

THE ROLE OF WORK PREFERENCES IN THE DISPARITY BETWEEN FEMALES
IN PUBLIC RELATIONS AND FEMALES LEADING PUBLIC RELATIONS

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DEDICATION

I would like to thank my parents who brought me into this world not knowing what they were in for. Mo you are my silent cheerleader. Even in the hardest of times I know you are there unconditionally and that is the greatest gift a daughter could ever have. In return I hope you and Dad know that my accomplishments have always been an effort to make you proud.

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Abstract

This study examines the choices of Public Relations practitioners in an agency setting to analyze their preferences for work-life balance and the domestic division of labor. The in-depth interviews of 10 practitioners were used to add to the literature available on the use of Preference Theory to describe why women make up a majority of the Public Relations career field, but do not make up a majority of the leaders within Public Relations. Results indicate that PR practitioners are making work-life balance choices that have affected their career progression, there is an acceptance of long work hours that restricts advancement of people with family commitments, and work-life balance issues were not factors for employees' eligibility for advancement; however, management did feel that their billable hours and ability to balance the two would affect their selection.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

According to the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2010 estimates, females age 16 and over comprise about 47.2 percent of the labor force (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). The Bureau also estimates that nearly 60 percent of women 16 and older participate in the labor force. This is a significant increase in female participation in the workforce and shows a change in women's decisions to work. Similarly, the public relations career field has experienced an influx of female participation. However, the growth in female participation in the public relations workforce is much higher than the U.S. workforce overall. Women currently make up 60 percent of the public relations labor force (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). As women make the decision to enter the workforce, society has to learn to adjust to those decisions. It is necessary for women to have children in order for the human race to continue. Therefore, it is necessary for society to adjust to decisions women make in order to allow them to continue to live their lives without constraint. This thesis is intended to better understand women entering the public relations career field and how the field can be more supportive of their choices to balance their career progression and life.

Academic textbooks cite a number of reasons for the influx of women into public relations, including the field's welcoming environment, more opportunities for advancement, higher available salaries, low capital required to start a career in public relations, women's penchant for communication and listening skills, and women's

sensitivity in facilitating two-way communication (Cameron, 2009), but theory and research continue to analyze why the appearance of public relations as a female-friendly career is not necessarily producing female leaders in the field. “As women outnumber men in public relations, scholars have expressed concern that women will be relegated to the role of technicians and kept out of the corporate boardroom, creating a ‘velvet ghetto’” (Gower, 2001, p. 14). In the United States women have had the right to vote for more than 50 years, the equal rights movement is more than 30 years old, and there has been substantial legislation to pave a path to make it possible for women to lead. Why aren’t women leading public relations?

Gender research and Public Relations

A great deal of research has been done on the female gender and the reasons why there are disparities between the number of women in the labor force and the number of women in management roles in public relations. Those studies include looking at leadership styles as it relates to female managers in public relations. From transformational leadership traits to personality (Aldoory 1998, 2004), the effects of women on subordinates through their management positions have been defined. Aldoory (2004) found that women’s leadership styles should be more conducive to a public relations environment. Studies by Aldoory and Toth (2004) suggest that women were “perceived...as making better leaders in public relations due to the socialized traits they have acquired, that is, empathy and collaborative efforts,” (Aldoory &Toth, 2004). Aldoory’s study did not conclude that female personality or leadership traits caused the inequity in the number of women in PR versus the number in management roles.

Even so, there has been an increase in the number of women holding the top public relations spot in the nation's 200 largest corporations, a sign that women are starting to enter the senior levels at higher numbers (Cameron, p. 62). However, the dimensions and impact of leadership positions women hold within public relations have not caught up to the male leadership positions within the profession.

Why choice

More recently scholars have looked to new theories as to why the number of women is not meeting the number of men in numbers at the senior management level. Studies by Dozier (2007) point to years of experience as a factor in income inequity. In addition Dozier points out, while women are meeting, or exceeding the levels of education achieved by men, they are taking time off to do other things, such as start a family, rather than consistently focusing on their career.

