



# CAREGIVING DECISIONS, WELL-BEING, AND PERFORMANCE: THE EFFECTS OF PLACE AND PROVIDER AS A FUNCTION OF DEPENDENT TYPE AND WORK-FAMILY CLIMATES

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**This research investigates relationships between caregiving decisions and work-family outcomes—well-being, performance in work and family roles, and work-family conflict—occurring as a function of dependent type and work and family climates. We compared effects of caregiving decisions regarding place and provider for child and elderly dependents in climates encouraging or discouraging sacrifice and sharing concerns. Well-being and performance were lowest with in-home elder care by a family member, in work or family climates that discouraged sharing concerns.**

During their careers, most employees will make caregiving decisions. Caregiving decisions, which refer to the selection of arrangements for the care of a dependent while the decision maker works, involve deciding who provides the care and where the care occurs. Caregiving decisions are typically made for different types of dependents, such as children and elders. The caregiver role is part of most individuals' role repertoires (Barnett, 1998), and the management of dependent caregiving has been referred to as the "unexpected career" (Aneshensel, Pearlin, Mullan, Zarit, & Whitlach, 1995). Just as career management involves making decisions and determining how to best operate in one's work and personal environments (Hall, 1986), managing caregiving involves decision making within the parameters of those environments. Researchers have argued that how individuals combine roles is at least as critical an influence on work and family outcomes as the number of roles they hold (Thoits, 1992) and the actual level of demands (Smerglia & Deimling, 1997).

Themes prevalent in the work-family literature

include the importance of a positive workplace climate supporting dependent care arrangements (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999), the need for studies to include not only work measures, but also family measures (Zedeck, 1992), and the belief that workers' performance and well-being depend in part on the nature of dependent care arrangements (Friedman & Galinsky, 1992). Surprisingly, the effects of caregiving arrangements on worker attitudes and behaviors have been underexamined (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998, 1999). Moreover, issues such as caregiving arrangements, climate, and employee work-family outcomes have received limited empirical integration. The research that has occurred has tended to examine these issues independently, overlooking their interdependence and interactions.

The purpose of this study was to investigate relationships between caregiving decisions and key work and family outcomes (well-being, performance in work and family roles, and work-family conflict) as a function of dependent type and work and family climates. Since well-being and work-family conflict are among the most commonly studied outcomes in the work-family literature (Zedeck, 1992), it is important to better understand how they relate to caregiving decisions. In his review, Zedeck (1992) argued for more research examining factors influencing performance in both work and family roles. Yet only a few studies have been done on the direct effects of arrangements on job performance, and these have had mixed or null results (e.g., Goff,

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Mount, & Jamison, 1990; Kossek & Nichol, 1992). Managerial studies generally have not examined performance in the family role, despite its critical impact for both home and workplace.

Figure 1 shows typical caregiving decisions that can be made for two common types of dependents: elders and children. One aspect of a caregiving decision is choosing where primary care will be provided (whether in-home or out-of-home). Another aspect involves who provides the care (family or nonfamily). We expected that the effects of caregiving decisions on conflict, performance, and well-being would depend on the type of dependent cared for. We further expected that relationships between caregiving decisions and conflict, performance, and well-being would be moderated by the work and family climates experienced by a caregiver. These climates were also expected to have direct effects on conflict, performance, and well-being. Below, we further discuss the multiple facets of caregiving decisions, as well as the theoretical rationale for the relationships shown in Figure 1.

### FACETS OF DEPENDENT CAREGIVING DECISIONS

#### Caregiving Decisions: Type, Place, and Provider

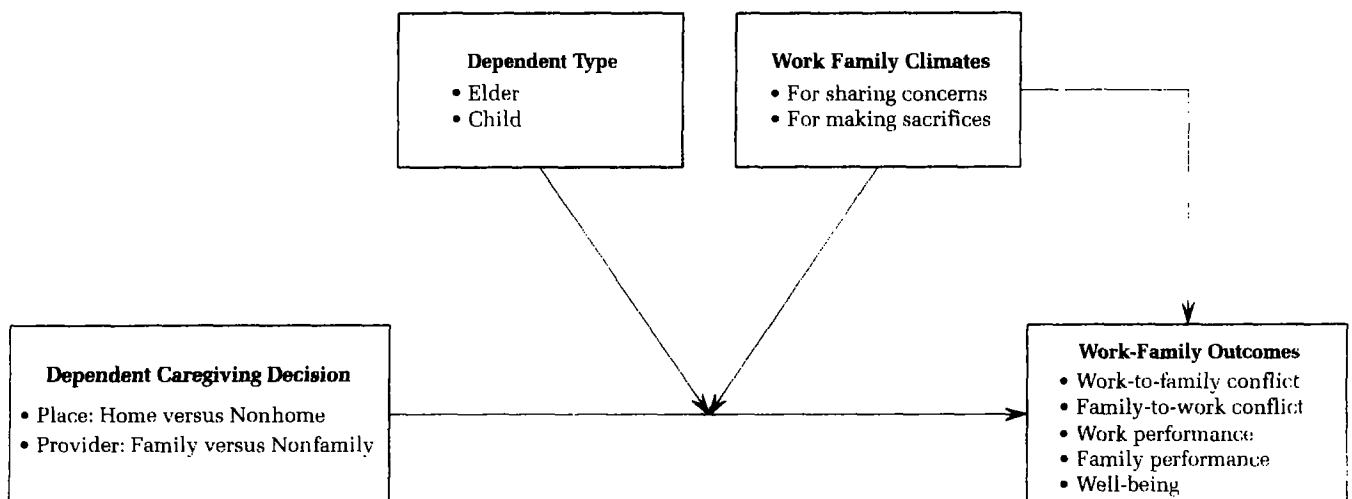
Caregiving decisions are a fact of life for employees and result in many different arrangements. For example, census data (U.S. Census Bureau, 1998a) on the caregiving decisions of employed women with children under five years of age show that 33 percent of these children are cared for by relatives in the children's homes, 16 percent are cared for by relatives out of the home, and 5 percent are cared

for by nonrelatives (nannies, babysitters) in the children's homes. Nearly half (46%) receive care by nonrelatives in out-of-home locations (such as child care centers). Similar variation is also found for providers and locations of elder care. Arrangements include nursing homes (26%), care by spouse (15%) or other relative (33%), adult care facility (12%), and paid nurse or companion (13%) (Kossek, DeMarr, Backman, & Kollar, 1993; U.S. Census Bureau, 1994; 1998b).

