

Telecommuting, control, and boundary management: Correlates of policy use and practice, job control, and work–family effectiveness [☆]

Ellen Ernst Kossek ^{a,*}, Brenda A. Lautsch ^{b,1}, Susan C. Eaton ^{c,✕}

^a *School of Labor and Industrial Relations, Michigan State University, 433 South Kedzie, East Lansing, MI 48824-1032, USA*

^b *Faculty of Business Administration, Simon Fraser University, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby, BC, Canada V5A 1S6*

^c *Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, 79 JFK Street, Cambridge, MA, USA*

Received 30 March 2005

Available online 31 August 2005

Abstract

We examine professionals' use of telecommuting, perceptions of psychological job control, and boundary management strategies. We contend that work–family research should distinguish between descriptions of flexibility use (formal telecommuting policy user, amount of telecommuting practiced) and how the individual psychologically experiences flexibility (perceived

[☆] We are grateful to the School of Labor and Industrial Relations at Michigan State University for providing graduate assistantships to support data collection and analysis, and especially to Casey Schurkamp for serving as project manager of this study and to Kerrie Vanden Bosch for her data analysis support for early work on this study. The John F. Kennedy School of Harvard University's Dean's Research Fund is thanked for providing partial funding to support the research. We are grateful to Susan Eaton's many contributions to this research project. We thank the Editor of JVB and two anonymous reviewers for helpful comments.

* Corresponding author. Fax: +1 517 355 7656.

E-mail addresses: kossek@msu.edu (E.E. Kossek), blautsch@sfu.ca (B.A. Lautsch).

¹ Fax: +1 604 291 4920.

✕ Died on December 30, 2003.

control over where, when, and how one works, boundary management strategies regarding separation between work and family roles). Survey and interview data were collected from 245 professionals in two Fortune 500 firms with telework policies. Employees who perceived greater psychological job control had significantly lower turnover intentions, family–work conflict, and depression. Boundary management strategies higher on integration were positively related to family–work conflict. Although we found a main effect for formal policy use and higher depression, an interaction existed where women users with children had lower depression. Formal use positively related to supervisor performance ratings. Future research should distinguish between descriptive use and psychological experiences of flexibility.

© 2005 Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Keywords: Telecommuting; Flexible work arrangements; Work–family; Control; Work-life boundaries

1. Introduction

The US Census Bureau (2002) reports that 15% of employed persons work from home at least once a week—a growing figure. Telecommuting is defined as work conducted from home that is often supported by telecommunications technology (telephone, Internet access, or computer) (Nilles, 1998). Despite rising interest in adopting telecommuting, greater understanding is needed on variation in the extent and effects of different types of use; such as formal policy and compared to practice, and psychological experiences with flexibility such as control over job flexibility and boundary management. We examine professionals' use of telecommuting, perceptions of job flexibility control, beliefs about the self-management of work and family boundaries, and linkages to work–family effectiveness. We argue research should distinguish between *descriptions of flexibility use* (formal telecommuting policy user, amount of telecommuting practiced) and the individuals' *psychological experiences with flexibility* (psychological job control over where, when, and how one works, beliefs that one can choose to separate work–family boundaries). Formal permission to use a flexibility policy (telecommuting) should not be confounded with the practice of working from home, or with psychological beliefs about job control or work–family boundaries. These are all different issues that studies should separately assess.

Karasek and Theorell's (1990) demand-control-support (DCS) model of individual stress provides a useful framework for organizing our hypotheses' antecedents. Demands, defined as one's amount of workload and responsibilities, positively predict work distress. Control, the autonomy one has to make decisions about the order and way in which one's work is done, positively predicts well-being. Support, the type and amount of assistance received from one's employer, positively correlates with well-being and productivity. Applying this framework to our study, work–family well-being and effectiveness (performance, work–family conflict, family–work conflict, turnover, and depression) are a function of (1) job demands (work hours); (2) control (psychological job control, beliefs about the separation of work–family boundaries); and (3) employer supports for family (use of formal flexibility (telecommuting), use of other work–family policies, the amount of flexibility practiced). We

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/887600>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/887600>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)