A further look into research has raised the idea that women's positions at work are more dependent on their positions at home, their attitudes and behaviors toward employment and domestic labor division, than are their abilities to lead (Hakim, 2000). That research, begun in the area of sociology, looks at women who are solely committed to a career, solely committed to a marriage and family life, and those that balance the two. However, similar research on the effects of women's choice in employment has not been done in public relations. The effects of those decisions could affect women's abilities to advance. In identifying this gap in the public relations research on gender, this study will look at the possibility that women in public relations are making their employment pattern decisions based on their attitudes and behaviors toward sex-role and domestic division of labor preferences or choices, which may lead to a disparity between

the number of women in public relations and the number of women leading public relations. To do so, this research will apply concepts derived from Preference Theory to the research to analyze women's attitudes and behaviors. Preference Theory (Hakim, 2007) is based on the idea that women's workforce participation depends on their choices and whether they prefer a life based on family, career, or a balance of the two. What follows is a review of the literature that examines gender-based theories and perspectives and relates it to the scholarship on gender and public relations.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The literature presented here focuses on three main subject areas based on available research in order to analyze existing areas of research and strengthen the need for further research relating Preference Theory to public relations specifically. The review centers on gender and explains the gendered nature of the public relations career field and the disparity in numbers between women in the field and the proportion of women in high-level roles. The examination of each of these subject areas will help to determine why there is a continued need to look for a theoretical explanation for the gendered makeup of public relations' leadership. First, Aldoory's (2008) summary of existing research on gender in public relations categorizes the work into three groups: 1) descriptive, 2) explanatory, and 3) critical approaches. This is followed by a look at feminist perspectives. Finally, preference theory is introduced along with an application of its definitions to form a possible alternate understanding of the gender inequity.

Gender-Based Research

Descriptive Scholarship

First, Aldoory defines descriptive scholarship as that which examines women's status by comparing it to that of men in public relations, focusing on discrepancies in salary, hiring, and roles. She mentions that other studies in this group have described sexual harassment and difficult experiences women have faced in seeking promotion. Much research has been done comparing women's salaries to that of men. Research by

Dozier, Sha and Okura (2007, p.2) asserts, “that men practitioners are paid more than women practitioners is long-standing and well documented.” In fact, other scholars note that on the subject of salaries nationwide, “since the government began tracking household incomes in 1960, women have always made less than men. Census data show that, in 2004, the median for men's earnings was \$40,798, compared to \$31, 223 for women; in other words, women earned only 77 cents for every dollar earned by men,” (DeNavas-Walt, Proctor & Lee, 2005). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010) reports that men over the age of 16 have a median weekly salary of \$824 where women over the age of 16 have a media weekly salary of \$669 showing that women still only make about 81 cents for every dollar men earn overall. One might think that since the majority of public relations practitioners are female that salary differences between genders would not be as apparent as displayed in the Bureau’s statistics. For instance, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics’ recent data on median wages earned by occupation shows that women registered nurses made about 86 cents for every dollar male RN’s earned (U.S. Bureau of, 2010). This number appears to be closer to equal wages. The same report shows women earn just 83 cents to every dollar male public relations specialists do. An explanation for the discrepancy continues to be sought, but the answer remains undefined. Dozier and his co-researchers show that, “career interruption to have a baby does not account for salary differences between men and women practitioners” (Dozier, 2007, p.1). Dozier comes to this conclusion through a survey of the Public Relations Society of America. That survey found that women’s salaries, if they were not depressed by taking time off work to have a child, would increase by only \$148 per year. Dozier found this to be statistically insignificant. However, Dozier only controlled career

interruptions to have a child that took women out of the workforce for more than year. This does not account for women who took a shorter leave of absence, or for what happens to a woman's career that has to balance work with their family commitments that come with having children such as school schedules, after-school activities, and sick leave to care for children.

A contrasting perspective to Dozier's work is presented by Hakim in her scholarly research-based book "Work-Lifestyle Choices in the 21st Century." Here she states, "By the 1990s, equal pay and comparable worth policies had effectively eliminated sex discrimination in pay at the national level in the USA, Britain, and many western European countries" (2007, p. 61). Hakim is asserting that generally, companies are not allowed to pay women and men with equal experience and education differing salaries based on their gender. She was not stating that women and men were making comparable salaries and achieving professional promotions equally. A discrepancy in men and women's pay continues to exist. The contrasting findings show that the point still remains; there is a discrepancy in women's achievements in the public relations career field that is not well explained.