These statistics show how much variation occurs in the facets of caregiving decisions. Thus, to account for this variation, researchers must distinguish between *types* of caregiving decisions by examining potential differences between child and elder care. Moreover, for each type of dependent, it is critical to examine the effects of variation in the *places* where care occurs, and in the *providers* of that care.

**Type of dependent: Child or elder.** Although little research has examined how elder and child care differ in their relations to employee outcomes, managing elder care involves very different decisions than managing child care. Elders and children have reverse caregiving life cycles (Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999). An elder becomes more physically dependent as she or he ages, requiring increased assistance with activities of daily living, such as assistance with eating, dressing, toileting, and bathing (Stone, Cafferata, & Sangl, 1987). Elders also face rising medical demands and crises until care ends with death (Scharlach, Sobel, & Roberts, 1991). In contrast, a child's aging is usually linked to greater independence and less assis-

FIGURE 1  
The Effects of Place and Provider as a Function of Dependent Type and Work-Family Climates.



tance with daily activities, and care ends with maturity.

Managing elder care is also more complex than managing child care because it involves the coordination of many social services (Friedman & Galinsky, 1992). Even the caretakers of elders who live alone in their own homes perform many tasks, involving transportation, finances, doctors, retirement decisions, and household duties, for an average of 11 hours a week (Bond, Galinsky, & Swanberg, 1998). Studies show that those who manage elder care are more likely to experience increased depression, anxiety, and poor health (George & Gwyther, 1986; Strawbridge, Wallhagen, Shema, & Kaplan, 1997); family interference with work; stress; and personal and job costs (Gottlieb, Kelloway, & Fraboni, 1994). It is important to note that managing child care has not necessarily been found to predict negative well-being or harmful work outcomes.

**Caregiving decisions: Place and provider.** Caregiving in the home or by a family member occurs within an employee's family system and has unique psychological and behavioral implications. The literature suggests that dependent type will moderate relationships between work-family outcomes, home/nonhome and family/nonfamily caregiving decisions (Strawbridge et al., 1997).

Compared to other arrangements, elder care located at home or provided by family is likely to more negatively influence employee outcomes, owing to unpleasant caregiving experiences and stressful family dynamics. As Shonsey observed, "Elder care is not about having babies and raising children—the positive aspects of life. Elder care is about the end of life, about aging and dying" (1994: 48). Elder care's life cycle should be experienced more negatively than the cycle of child care, as elder care culminates in health crises, dying, and death. Home- or family-based care (as opposed to arrangements not involving home or family) makes caregivers less able to separate from the dependent's deterioration and emotional or health problems.

In many cultures, the prevalent view is that it is healthy for individuals, as they mature, to establish separate identities from their parents. When parents become dependent, that clear separation of identity is lost (Aneshensel et al., 1995). The employee becomes responsible for managing his/her own work and family demands, in addition to making caregiving decisions for parents. This represents a reversal of lifelong patterns of responsibility and autonomy (Smeglia & Deimling, 1997), often resulting in a loss of self, a decrease in well-being, and a decrease in the quality of relations with those

who figure prominently in one's life, such as parents (Skaff & Pearlin, 1992). Care in the home or by a family member likely exacerbates these negative effects because the employee is an integral part of the family system or residence. The greater proximity to the dependent's life descent should magnify depressing psychological effects, leading to especially high levels of conflict and especially low levels of well-being (George & Gwyther, 1986) and performance in work and family roles.

In contrast, home or family-based child care does not involve increased exposure to death or reverse life cycle dynamics. In fact, many workers experience it positively. Research suggests that most employees perceive home and family-based care to be less potentially harmful than other arrangements, as studies historically contrast "children reared at home" with those "reared in child care" (Galinsky & Friedman, 1988). Although not scientifically supported, a pervasive societal myth is that day care poses a risk to healthy child development. Many employed parents, especially mothers, experience tremendous fear that they are harming their children (Lerner, 1994). Home or family-based care can partly alleviate this negative affect by enabling children to be cared for within the parents' family environment.

Employees using home or family-based care are also likely to have greater involvement in the nature and structuring of caregiving activities than those using care not involving home or family. Greater involvement is likely to be experienced as more positive for child care than for elder care. Most parents want to have authority over the way their children are reared throughout the workday (Lerner, 1994). In contrast, caregiving for elders is not a role that many employees have anticipated, and a lack of perceived competence in managing elder care is a common problem that many consider stressful (Aneshensel et al., 1995). Consequently, some individuals may believe that elder care is best provided by a professional expert or facility. For example, one study found that nearly half of the adults surveyed stated that the experience of caring for parents made them not want their families to care for them as dependents (Wallhagen & Strawbridge, 1995).

Care for elders located in the home or the family may also be more costly for elders than is such care for children. The economic reality is that home or family-based elder care often demands major expenses associated with life decay (Abel, 1987). Common expenses include home modifications, such as adding barrier-free entrances, special showers/baths, elevators, or ground floor bedrooms, and buying medical equipment (Day, 1985). Thus, se-

lecting elder care in the family or home domain correlates with decreased well-being, social participation, and financial resources and with less favorable attitudes about managing work and elder care demands (Kossek et al., 1993).

Taken together, the differences discussed in this section suggest that the relationship between who provides care, where care is provided, and employee well-being, conflict, and performance may vary by type of dependent.

*Hypothesis 1. Type of dependent will moderate the relationship between a home and a non-home caregiving decision and employee outcomes (work-family conflict, performance in work and family roles, and well-being). A home care arrangement will be more detrimental when the dependent is an elder than when the dependent is a child.*

*Hypothesis 2. Type of dependent will moderate the relationship between a family and a non-family caregiving decision and employee outcomes (work-family conflict, performance in work and family roles, and well-being). A family care arrangement will be more detrimental when the dependent is an elder than when the dependent is a child.*

## THE ROLE OF WORK AND FAMILY CLIMATES

Caregiving decisions represent situational stressors that must be examined in an employee's larger context (Smerglia & Deimling, 1997). One important aspect of that context is climate. An employee's work or family climate should impact the consequences of caregiving decisions both directly and indirectly (Kossek et al., 1999). Unfortunately, climate has received little attention in the work-family literature. However, Parker and Hall noted that culture and climate are "ideas that almost beg to be used in work-family inquiry" (1992: 443).

Climate is a person-oriented concept that reflects shared perceptions of "the way things are around here" (Ostroff, 1993; Reichers & Schneider, 1990). Investigating how an employee's work climate for family issues affects outcomes associated with caregiving decisions is critical, because most employers operate under the assumption that work is the primary priority in employees' lives (Allen, Parker, & Kourpounadis, 1998). Work-family benefits may create new ways of working, but employees who utilize such programs may be negatively affected if the climate still encourages old ways of working (Perlow, 1995; Thompson et al., 1999). Similarly, investigating the family climate for work concerns may be critical. Employees need to per-

ceive that their family environments enhance their effectiveness in managing work and caregiving responsibilities, though little work has been done on the influences of family climate.

