($P = -.03, ns$). Taken together, the analysis of the simple effects gives further credence to our proposed mediated moderation model as the pattern of effects is different based on whether or not a work-link exists.

Note also in Table 5 that the direct effect of spouse instrumental support on emotional exhaustion is also quite different depending on the nature of the work link, specifically whether or not a link exists in the couple. For same workplace participants, the path is significant ($P = -.29, p < .01$). Further, among same occupation participants the effect is significant ($P = -.31, p < .01$) while the effect is not significant for couples without a work link ($P = -.08, ns$). This supports Hypotheses 3a and 3b.

To illustrate the mediated moderation effect, we graphed the mediated (through work–family integration) effects of work–family links on the relationship between spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion (see Figure 2). The results suggest that those with a work-link (either sharing a workplace or an occupation; those sharing both are not included in the graph) have a negative relationship between

spouse instrumental support and exhaustion. On the other hand, those without a work link do not have a significant relationship between spouse instrumental support and exhaustion when their work–family integration is accounted for. Taken together, these findings support Hypothesis 5 regarding the mediated moderation effect of work–family links and work–family integration on the relationship between spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion.

Discussion

The two studies presented shed light on the spouse instrumental support to emotional exhaustion relationship in married couples. First, we found a significant relationship between work-linked relationships and work–family integration. Spouses that shared a workplace and spouses that shared an occupation had higher work–family integration than those who did not share a workplace or occupation. These findings were consistent with the suggestions of Janning

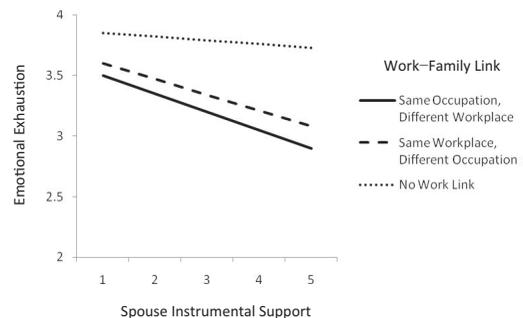


Figure 2. Interaction between the indirect (mediated) effect of spouse instrumental support and work links on emotional exhaustion in Study 2.

(2009) and Moen and Sweet (2002) that work-linked couples would have more highly integrated work and family roles. It is interesting to note that as demonstrated in Study 1, the combination of sharing both a workplace and an occupation was not significantly different from just sharing one link, either occupation or workplace.

Second, our findings also support the hypothesized impact of work links and work-family integration on the spouse instrumental support-emotional exhaustion relationship, finding that work-links impact the spouse instrumental support-emotional exhaustion relationship indirectly through work-family integration. Such findings are consistent with recent work on the work-family interface that suggests family experiences can improve the quality of work life (Carlson & Grzywacz, 2008; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006); moreover, they support the hypotheses derived from boundary and conservation of resources theories regarding the nature of work-family resources.

Implications for Research and Theory

This study expands the research on the understudied group of employees that share a workplace and occupation with their spouse. As noted earlier, our findings are consistent with those of Moen and Sweet (2002), who found high levels of spillover in couples who worked for the same company. We extend their work by examining the effects of spouses working in the same occupation and by looking more specifically at the outcomes of resources that move across role boundaries. Moreover, Janning (1999, 2006, 2009; Janning & Neely, 2006) has examined the work-family integration of work-linked couples, finding that spouses who worked in the same workplace had more conversations about work while at home. Our work supports these findings of high integration of work-family roles in married coworker settings, especially regarding social support in work-linked couples (Janning, 2006). We extend this research by looking beyond conversations to other forms of instrumental support in the home.

It is interesting to note, however, that we did not find differences in work-family integration or in the moderation of spouse instrumental support and exhaustion based on different types of work-linked couples (e.g., same-occupation or same-workplace). This differs somewhat from Janning (2009), where she noted that same-workplace employees tend to bring more work symbols into the home whereas same-career employees tend to bring more home symbols into work. Our study does not necessarily contradict

what she found, however, since the work-family integration measure we used does not necessarily account for the direction of the integration. The work-family integration scale focuses on psychological perceptions of the relationship between the roles whereas Janning was focused on the use of symbols among work-linked couples. Finally, since our measure of support focused on home-based support, one might expect that the nature of the work-link may not impact such support when compared to work-specific support. Nonetheless, future research may seek to explore potential differences between the forms of work-linked couples, perhaps by integrating the perception of work-family integration with the behaviors and symbols that indicate integration.