Explanatory Research

Adding to descriptive research is the area of explanatory research. This area of research, according to Aldoory, has sought underlying reasons for gender inequity for purposes of theory building (2008, p. 3). Aldoory cites explanatory factors have included the marginalization of the public relations function; women's exclusion from men's social and informal work networks; women's lack of self-esteem; too few female role

models; outmoded attitudes of senior men; conflicting messages for women; women's balancing act between career and family; gender stereotypes; socialization; sexual harassment; and ageism. Research included in this area is that of management styles and the glass ceiling or velvet ghetto. The term velvet ghetto provides a description of the perceived high profile, but low power positions given to women (Toth & Grunig, 1993). For many years public relations lacked needed education requirements or standards to enter the profession. Contributing to the glass ceiling were issues of perceptions of women, sexual harassment issues and job satisfaction as it relates to the balance of career and life goals (Toth & Grunig, 1993). Aldoory has concentrated a great deal of research in this realm where she defines a number of women's balancing acts through her work-life research and her research in management styles and traits and their relation to the female gender. Aldoory (1998) has completed research in feminist studies examining the communicative attributes of leadership for women in public relations. Specifically she outlined women's penchant for transformational leadership styles. Her work continues to "support the notion that feminization is not a negative force for the profession" (1998, p.96).

In addition, Choi and Hon worked to study perceptions of gender differences within public relations (Choi, 2002). They concluded "the individual gender of respondents rather than gender composition in powerful positions influenced perceptions of gender differences" (2002, p. 254). In other words, the number of women in power within an organization does not necessarily mean perceptions of women within the organization will change. Also contributing to a change in the career field and a potential glass ceiling is a 1997 study of job satisfaction within public relations by Serini, et al. In

that study their qualitative results showed that men's discussions of job satisfaction centered on topics such as respect, prestige, and pay. However, women specifically cited "a change in attitude toward family needs" (1997, p. 112) within the career field, which made it possible to be more open about taking care of children. However, the combined conclusions of explanatory research have only added to the idea that women can become leaders in public relations rather than explaining why they have not.

Critical Research

This leads to the final area of research Aldoory calls critical research. "Critical research has highlighted the ideologies that legitimize masculine dominance in public relations and has suggested that women AND men should resist the institutional systems that constrain their work" (Aldoory, 2008, p. 3). Research in this category looks at the gendered norms created by society and how men and women operate within them. Choi and Hon (2002) found that organizations where women occupied 40 to 60 percent of the managerial positions were "gender integrated" and more friendly environments for the advancement of women than male-dominated organizational structures. The organizations that showed a commitment to gender equity were ones that practiced the most excellent public relations. This area of research continues the suggestion that the career field should move forward and allow it to become more feminized by women attaining leadership roles, but does not define why the career field is not already led by women conclusively. While the organizational structures contribute to a lack of female leaders the studies do not point to them as the end all, be all for the discrepancy in public relations.

Policy

A factor that is often neglected in examining the extent to which women can participate and advance in the workforce is an examination of whether policy facilitates that participation. “The fact that a policy exists on paper does *not* mean it is always accepted as legitimate or followed as written” (Kirby, 2002, p. 51). Organizational policies on work-life balance are becoming more available within corporations. However, just because the policy exists does not necessarily mean it is used or communicated to employees. According to Kirby, the existence of policies should be supported by supportive environment for the use of work-family policies such as flexible work and family leave. Kirby (2000) examined the implementation and communication of work-life policies in companies and found that mixed messaging from supervisors made the employees feel that while policies for family leave and care were in place using those policies were not always encouraged. She found that while policies were in place, the employee absences meant that other employees generally picked up the additional workload while they were gone. Kirby and Krone (2002) furthered the results of that study through the use of a series of interviews to see what co-worker reactions were to using work-life policies. Their study specifically focused on the use of organizational work-life policies and found that the use the work-life policies created feelings of resentment because other employees had to take on additional work while the employee was out. Moreover, co-workers resented those with a family for being able to take additional time off each year to care for them. This created an environment where it was difficult to use work-life policies. As it relates to this research, an unsupportive environment for work-family policies can add to the glass ceiling effect for employees

who choose to balance work and family. The research available does not analyze the public relations domain specifically and also does not investigate how the effects of an unsupportive environment affect career advancement for those who do use these policies. However, it clearly creates a reason that women may experience bias in promotion by choosing to balance work and family.