Recent research has treated climate as a "content-free" construct that is referenced to the research question of interest (e.g., Schneider & Reichers, 1983). Researchers speak less of "the climate" and more of "the climate for something." We explored critical dimensions of both work climate and family climate as direct influences on caregiving decision outcomes. We also explored climates as moderators of the effects of dependent caregiving decisions. Reviewing the climate and work-family literatures, we examined a *climate for sharing concerns* (e.g., Thomas & Ganster, 1995) and a *climate for making sacrifices* (e.g., Kofodimos, 1993).

A climate for sharing concerns encourages employees to share concerns about one role while working in the other. More specifically, a work climate for sharing concerns is one where employees can discuss family concerns with supervisors and peers. A family climate for sharing concerns is one where employees can discuss work concerns with family members. The ability to share concerns about managing multiple roles helps individuals get feedback on developing caregiving strategies that facilitate work-family integration and effective joint enactment of roles (Kofodimos, 1993). One would expect that climates allowing individuals to share concerns from other life domains would be associated with less conflict, better performance in work and family roles, and improved well-being (Adams, King, & King, 1996).

A climate for sacrifices encourages employees in one role to make sacrifices to support the other. More specifically, a work climate for making sacrifices is one in which employees are expected to sacrifice family performance for the sake of work performance. A family climate for sacrifices is one in which employees are expected to sacrifice work performance for the sake of family duties. Many organizations have internal cultures that signal (through values, rewards, and norms) that employees should devote increasing time and energy to work, even if such devotion results in their neglecting family life (Kofodimos, 1993; Thompson et al., 1999). Employees are typically expected to restructure family to accommodate work and to leave family concerns at home while at work. Similarly, family environments may also vary in the degree to which members feel able to make family sacrifices to support work. We expected that the less an employee's climates required such sacrifices, the lower the levels of work-family conflict (Adams et

al., 1996) and the higher the work and family performance and well-being.

It is important to note that we do not necessarily expect levels of the climate dimensions of sharing concerns and making sacrifices to be in opposite directions, as the two are different constructs. People can feel free to share concerns without necessarily expecting to make sacrifices. Indeed, in some cases, people may need to share more concerns when a climate is making them sacrifice, as that demand creates concerns in and of itself.

*Hypothesis 3. Work and family climates for sharing concerns will be negatively related to work-family conflict and positively related to performance in work and family roles and well-being.*

*Hypothesis 4. Work and family climates for making sacrifices will be positively related to work-family conflict and negatively related to performance in work and family roles and well-being.*

Although the above section concerns the direct effects of work and family climates, we further examined whether climate moderated the relationships between caregiving decisions and key outcomes. Examining climate as a moderating influence is consistent with the fundamental notion that individual outcomes are a function of person, context, and the interaction of the two (Roberts, Hulin, & Rousseau, 1978). Research shows caregiving decisions are linked to lower levels of well-being and higher conflict when they are not congruent with family or work environments (Kossek et al., 1999; Smerglia & Deimling, 1997).

Despite their intuitive importance, person-context interaction effects are rarely examined in the work-family literature. However, two of the most common types of interaction effects in the larger organizational behavior literature are "enhancer" effects and "neutralizer" effects (e.g., Howell, Dorfman, & Kerr, 1986; Kerr & Jermier, 1978). Enhancers are moderators that increase the relationship between an independent variable (such as caregiving decisions) and a dependent variable (such as well-being). Neutralizers are moderators that decrease the relationship between an independent and a dependent variable.

A critical issue in this study was therefore to examine the degree to which work and family climates for sharing concerns and making sacrifices were enhancers or neutralizers. As noted above, home and family-based caregiving decisions differ from nonhome and nonfamily decisions in many ways, from affective ramifications to involvement

and cost. These differences are less likely to adversely affect work-family outcomes when the employee who is making the decisions has the ability to share concerns and to work through any problems involved in his or her care choices. This would suggest that a climate for sharing concerns would neutralize the effects of caregiving decisions. In contrast, such differences seem more likely to adversely affect outcomes when the employee is expected to make sacrifices in one life role to fulfill another. Such an individual lacks support from role stakeholders for working through difficulties in enacting the realities of the care decisions. This observation suggests that a climate for sacrifices would enhance the effects of caregiving decisions and thus that the expected negative effect of home care choice and care by a family member on conflict, performance, and well-being would be stronger under higher levels of sacrifice climates.

*Hypothesis 5. Work-family climates will moderate the relationship between a home and a nonhome caregiving decision and work-family conflict, performance in work and family roles, and well-being. A home care choice will be more detrimental where low levels of climates for sharing concerns or high levels of climates for making sacrifices exist.*

*Hypothesis 6. Work-family climates will moderate the relationship between a family and a nonfamily caregiving decision and work-family conflict, performance in work and family roles, and well-being. A family care choice will be more detrimental where low levels of climates for sharing concerns or high levels of climates for making sacrifices exist.*

We have argued that a home- or a family-based caregiving decision will have detrimental relationships with conflict, performance, and well-being when the dependent is an elder. We have further argued that a home or a family-based caregiving decision will be especially damaging when the caregiver's climates do not encourage sharing concerns but do encourage making sacrifices. Parker and Hall noted that "by definition, work-family concerns are intrinsically concerns about complex person-situation interactions" (1992: 443). To further test our predictions, we examined the possibility that the combination of a home decision or a family care decision, an elderly dependent, and a "bad" climate would be associated with especially low levels of performance and well-being and especially high levels of conflict.

*Hypothesis 7. There will be a three-way interaction between a home versus a nonhome care-*

giving decision, the type of dependent, and work-family climates. The lowest levels of performance in work and family roles and well-being (and the highest levels of work-family conflict) will exist with the combination of a home decision, an elderly dependent, and either low climates for sharing concerns or high climates for sacrifice.