As noted in the introduction, this study takes boundary theory in a different direction than has been studied in the past (see also Desrochers et al., 2005; Winkel & Clayton, 2010). To this point, studies of boundary theory have focused on preferences for work-family integration versus segmentation. For example, Kreiner (2006) found that employees' fit between preferred and experienced work-family integration was associated with lower stress (see also Clark, 2000; Edwards & Rothbard, 1999). We extend boundary theory, integrating it with COR theory, to explain why highly integrated work and family roles may allow for an easier transmission of resources from one role to another and how that easier transition leads to lower strain for employees. Much of the previous research on boundary theory has focused on the potential costs of permeable boundaries (e.g., Ashforth et al., 2000; see also Kossek et al., 2005); the current study expands this body of work by testing a potential benefit of permeable boundaries—greater resource sharing via spouse instrumental support. Researchers have offered some evidence for a positive relationship between integrated roles and higher performance (see Kossek et al., 2005). We offer evidence for a second benefit, reduced emotional exhaustion.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

We recognize that there are a number of methodological limitations to the present work that must be addressed. We acknowledge that this was a limited sample of participants working in one occupation or in one organization. In Study 2, we improve upon this limitation by studying a larger, more diverse sample of participants. Additionally, the data from Study 1

are single-source data collected at a single point in time, which may lead them to susceptibility to common method bias. To test for this possibility, we conducted Harman's one-factor test to determine whether the measured (nondemographic) scales were influenced significantly by a common measurement factor (cf., Mossholder, Bennett, Kemery, & Weslowski, 1998). Using confirmatory factor analysis, we tested a model that loaded all of the measured variables onto one factor, finding that it provided relatively poor fit to the data (analyses available from first author). While this test cannot rule out the possibility of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), the consistency of the results, especially when we tested the model using time lagged data in Study 2, suggests that factors other than common methods are influencing the data.

Our measure of spouse instrumental support in Study 2 is limited in the sense that the items emphasize the manner in which the spouse would provide instrumental support at home rather than exclusively work-related support behaviors. This is a result of adapting the measure; it was created for family members broadly, without the expectation that some family members (e.g., spouse) would be able to help out at work. Future research that develops a valid measure of spouse helping behavior at work could help to address this issue.

Our study does not account for the point where integrated roles become blurred. Blurring has been positioned as an extreme form of integration (Ahrntzen, 1990; Ashforth et al., 2000) where work and family demands appear simultaneously in the same context (Desrochers et al., 2005). That said, it is not clear how the two terms are entirely different. For example, Desrochers et al. (2005) refer to integration-blurring in their hypotheses and refer to their scale as the work-family integration-blurring scale, but the implication is not that a low score on the scale indicates integration and a high score indicates blurring. Instead, a low score would refer to relatively nonintegrated roles. Thus, it is not clear from their scale at what point one could consider their roles so integrated that they are blurred. Future research that examines if there is a point where one's perception shifts from integrated to blurred boundaries would be useful in establishing the true meaning of the term blurring and examine whether blurred boundaries meaningfully differ from integrated boundaries.

We recognize that there may be other variables that help to explain the means by which work-linked couples influence the spouse instrumental support-emotional exhaustion relationship beyond work-

family integration. One possibility that we did not test was the role that work-linked couples' social awareness or empathy might play. Given their familiarity with the common stressors of an occupation, married coworkers may have greater social awareness of their spouse's stress. Through greater social awareness of their partner's stressors, work-linked couples may have greater empathy and be more likely to be spurred to action, engaging in instrumental support at home.

Practical Implications

Despite the present study's limitations, it may hold important practical implications for managers seeking to manage the work-family interface in a manner that maximizes both employee and organizational outcomes. Indeed, a number of organizations (e.g., DuPont) and universities have adopted policies to hire and support work-linked couples, recognizing that such relationships could be helpful in terms of recruiting and retaining employees (Farley, 2007; Wolkenbreit, 1997). The present research suggests that beyond recruitment and retention, the nature of the resources held by work-linked couples may positively contribute to their well-being. While we have demonstrated that these additional resources may be helpful in reducing strain, these benefits may extend to other outcomes as well. For example, COR theory suggests that having greater resources should allow an employee to invest those resources in work, which could lead to higher work engagement and job performance (Gorgievski & Hobfoll, 2008). Indeed, meta-analytic investigations of work engagement, frequently conceptualized as opposite to burnout (Salanova & Schaufeli, 2008), have found that social support is positively associated with engagement (Halbesleben, 2010). Moreover, studies of exhaustion, engagement, and performance support the notion of resource investment in work when resources are available (e.g., Halbesleben & Bowler, 2007; Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2008). Taken together, the literature suggests that active recruitment of work-linked couples, through policies to support such work-family integration, could lead to lower strain, higher work engagement, and higher job performance (Halbesleben & Rotondo, 2007).

Practical barriers may exist that prevent organizations from hiring work-linked couples (e.g., a limited number of positions). This study and the emerging research on work-linked couples can offer suggestions for all employees. For example, if instrumental support cannot be garnered from a spouse, perhaps it

could be developed by supervisors (Halbesleben & Rotondo, 2007). Programs that involve family in work may put family members in a better position to provide the meaningful support that work-linked couples experience regularly.

Conclusion

The present studies provide an initial examination of the role that working with one's spouse (either in the same occupation or workplace) plays on the nature of spouse instrumental support and emotional exhaustion. Together, our studies expand the stress and work-family literatures by testing for a benefit of integrated work-family role boundaries. We believe, pending future research, that the notion of married coworker relationships holds promise in understanding the complex dynamics of work-family roles and social support, both practically and theoretically.

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