Preference Theory

As all of these areas come together, no clear definition has emerged to explain the discrepancy between the number of women in public relations and the number of women in management roles in public relations. For this reason this study will analyze a newer theory, which provides an avenue to understand the decisions and existing structures that create the disparity. Hakim (2007) believes that the United States has made a transition from a repressive society to a new one that allows for women to develop within the modern society and become leaders with more ease. She asserts that today “men do not surpass women in ability and talents” (2007, p.9). She also argues that the United States exhibits a scenario where “there are no major constraints limiting or forcing choice in particular directions” (Hakim, 2007). Hakim’s beliefs have led her to examine the United States and Britain for new developments in women’s work-lifestyles. She explains that the United States went through key developments to reach this new scenario starting with the contraceptive revolution. The introduction of contraception to women allowed “sexual activity to be divorced from reproduction” (Hakim, 2007, p. 45). This created an opportunity for women to choose to become mothers with more ease. This gave women the chance to become career-centered and childless or to choose to balance both. Additionally, the institutional changes necessary for an equal opportunity revolution

occurred in the mid-20th century in the United States. “Institutional change consists of changing the operation of important social institutions, such as elections, the military, the educational system, the legal system, and courts” (Hakim, 2007, p. 57). This allowed for the increased acceptance of women in power roles. Finally Hakim mentions the increase of white-collar and service work, jobs for secondary earners and the lifestyle choices available during the 20th Century in the United States as some of the other reasons the country has reached the point of a new scenario and that knowledge-intensive jobs will be a feature of the 21st Century. “Given the almost gender-blind, certainly gender-neutral methods of accreditation and qualification for knowledge-based occupations, women suffer far fewer impediments and barriers to access these better-paid, higher-status, and interesting jobs” (Hakim, 2007, p. 82). Hakim is referring to women in the 21st Century’s ability to advance compared to women in past generations. This perspective lays the groundwork for the possibility that women have equal access to most occupations and that women can make choices related to their career trajectories. All things being equal, however, there remains a need for explanation of the disparity between the number of women in public relations and the number of women leading public relations.

While much of the previous research in public relations has examined leadership styles, salaries, and mentorship, this study is one of the first to examine how issues of work-life balance and choices relate to the promotion of women in the field of public relations. Therefore concepts from preference theory will be used to advance our understanding of the factors influencing how women in public relations advance in the field by studying a specific agency. The focus on one agency will allow for managing the variables within the participant population, ensuring they were operating in similar

environments. This will show a greater connection between choice and why the women advanced in the field or did not.

Preference Theory is focused on women's choice between family work and career work. It is believed through the lens of Preference Theory that women's heterogeneous choices and preferences for a life based on family, career, or a balance of the two can lead to understanding the disparity between the number of women in the workforce and the number of women in senior management roles. There are four tenets to Preference Theory (Hakim, 2007). First, it asserts that five separate changes in society and in the labor market, which started in the late 20th Century, are producing a qualitatively different and new scenario of options and opportunities for women in the 21st Century. Second, it asserts that women are heterogeneous in their preferences and priorities and based on the changes in society now have a choice in creating their own work pattern choices. Third, the difference of women's preferences and priorities creates conflict between groups of women, which creates an advantage for men, whose interests are the same. In public relations this could mean that the varying choices between women could pit the childless against those who have children and means women in power will choose to side with one group over the other. This decision means that women will no longer be working together to promote women within the ranks and instead will work only with women who made similar choices as they did. Finally, women's heterogeneity is the main cause of women's variable responses to social engineering policies in the new scenario of modern societies. What this means is that since not all women make similar choices it is difficult for there to be a common expectation of what women will choose to do. Essentially there would not be one popular attitude toward women at work since there

are so many choices groups of women make toward working.