*Hypothesis 8. There will be a three-way interaction between a family versus a nonfamily caregiving decision, the type of dependent, and work-family climates. The lowest levels of performance in work and family roles and well-being (and the highest levels of work-family conflict) will exist with the combination of a family decision, an elderly dependent, and either low climates for sharing concerns or high climates for sacrifice.*

## METHODS

### Sample

The final sample for this study consisted of 490 employees of a public midwestern university. The data were derived from a larger study that examined many facets of work-family issues, such as person-environment fit (cf. Edwards & Rothbard, 1999). Seventy percent of the sample had only children as dependents, and 18 percent had only elders as dependents. Surveys were distributed to a random sample of 20 percent of the workforce. The sample was stratified according to age, gender, and job type. Survey administration yielded a response of about 30 percent. Respondents ranged in age from 21 through 69 years and averaged 40 years. Just over 66 percent were women, and 85 percent were Caucasians, with the remainder distributed about evenly among African Americans, Asians, and a category combining Hispanic, Native American, and other ethnicities. Approximately 94 percent had completed high school; 64 percent held bachelor's degrees, and 34 percent had earned advanced professional degrees. Respondents included professional and administrative workers (28%), clerical workers (18%), faculty members (12%), graduate assistants and postgraduate fellows (8%), and hospital physicians, administrators, technicians, and employees holding other miscellaneous positions (10%). Comparing the initial stratified sample to the final sample showed that the average age was about two years higher, the proportion of women was higher, and positions held primarily by women (such as clerical jobs) were slightly overrepresented in the final sample.

The study was conducted in a setting where

good-quality child care was available. The university supported an award-winning on-site child care center and had had a manager of family care resources for many years. In the local area, the cost of care at a childcare center ranged from \$2.85 through \$5.00 per hour. For elder care, the average hourly cost of a home health care worker ranged from \$13.50 through \$15.00. Adult day care programs were available.

### Measures

**Dependent caregiving decision.** Caregiving decisions for children were assessed with the following question: "What is the *primary child care arrangement* for each of your children? By *primary* we mean where the child spends the most time (not including school)." Respondents placed a check mark next to the option that best described their primary care arrangement. Options coded as home-family decisions, ( $n = 197$ ), which described care at home with a family member as the caregiver, included "spouse/partner," and "older sibling of your child cares for child," followed up by a question about whether the older sibling was living in the home. Options coded as home-nonfamily ( $n = 31$ ; home location, nonfamily caregiver) included "unrelated person comes to your home." Options coded as nonhome-family ( $n = 73$ ; outside of home, family member is the caregiver) included "adult relative cares for child," followed up by a question insuring that the care did not occur in the home. Options coded as nonhome-nonfamily ( $n = 223$ ; outside of home, nonfamily caregiver) included "unrelated provider in their home," "licensed child care center/preschool," and "before/after school program."

Caregiving decisions for elders were assessed with the following question: "What is the *primary type of elder care/disabled care arrangement* you use?" Options coded as home-family decisions ( $n = 54$ ) included "adult member of your household cares for elder." Options coded as home-nonfamily ( $n = 8$ ) included "someone comes to care for elderly person in your home," followed up by a question asking whether the person was or was not a relative. All respondents who checked this option indicated that no relatives offered caregiving assistance. Options coded as "nonhome-family" ( $n = 19$ ) included "someone comes to care for elder in their home," followed up by a question checking whether relatives were the caregivers. Options coded as nonhome-nonfamily ( $n = 85$ ) included "adult day care center," "nursing home or foster care home," and "someone comes to care for elder

in their home," followed up by a question checking whether nonrelatives were the caregivers.

**Type of dependent.** Children were coded 1, and elders were coded 2.

**Work climate for family role.** The level of a work climate for sharing family concerns that was present was assessed with three items (1, "strongly disagree," to 7, "strongly agree") stating "*In my department, it is generally accepted that people:*" "Might share concerns about their family," "Can talk about family problems," and "Can get advice on how to deal with family issues." A work climate for making family sacrifices was also assessed with three items, stating "*In my department, it is generally accepted that people:*" "Must take time away from their families to get their work done," "Have to put their families second to their jobs," and "Need to make work their top priority."

**Family climate for work role.** To assess the level of a family climate for sharing work concerns, we used three items (1, "strongly disagree," to 7, "strongly agree") stating "*In my family, it is generally accepted that people:*" "Might share concerns about their jobs," "Can talk about work problems," and "Can get advice on how to deal with work issues." A family climate for work sacrifices was assessed with "*In my family, it is generally accepted that people:*" "Must take time away from their jobs to spend time with the family," "Have to put their work second to their families," and "Need to make family their top priority."

Climate is often measured by aggregating individuals' climate perceptions to a higher level, such as a group or organization level. Although aggregation was possible for work climate, it was not possible for family climate. We therefore kept both variables at the individual level of analysis to keep them more comparable. It should also be noted that it is each individual's own perception of the climate that most influences his or her behavior.

**Work-family conflict.** We assessed work-to-family conflict and family-to-work conflict using two 4-item scales developed by Gutek, Searle, and Klepa (1991). Work-to-family conflict items included "After work I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do." Family-to-work conflict items included "I'm often too tired at work because of the things I have to do at home." (1, "strongly disagree," to 7, "strongly agree").

**Performance.** Family performance was assessed using a five-item scale (1, "strongly disagree," to 7, "strongly agree"). Sample items included "I am viewed by my family as doing an exceptional job at home," and "My family thinks what I do at home is outstanding." Work performance was also assessed using a similar five-item scale with the same an-

chors; sample items included "I am viewed by my supervisor as an exceptional performer" and "My supervisor thinks my work is outstanding." The work performance items have been validated elsewhere (see Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998).

**Well-being.** Well-being was assessed using a 28-item scale reflecting levels of anxiety, irritability, depression, and somatic symptoms (Caplan, Cobb, French, Harrison, & Pinneau, 1980). Items began "*How often have you experienced each of these during the past month?*" (1, "never," to 7, "almost always"), and sample items included: "You felt nervous" (assessing anxiety); "You got aggravated" (irritability); "You felt sad" (depression); and "You were bothered by your heart beating hard" (somatic symptoms).

**Control variables.** Demographics were gathered for use as controls. Respondents indicated age, gender, marital status, and the number of children living in the home.

## RESULTS

The means, standard deviations, and zero-order correlations for all variables are shown in Table 1. Internal consistencies are shown on the diagonal of the correlation matrix. Table 1 shows that a home care decision was more common among married, male employees with more children at home. A family care decision was more common among younger members of the same group. Table 1 also shows that home and family care decisions were more prevalent for children than for elders.

We tested the study's hypotheses using hierarchical multiple regression analysis; Tables 2, 3, and 4 show results. Control variables were entered in the first step of the regressions. The second and third steps examined direct effects of home and family caregiving decisions and direct effects of dependent type. Caregiving decisions had no direct effects, but employees with elderly dependents had significantly lower work performance than employees with child dependents ( $\beta = -0.17$ ).