Hakim (2007) clearly defines the three types of women's choices. Home centered women prefer not to work, and give priority to their family life. This family-oriented group accepts the sexual division of labor in the home. Careerists, or work-centered women, are defined in that "their main priority in life is some activity other than motherhood and family life," (Hakim, 2007, p. 164). Finally the third group, the adaptive group, encompasses "80% of all adult females" who want to combine work and family without either taking a priority (Hakim, 2007, p. 164). This group includes women with unplanned careers and women whose life choices depend on whom they marry.

Preference Theory's tenets create some possible explanations for the disparity between the female gender's representation in public relations overall and at the senior management level numbers. The creation of a category of secondary earners has opened the possibility that women are choosing not to become CEOs. If women are choosing to balance both work and life they may choose not to extend beyond the tactical level in order to create a balance between home and career. With the rise in divorce rates in the U.S., women may find themselves in a new family scenario, such as divorce or remarrying, and might have new ideas about their career choices. Also affecting their choice can be the existence of policies within the workplace and how use of those policies is perceived.

Qualitative research on the diversity of choices and decisions that exist, such as this thesis, will help to explain why so many women work in public relations, but do not have management level positions. About 65 percent of all majors in journalism and mass communications programs are now women, and it's estimated that 70 percent of public

relations majors are female.” In addition, studies show that 58 percent of college students are female, and for every 50 women who graduate from college only 37 men do (Cameron, 2009, p. 61). Those numbers could lead a person to believe that more women are choosing to be work-centered. However, those numbers do not continue later into careers when advancement is possible and management level positions would be achieved. In fact, in 1998, Crompton and Harris used qualitative research on doctors and bank managers in several European countries to demonstrate that women with higher education qualifications and professional/managerial occupations are not necessarily career-centered as cited in Hakim. This study found that most women displayed diverse work orientations, with only a tiny number being work-centered. This study could be paralleled to identify possible reasons for the disparity in public relations specifically.

Hakim’s Preference Theory is not without critics. Those critiques center on a lack of explanation for additional factors that could change the numbers of women joining the labor force in higher-level jobs. Crompton and Harris (1998) point to the lack of family wage jobs available in Britain. Family wage jobs pay wages sufficient to support a family single-handedly. A decline in family wage jobs in Britain could be responsible for more women entering the labor force rather than women’s choice. The belief by critics is women’s employment patterns cannot be explained by true choice or innate characteristics. In this thesis the researcher is examining a career field where women are more likely to have a college degree and may be in a position to choose to work or not.

Many critics of the theory believe that the choice is affected by a woman’s development. Instead of true choice, critics “suggest that the heterogeneity of women’s approaches to employment and family life is not a reflection of innate characteristics, but

are deeply rooted in early patterns of socialization” (Crompton, 1998, p. 146). Using examples of how preferences were mediated by circumstances, McRae asserts that some women’s decisions do not come from a consistent commitment to a life goal, but rather the “logic of the situations in which they found themselves suggested that this was the best choice open to them,” (McRae, 2003, p.592). The Preference Theory lacks “a systematic account ... of why particular women fall into particular categories” (Crompton, 1998, p. 145).

However, even critics of the Preference Theory agree that women should not be treated as a homogenous group in respect to employment behavior. They also agree “that women’s ability to control fertility has been an important factor contributing to the changes in the situation of women during this century” (Crompton, 1998, p. 147). Some have even agreed to a lack of theoretical explanation for women’s employment choices. This same missing explanation is seen in public relations, as the number of women in the career field versus the number of women in higher-level jobs remains unexplained. These reasons add to the benefits of this thesis and research. Examining women’s choice, or decisions, to work and what informs those decisions will add to public relations literature. Analyzing the variables in this study will create an area of literature that does not currently exist in public relations.

Literature Summary

This literature review provides an overview of varying gender-based research in work-life balance, leadership traits, and the number of women reaching senior management level roles in the labor field in general and their outcomes. It discusses the many reasons examined for the disparity between the number of female professionals in

the labor force combined with some studies of the public relations field specifically (Aldoory, 2008) and their lack in numbers at higher ranks. By using concepts identified in Preference Theory to examine work preferences, choices and/or decisions one sees that it may be possible that heterogeneous female decisions have led to lower numbers at the senior ranking levels. After examining critiques of preference theory, this thesis will analyze women's choice and decisions made rather than what is traditionally thought of as simple preferences. It is clear from the work by Kirby (2000) and Kirby and Krone (2002) that while women may have preferences, they may not in actuality have a choice in their decisions. While feminists have difficulty including women's decisions as a factor in their rising to senior levels it is clear that the feminist perspective and leadership styles have not proven a clear reason for the disparity in public relations. The literature being added to the Preference Theory is an opportunity to expand on the realm of possibilities and this research will work to add to the understanding of the lack of female leaders in public relations specifically.

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to explore the polarization of women's employment and career decisions in public relations firms. This paper is based on qualitative research of a large public relations firm. A single firm was chosen to create a purposive sample for the research. As Galvan (2009) notes, a purposive sample is selected based on a judgment of what types of individuals would be good sources of data for the research topic. The research will focus on adding to the limited data to understand the disparity between the number of women in public relations and the number of women in senior management level roles at public relations agencies. The intent is to see if the

concepts within Preference Theory exist within a public relations agency. Currently the theory has not been applied specifically to public relations and this study would begin the process of creating literature to address how women's work and family choices affect their employment. The focus on firms will allow a more complete look at PR professionals rather than PR professionals working within other organizations. The focus on this firm will specifically address the disparity between the male CEO and the females within the firm. It will also allow the researcher to analyze choices that were made by females within the same set of organizational constraints.

Research Questions

Having identified a gap in public relations research on leadership and gender, this study will look at the possibility that women in public relations are making employment pattern decisions based on their attitudes and behaviors toward sex-role and domestic division of labor choices, which may lead to a disparity between the number of women in public relations and the number of women leading public relations. The idea that choices made by the employee have affected their advancement in the career field remains unexplored. The research questions this research will analyze are:

- RQ1. What family choices exist among practitioners employed at XYZ Public Relations Agency?
- a. What do practitioners at XYZ Public Relations think of family choices among their co-workers?
 - b. Are the perceptions of family choices different for males versus females or management versus non-management within agency XYZ?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of the domestic division of labor and roles of men and women in the home and workplace among practitioners employed at agency XYZ?

RQ3: Are the perceptions of the domestic division of labor different for males versus females or management versus non-management within agency XYZ?

Chapter 3

Methodology

Characteristics

This project utilized in-depth interviews to examine perceptions, choices, and emerging theoretical framework. The use of in-depth interviews provided an opportunity to make use of participants' natural environment where respondents felt more comfortable discussing their work preferences without fear of retribution while providing the researcher an opportunity to develop a detailed involvement about the individual and the work place. In addition, the firm and the respondents remained confidential throughout in order to remain responsive to their needs.

Strategies

A series of in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to gather knowledge of the staff at the firm. The researcher was able to individually interview members of the firm working in both a traditional and contract role within the agency on their perceptions of both their work-level at the firm and their work preferences over a sustained period of time.

In-Depth Interviews

According to Stacks (2002) in-depth interviews are best for answering questions for definition, value and policy. This method allowed the researcher to focus on an

agency that is female friendly, mirrors the level of gender breakdown typically seen in public relations, and is an up and coming firm in the public relations industry as evidenced by their extensive growth and increased company revenues. Hon (1995) encouraged the use of interviews to give women the opportunity to speak more freely, which made this method better than a focus group setting. In-depth interviews provided a level of privacy that encouraged respondents to speak freely with less restraint about their work-preference choices.

This method is not without constraints and limitations. There is a possibility of “misinterpretation of cultural differences and observer effects” as pointed out by Hon (1995). The sensitivity of this subject matter can affect response. Since the researcher’s gender matched those at the center of the research it helped to avoid bias. “The effectiveness of male researchers in interviewing female subjects has been largely discredited” (Denzin, 1994, p. 369). Denzin believes male researchers interviewing women are less successful in their results, which is due to their gender making it difficult for the women to relate and open up.

The interviews took place via telephone due to geographical separation. Each interview lasted less than 60 minutes, and the question topics were: 1) job information, 2) years of experience, 3) education level, 4) marital status, 5) number of children they have, if any, 6) their choices regarding work-life balance, 7) their choices on the domestic division of labor.