The fourth step of the regressions examined the extent to which type of dependent moderated the effects of caregiving decisions and was used to test Hypotheses 1 and 2. Results suggest that the relationship between both home and family caregiving decisions and family performance is moderated by type of dependent, as is the relationship between the two caregiving decisions and well-being. The plots of the interactions suggest that home- and family-based caregiving decisions are more likely to be associated with lower family performance and lower well-being when the de-

**TABLE 1**  
**Descriptive Statistics and Correlations for All Variables<sup>a</sup>**

Variable	Mean	s.d.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Dependent variables																			
1. Work-family conflict	4.41	1.26	.70																
2. Family-work conflict	2.53	1.07	.23*	.68															
3. Work performance	5.74	1.12	.10*	-.09*	.94														
4. Family performance	5.61	1.07	-.16*	-.05	.15*	.90													
5. Well-being	5.27	0.76	-.24	-.22*	.08*	.16*	.94												
Control variables																			
6. Age	38.67	7.94	.01	-.21*	-.03	-.05	.10*												
7. Gender	1.63	0.48	.00	.05	.16*	.12*	-.14*	-.14*											
8. Single	0.06	0.24	-.07	.05	.06	.09*	.01	.08*	.16*										
9. Living together	0.03	0.17	.00	-.04	.00	.04	-.12*	-.09*	.06	-.05									
10. Number of children in home	1.80	0.98	.00	.11*	.06	.08	.00	-.19*	-.03	-.11*	.00								
Dependent care-giving choice																			
11. Home decision	0.42	0.49	-.01	.02	-.01	-.05	.03	-.05	-.21*	-.15*	.02	.25*							
12. Family decision	0.50	0.50	-.01	.03	-.02	-.05	-.05	-.15*	-.09*	-.12*	.04	.21*	.59*						
Moderator variables																			
13. Type of dependent	1.13	0.34	-.03	-.16*	-.12*	.01	.00	.63*	-.03	.08*	.00	.33*	-.09*	.11*					
14. Family climate for sharing	5.56	1.12	.00	-.06	.11*	.30*	.13*	.09*	-.01	-.02	-.04	-.16*	-.08*	-.09*	.01	.85			
15. Family climate for sacrifice	4.78	1.07	.07*	.17*	.03	.19*	-.10*	-.25*	.15*	.02	.10*	.06	-.02	.04	-.20*	.09*	.73		
16. Work climate for sharing	4.80	1.33	-.13*	-.09*	.27*	.07	.23*	.00	.11*	.05	-.02	-.03	-.01	.01	-.06	.19*	.04	.84	
17. Work climate for sacrifice	4.07	1.40	.37*	.16*	-.11*	-.13*	-.15*	.02	-.06	-.06	.05	-.07	.01	.00	.07	.02	.00	-.34*	.74

<sup>a</sup> After "listwise" deletion;  $n = 490$ . Values on the diagonal are internal consistency reliabilities.

\*  $p < .05$

pendent is an elder, as predicted. Sample plots are shown in Figure 2. Thus, Hypotheses 1 and 2 were partially supported.

The fifth and sixth steps of the regressions examined the direct effects of climate and were used to test Hypotheses 3 and 4. Results suggested that a family climate for sharing work concerns was positively related to work performance ( $\beta = 0.13$ ), family performance ( $\beta = 0.29$ ), and well-being ( $\beta = 0.13$ ). Similarly, a work climate for sharing family concerns was

positively related to work performance ( $\beta = 0.24$ ) and well-being ( $\beta = 0.19$ ). The results for sacrifice climates suggested that a family climate for making work sacrifices was positively related to family-to-work conflict ( $\beta = 0.12$ ), negatively related to well-being ( $\beta = -0.07$ ,  $p < .10$ ), and—contrary to predictions—positively related to family performance ( $\beta = 0.14$ ). Similarly, a work climate for family sacrifices was positively related to work-to-family conflict ( $\beta = 0.38$ ) and family-to-work conflict ( $\beta = 0.17$ ), nega-





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**TABLE 2**  
**Results of Regression Results for Conflict<sup>a</sup>**

Step	Variable	Work-to-Family Conflict		Family-to-Work Conflict	
		$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
1	Age	.01	0.03	.05*	-0.21*
	Female gender		0.01		0.02
	Single		-0.08		0.04
	Living together		0.00		-0.06
	Number of children at home		0.00		0.06
2	Home decision	.00	-0.01	.00	0.00
	Family decision		-0.03		-0.02
3	Dependent type	.00	-0.08	.00	-0.04
4	Home decision $\times$ type	.00	0.08	.00	0.26
	Family decision $\times$ type		0.01		-0.08
5	Family climate for sharing	.01	-0.01	.01*	-0.04
	Family climate for sacrifice		0.10*		0.12*
6	Work climate for sharing	.14*	0.00	.03*	-0.02
	Work climate for sacrifice		0.38*		0.17*
7	Home decision $\times$ family climate for sharing	.02*	-0.73*	.01	0.07
	Home decision $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		-0.09		0.06
	Family decision $\times$ family climate for sharing		0.17		-0.45
	Family decision $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		0.02		-0.10
8	Home decision $\times$ work climate for sharing	.00	0.06	.00	-0.14
	Home decision $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		0.00		-0.07
	Family decision $\times$ work climate for sharing		-0.25		0.26
	Family decision $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		0.05		0.13
9	Type $\times$ family climate for sharing	.00	-0.25	.01*	0.25
	Type $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		0.12		-0.39*
10	Type $\times$ work climate for sharing	.00	-0.18	.01*	-0.50*
	Type $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		-0.21		-0.17
11	Home $\times$ type $\times$ family climate for sharing	.01	-0.28	.00	-0.75
	Home $\times$ type $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		-0.58		0.15
	Family $\times$ type $\times$ family climate for sharing		0.91		-0.10
	Family $\times$ type $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		1.24		0.09
12	Home $\times$ type $\times$ work climate for sharing	.01	-1.10	.00	-0.41
	Home $\times$ type $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		0.61		0.52
	Family $\times$ type $\times$ work climate for sharing		0.98		0.60
	Family $\times$ type $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		0.04		-0.17
Total $R^2$	.19*		.13*		

<sup>a</sup> After listwise deletion,  $n = 490$ .

\*  $p < .05$

tively related to family performance ( $\beta = -0.15$ ), and negatively related to well-being ( $\beta = -0.11$ ). Thus, Hypotheses 3 and 4 received partial support.

The seventh and eighth steps of the regressions examined the extent to which family and work climates respectively moderated the effects of caregiving decisions. These steps were used to test Hypotheses 5 and 6. Results showed that the relationships between a home caregiving decision and work-to-family conflict and well-being were moderated by a family climate for sharing work concerns. In addition, the relationship between a family caregiving decision and well-being was also moderated by a family climate for sharing work

concerns. No interactions were observed with a family climate for work sacrifice or with either work climates. The plots of the significant interactions were as predicted, with sample plots shown in Figure 3. A home or a family care decision was less likely to result in increased work-to-family conflict or decreased well-being when high sharing-concerns climates existed. Thus, Hypotheses 5 and 6 received some support.

The 9th and 10th steps of the regressions examined interactions between type of dependent and climate. Such interactions were not the subject of any explicit hypotheses, but we needed to include them in the regression before testing the

**TABLE 3**  
**Results of Regression Analyses for Performance<sup>a</sup>**

Step	Variable	Work Performance		Family Performance	
		$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
1	Age	.03*	0.01	.03*	0.06
	Female gender		0.16*		0.10 <sup>†</sup>
	Single		0.04		0.07
	Living together		0.00		0.03
	Number of children at home		0.08 <sup>†</sup>		0.07
2	Home decision	.00	0.04	.00	0.02
	Family decision		0.03		0.04
3	Dependent type	.02*	0.17*	.00	0.03
4	Home decision $\times$ type	.00	0.20	.02*	0.40*
	Family decision $\times$ type		0.26		0.39*
5	Family climate for sharing	.02*	0.13*	.11*	0.29*
	Family climate for sacrifice		0.02		0.14*
6	Work climate for sharing	.05*	0.24*	.02*	0.04
	Work climate for sacrifice		0.01		0.15*
7	Home decision $\times$ family climate for sharing	.01	-0.49 <sup>†</sup>	.01	0.12
	Home decision $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		0.12		0.15
	Family decision $\times$ family climate for sharing		0.53 <sup>†</sup>		0.29
	Family decision $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		0.14		0.38
8	Home decision $\times$ work climate for sharing	.01	-0.47*	.01	0.30
	Home decision $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		-0.11		0.25
	Family decision $\times$ work climate for sharing		0.07		-0.03
	Family decision $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		0.12		0.29 <sup>†</sup>
9	Type $\times$ family climate for sharing	.01	-0.32	.01 <sup>†</sup>	-0.12
	Type $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		0.33 <sup>†</sup>		0.39*
10	Type $\times$ work climate for sharing	.00	0.23	.02*	0.08
	Type $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		-0.02		0.62*
11	Home $\times$ type $\times$ family climate for sharing	.02*	2.17*	.01	1.61
	Home $\times$ type $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		-1.72*		0.45
	Family $\times$ type $\times$ family climate for sharing		-0.58		1.63 <sup>†</sup>
	Family $\times$ type $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		1.64*		0.06
12	Home $\times$ type $\times$ work climate for sharing	.01	-1.28	.02*	-0.71
	Home $\times$ type $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		-0.49		1.99*
	Family $\times$ type $\times$ work climate for sharing		1.92*		1.01
	Family $\times$ type $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		0.60		0.85
Total $R^2$		.18*		.20*	

<sup>a</sup> After listwise deletion,  $n = 490$ .

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$

\*  $p < .05$

three-way interactions. The 11th and 12th steps of the regressions examined three-way interactions of caregiving decision, type of dependent, and climate, testing Hypotheses 7 and 8. Significant three-way interactions were found for well-being using both home and family caregiving decisions and both a family climate for sharing work concerns and a work climate for sharing family concerns. The plots of these interactions supported our predictions; samples are shown in Figure 4. The combination of a home or family care decision, an elderly dependent, and a work or family climate low in sharing concerns was

especially damaging to well-being. This same pattern was found for work performance: the combination of a home care decision, an elderly dependent, and a family climate low in sharing concerns was especially detrimental to work performance. Thus, Hypotheses 7 and 8 received partial support. We note that three-way interactions were also demonstrated using work and family climates encouraging sacrifices, with both work performance and family performance. However, the plots of these interactions were not as predicted. Rather, especially low levels of work and family performance occurred with the com-

**TABLE 4**  
**Results of Regression Analyses for Well-Being<sup>a</sup>**

Step	Variable	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
1	Age	.03*	0.07
	Female gender		-0.12*
	Single		0.01
	Living together		-0.10*
	Number of children at home		0.01
2	Home decision	.01	0.07
	Family decision		-0.09 <sup>†</sup>
3	Dependent type	.00	-0.07
4	Home decision $\times$ type	.02*	-0.41*
	Family decision $\times$ type		-0.54*
5	Family climate for sharing	.02*	0.13*
	Family climate for sacrifice		-0.07 <sup>†</sup>
6	Work climate for sharing	.06*	0.19*
	Work climate for sacrifice		-0.11*
7	Home decision $\times$ family climate for sharing	.02*	-0.45*
	Home decision $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		-0.13
	Family decision $\times$ family climate for sharing		0.59*
	Family decision $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		0.24
8	Home decision $\times$ work climate for sharing	.01	-0.06
	Home decision $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		-0.24
	Family decision $\times$ work climate for sharing		0.20
	Family decision $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		0.17
9	Type $\times$ family climate for sharing	.00	-0.05
	Type $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		0.10
10	Type $\times$ work climate for sharing	.00	0.22
	Type $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		0.06
11	Home $\times$ type $\times$ family climate for sharing	.02*	2.19*
	Home $\times$ type $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		-0.41
	Family $\times$ type $\times$ family climate for sharing		-2.66*
	Family $\times$ type $\times$ family climate for sacrifice		0.84
12	Home $\times$ type $\times$ work climate for sharing	.02*	-0.02
	Home $\times$ type $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		-0.72
	Family $\times$ type $\times$ work climate for sharing		-1.74*
	Family $\times$ type $\times$ work climate for sacrifice		1.12
Total $R^2$		.18*	

<sup>a</sup> After listwise deletion,  $n = 490$ .

<sup>†</sup>  $p < .10$

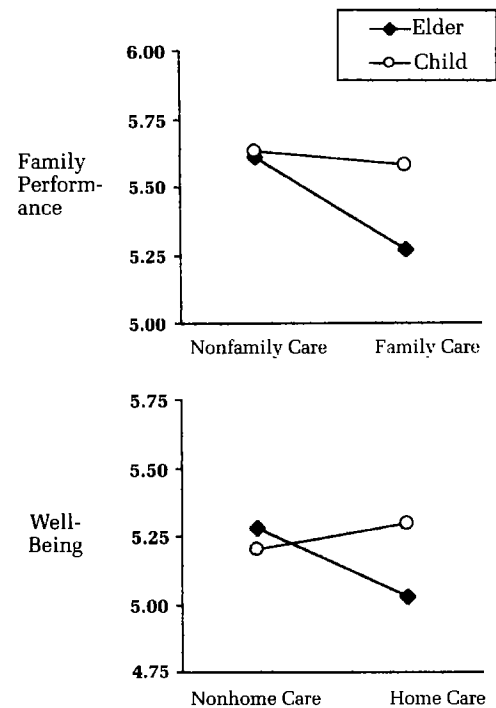
\*  $p < .05$

combination of a home or family choice, an elderly dependent, and low (rather than high) climates for sacrifice.