Quotes from participants’ answers during the interviews were categorized based on perceptions of personal family choice, perceptions of co-worker family choice, and perceptions of domestic division of labor. The gender and level of responsibility

(subordinate or manager) of the respondent was also noted in order to analyze the difference between female and male perceptions. Quotes were used in the results based on looking for specific outcomes that related to Preference Theory's tenets. The results were specifically identified based on identifying their relation to both the research questions and the tenets.

Participants

The researcher interviewed 10 public relations professionals who work in both traditional and contract roles at a large public relations firm in a single metropolitan area in the Midwest. XYZ Agency, as it will be referred to in the study, is less than 10 years old, and employs a full-time, traditional staff of 12 public relations practitioners, in addition to a large consulting staff, creative group, and marketing and design employees, bringing the total employees to more than 20. The contract staff members interviewed started work with the company in a traditional role and have transitioned out of those roles and into contract positions. The agency was chosen purposively for both access reasons and the organization's characteristics. A male leads the agency and the females' staff positions vary from senior vice president to consultant. The varying range assisted with breaking down the groups on their attainment level and gave a perspective as to how years of experience, education, and their preferences and career decisions may have affected career progression. The make-up of the agency provided the researcher an opportunity to see if family and work preferences influenced their career path and opportunities for advancement. In addition, the agency has shown that they promote women regularly, so it provided an opportunity to see how these concepts were put into

practice in an organization that appears supportive of women's work. XYZ Agency works regularly with political campaigns, non-profits and local elections. The agency also has larger clients and has expanded in the last five years by adding a creative department, branching out to new cities and a diversity public relations effort.

The selection of one agency contributed to the providing an exploratory look at women's work-life choices that is currently missing from the literature. In addition, it gave the study an opportunity to focus on how the policies and choices that exist in one agency affect everyone under those policies and choices. It was also an opportunity to investigate the variables of policies and how perceptions of use of those policies may have affected decisions.

Members of the agency that were interviewed are not referred to by name in the research and were assigned a pseudonym for data collection. This was included in the oral consent agreed to by the participants prior to the interview.

Few studies have focused on work-life balance choices and the public relations career field. After conducting preparatory work the researcher scheduled interviews.

Chapter 4

Results

The researcher conducted 10 in-depth phone interviews with XYZ Public Relations practitioners of varying levels and professional backgrounds (television, radio, non-profit management, public relations, etc.). The interviews presented the practitioners with an opportunity to provide insight into their preferences, opinions and decisions as it relates to domestic division of labor, work-life balance, and perceptions of family and career in order to add to the qualitative data available in an area that has limited exploration through research.

Participants varied in experience levels from less than one year to more than 15 in the public relations field. Their experiences with the agency and starting positions within the agency also varied from beginning as an intern to being hired directly as a public relations counselor (later vice president would replace the title). All participants had at least a bachelor's degree, and a few had chosen to pursue a master's degree.

The results identified three distinct findings that are expanded upon in this section. Those findings are: that public relations practitioners are making work-life balance choices that have affected their career progression; there is an acceptance of long work hours that restricts advancement of people with family commitments; and work-life balance issues were not factors for employees' eligibility for advancement; however, management did feel that their billable hours and ability to balance the two would affect their selection for promotion or additional responsibility and assignments.

After analyzing the general patterns and trends expressed during the interviews,

this section addresses how those trends help answer this study's research questions and expand our understanding of women in PR leadership positions.

Perceptions of Family Choices

The first research question examined what family choices exist among practitioners employed at XYZ Public Relations Agency. The question also sought to determine what practitioners thought of family choices among their co-workers and if those perceptions were different between males and females or between management and their subordinates.

One of the beliefs of the Preference Theory is that a creation of a category of secondary earners has opened the possibility that women are choosing not to become senior managers. Interestingly, the two management participants that have not transitioned to a contracting role are the main income earners in their households. The others are secondary earners and have transitioned from a full-time traditional role, to a full-time contracting role with the company.

When discussing personal family choice the subordinates were generally hesitant to answer questions describing their families, the use of policies that affect work-life balance, and what they would like to be doing in 10 years. They often answered the questions after the researcher probed for more information, where the managers, who typically had children, delved into the questions without hesitation. Subordinates would often respond to the use of policies for work-life balance by saying they did not have any reason to use them yet. Managers were much more likely to have a clear definition of their family and a clear plan for the future in their career. When asked to describe their family they usually responded without hesitation where subordinates followed up with a

question and spent more time considering what they would define as their family.