## DISCUSSION

The goal of this study was to examine changes in the relationships between key outcomes of caregiving decisions, such as well-being, performance in work and family roles, and work-family conflict, occurring as a function of dependent type and work and family climates. We found that caregiving decisions related to the place and provider of care do, in some circumstances, have important effects on outcomes traditionally studied by work-family re-

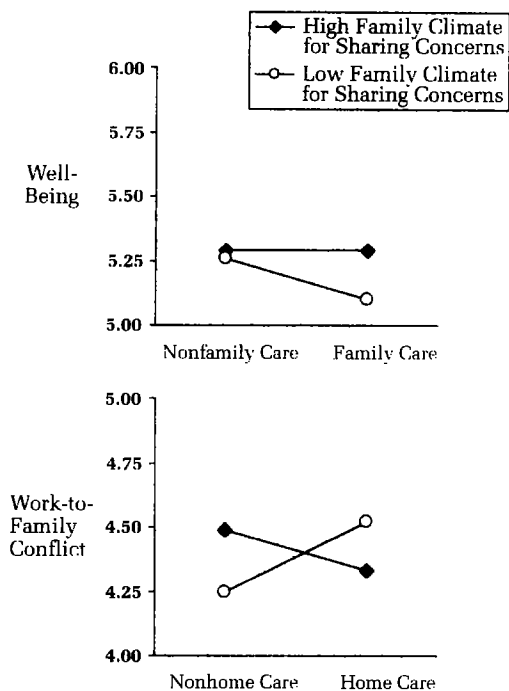
**FIGURE 2**  
**Sample Plots of Interactions between Caregiving Decisions and Type of Dependent**



searchers. Specifically, home and family care decisions were more likely to be detrimental (in terms of a caregiving employee's overall performance and well-being) when the dependent was an elder than when the dependent was a child. We also showed that home and family care decisions were more detrimental to work-to-family conflict and well-being when the employee lacked a family climate for sharing concerns. Moreover, our results suggested that the combination of an elderly dependent and lack of a sharing-concerns climate (either at home or at work) made a home or family care decision particularly damaging to well-being and work performance. Finally, we showed that work and family climates for sharing concerns and making sacrifices were directly related to well-being, work and family performance, and work-family conflict.

Previous work-family research has neglected the actual caregiving decisions employees make and has examined only direct effects of work-family variables. This is the first study to examine how type of dependent and positive or negative work-family climates interact with caregiving decisions, thereby taking a useful first step toward examining these issues. Our results reinforce the notion that work-family variables interact in complex ways, demonstrating that research on work-family perfor-

**FIGURE 3**  
**Sample Plots of Interactions between Caregiving Decisions and Climate**

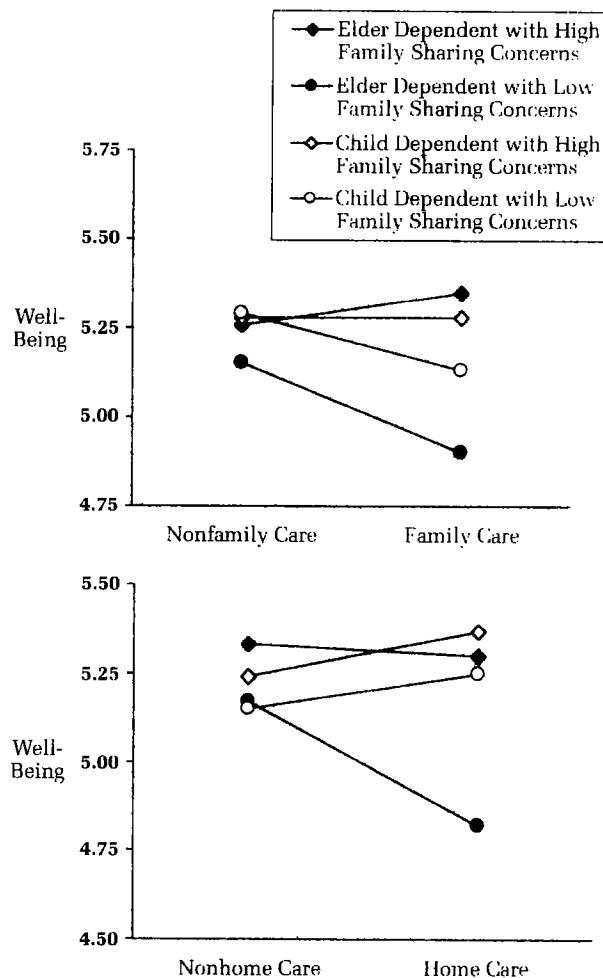


mance, conflict, and well-being would benefit from consideration of the simultaneous (and not just the independent) effects of such variables. Independently considering the consequences of the who, where, and how of caregiving (or the role of work-family climates) may lead to erroneous conclusions that such factors, in and of themselves, are unimportant. These findings have implications for theory and practice and are discussed below.

**Effects of Dependent Caregiving Decisions**

Traditionally, organizational studies of dependent care have considered elder care and child care as similar or have focused primarily on child care (Parker & Hall, 1992). Our results suggest that researchers studying the consequences of dependent caregiving decisions should treat elder care and child care decisions as separate phenomena. Future studies need to acknowledge that managing elder care interacts with variables to influence employee outcomes more negatively than does managing child care, especially when caregiving is at home or by a family member. Unlike work relationships, family and home relationships are marked by an absence of formal definitions of supervisory roles and job responsibilities and a less explicit division of labor (Zedeck, 1992). These issues become problematic with home or family elder care choices,

**FIGURE 4**  
**Sample Plots of Three-Way Interactions**



given their negative cost, involvement, and psychological ramifications.

Researchers should explore whether these findings could be attributed to a greater expectation that the employee using home or family care must engage in more unpaid caregiving work than those using nonhome or nonfamily care. Future research should investigate whether employees primarily using home or family care may experience greater pressure to provide respite for family or home providers. Scholars have shown that the more one participates in caregiving, the less one is able to commit to an organization, which can negatively influence performance (Thompson et al., 1999). The time or ability to perform other home roles, such as housekeeping or spouse relations, is also reduced. Put simply, employees using home or family care may have a longer "second shift" (e.g., Hochschild & Machung, 1989); or they may perceive pressure to take on such a longer shift.

## Effects of Work and Family Climates

To date, relatively few work-family studies have studied the effects of climate on work and family outcomes. More research has centered on the effects of employer-offered formal work policies such as flexible schedules or referral services (Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Moreover, studies that have examined informal influences like climate have assessed only direct effects, such as the degree to which a work climate is unsupportive of the family role (Thompson et al., 1999). Our results suggest that more attention needs to be paid to additional cross-domain aspects of climate, both positive ones, like the ability to share concerns about the family role when at work and vice-versa, and negative ones, like having to make sacrifices in one role to fulfill another. Just as the social support literature shows that instrumental and emotional support have different relationships with key outcomes, our results show that specific dimensions of climate (that is, sharing concerns and making sacrifices) have differing effects on the relationship between caregiving decisions and employee well-being, conflict, and performance. We did find a negative correlation of .34 between the two work climate dimensions, but we did not find a similar negative correlation between the two family climate dimensions. This observation suggests individuals can feel free to share concerns with family members about their work roles without necessarily perceiving they have to make sacrifices in their work roles in order to meet their family role demands.

Our results emphasized that a home- or a family-based caregiving decision resulted in less detrimental outcomes where climates for sharing concerns were present. Such climates also had favorable direct relationships with outcomes. These findings highlight the need to identify the conditions under which employees perceive they are able to discuss their work roles with their families and their family roles with their coworkers. Climates supporting sharing concerns about one's family while at work or about one's job while with family are necessary to directly benefit as well as enhance the positive consequences of employees' caregiving decisions. Indeed, low levels of sharing-concerns climates were especially damaging when home or family care was used with an elderly dependent, as evidenced by our three-way interaction results.

We found less support for our expectation that work and family climates for making sacrifices moderated the effects of caregiving decisions. Our results did not uncover any two-way interactions between caregiving decisions and climates for sacrifice, and our three-way interaction results did not

support our predictions. Perhaps work and family performance is lowest with the combination of a home or family choice, an elderly dependent, and a low climate for sacrifice because the employee may not be motivated to do the types of constructive actions that reconcile conflicting role demands.

Although no influence was formally hypothesized, results did show that the relationship between a family climate for work sacrifice and family-to-work conflict was higher when the dependent was a child than when the dependent was an elder. Similarly, the relationship between a work climate for family sacrifice and family performance was more negative in such cases. Additionally, the relationship between a work climate for sharing family concerns and family-to-work conflict was less negative when the dependent was a child. Thus, child dependents seemed to enhance the effects of "bad climates" and neutralize the effects of "good climates."

Although the moderating influence of sacrifice climates remains unclear, our results do strongly suggest that such climates directly harm outcomes. These results show the need for researchers, managers, and family members to further examine the potentially negative effects of individuals' perceptions that caregiving decisions are made in win-lose contexts. Such contexts may involve circumstances in which employees believe they are forced to make a less than desirable caregiving decision in order to be seen as valuable. Understanding the complex conditions that help create climates that "end the war between work and family" (Senge, 1990: 306) is clearly an important future challenge.

## Study Limitations

Some limitations should be noted. The fact that this study was conducted in an organization that had high-quality employer-supported child care available makes it a conservative test of the effects of child care. Future studies might examine contexts in which the availability of good child care is lower. We also did not directly measure the cost, reliability, or quality of care (beyond our measure of family performance). Previous research has shown that cost is highly correlated with family-based care, which is predominantly not paid for (Bergmann, 1997). Previous research has also indicated that reliability is correlated with family care, as studies show that families are more likely to expand caregiving hours to help with needs. Studies have indicated that the more that employees have family help with caregiving when their children are sick, the fewer problems they have arrangements (Kossek, 1990).

Care quality is often difficult to measure using

self-report employee data. Employees with caregiving responsibilities tend to not always have a good understanding of the characteristics of high-quality child care. For example, a common myth is that care by a stay-at-home mother is the highest-quality care (Lerner, 1994). However, research shows that one cannot assume that a child who stays at home with a mother or family member is receiving optimal care (Lerner, 1994). Compounding this problem is the fact that parents tend to rate their arrangements as higher in quality than do experts (Phillips, 1987). To deal with these issues, in future work on caregiving decisions researchers should consider using a multidisciplinary research team of experts to measure quality and outcomes for both the dependents and other family members.

Our results were generally stronger for the performance and well-being outcomes than for the work-family conflict outcomes. These findings are consistent with Greenhaus's (1988) call for more research distinguishing between psychological role conflict and behavioral criteria. Future studies need to continue to include multiple outcomes, because feeling stressed about managing dual roles (conflict) is a different construct from role performance or overall well-being. Work-family policies (for instance, flextime, on-site care center) may reduce time-based conflicts, but they do not necessarily reduce affective reactions related to perceptions of role stress (Bohen & Viveros-Long, 1981; Goff et al., 1990). What appears to matter more for role conflict perceptions is not so much the type of arrangement used, but the satisfaction with the caregiving arrangements (Goff et al., 1990). Future studies should measure satisfaction with arrangements.

This study captured the type of care being provided but did not capture whether the dependents cared for required assistance in the activities of daily living. Such activities have generally only been examined in the elder care literature. The child care literature tends to mainly assess only age or age group. Future research might also include measures of instrumental (for instance, social, financial) and direct (for instance, eating, toileting) activities of daily living for both child and elder dependents. Measuring these would allow one to get a clearer picture of the types of caregiving demands an employee is managing and would also allow for better measurement of caregiving involving individuals with special needs, such as handicapped children or disabled spouses.

Finally, this study used cross-sectional data. Caregiving is dynamic, and levels of responsibility may change over time and may eventually cease. Few studies have examined how caregiving and

work linkages shift over the career life cycle or the life stage of the individuals and/or couples studied. The impact of work on family and vice versa may differ as a function of whether one is starting out in a career (or a family) or is attempting to maintain an already achieved position.

## Conclusion

Despite these limitations, this study provides an integrative approach to guide future research in the work-family domain. Such an approach is needed because role performance and well-being (as well as organizational outcomes such as turnover or absenteeism) are likely influenced by the type of dependent an employee has to care for, what caregiving decisions are made, and what kinds of work or family climates those decisions are made in. Examining any of these facets in isolation leads to underestimation of the complexity of these phenomena.

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