Preference Theory defines the adaptive group of women as a group who combines work and family without either taking priority. This group, according to Hakim, includes women with unplanned careers and women whose life choices depend on whom they marry.

Interestingly, the researcher found this to be the case with a majority of subordinates who had unplanned careers and hesitated to say where they would definitively like to be in 10 years.

Participants interviewed described their families in various ways, but most included discussion of immediate family members. There were descriptions of being single, which included describing their family as being a pet and their first-degree relatives (mother, brother, etc.). There were descriptions of being married with no children. There were descriptions of being married with children, both young and older.

Managers were more likely to have children than subordinates although only one of them had more than one child. Although the researcher did not specifically ask if they were planning to have more children, most respondents did say the No. 1 factor in deciding the number of children they have was financial. Even more telling was that the participants that were interviewed made decisions on their career paths based on family choices.

Alivia, a management respondent said:

I would like to, in some capacity, still be working with the media. I enjoy writing, editing and media relations. So I would like to either do some freelance work that will make my schedule a bit more flexible or work in an environment where I can manage my family I would like to have at that point.

Two participants, who felt the agency was unsupportive of their work-life balance, made the decision to choose family over career and transitioned from a traditional role to contract staff. Those members had risen in the agency's hierarchy from subordinate to management and even senior management. However, they inevitably made decisions they called "personal" and moved away from full-time in-house employment with the agency. While they did not directly say that this was due to the agency, it could be possible that it was a related decision since they felt the agency was unsupportive. Either way their career progression was directly related to their choice to balance work and life, rather than choosing one over the other as Hakim purports in Preference Theory.

Alice, a management respondent who has transitioned from full-time to contract staff said this about her decision to transition:

At first I was living in a different city than my husband because the company didn't want to transfer me or give me the option of not working from the headquarters so I stayed there several months into my marriage because I didn't want to lose my job right away even though I wanted to live with my husband. But I eventually just said obviously my husband is more important than my job and if they don't understand then that's their problem. So then when I did decide to leave they kind of turned around and said oh hey actually we do have a bunch of projects you can work on as a consultant. It still wasn't full time but it was enough for this period in my life.

Subordinates were more likely to be married with no children or single, although all of them were in their 20s which means they were more likely to have not started a family. They were also more likely to say they either did not use or did not have a need for work-life policies, which may also be a product of age or timing. By comparison, subordinates were generally younger than the managers.

Arthur, a non-management respondent explained not needing to make use of work-life balance policies by saying:

Yeah, me personally I really haven't had to take specific family time off although my wife's grandma died and the company was ok with me taking time off to go to the funeral during the work day. I know other employees who have had to take time off for the families or a death in the family and spent time at home instead of coming to work.

As the findings relate to perceptions of co-workers' family choices it is important to note a discussion about support for work-life balance from management. Participants were asked to discuss the support the career field and managers give to work-life balance. Subordinates and managers alike felt that individuals could balance work and life in the public relations career field. Some noted that a balance would need to occur and that some flexibility may need to be available to make it work. However, there was no clear agreement among participants as to whether managers supported work-life balance choices. For example, Amy stated that managers supported her decisions fully.

I was working full-time [at XYZ agency] when I got married and moved to Dallas. That's a very personal move. My boss was as accommodating as he could be. He didn't have the workload for me to be on full-time [as a consultant]. But, for a year and a half he has worked with me on different projects and keeping me engaged with the team as a consultant and giving me some work.

In contrast, Amelia said in that support provided by management for her work-life balance has changed over time, suggesting that the agency standards have fluctuated:

It's a difficult question because when I first started in the field it was one way, and now it has changed. At first, no. When I first started I arrived at seven in the morning and everyone stayed until really late. I was the first one who started leaving at five to be with my family and it was very frowned upon.

Anika said that it was not just public relations profession that did not support work-life balance, but that it is a larger societal issue:

I think that since you have to put in long hours and have to work evenings and

weekend that makes it a little harder. But my personal opinion is that there aren't very many career fields at all in our culture that support a work-life balance and that is something that needs to change in our culture.

An extension of the support of work-life balance is noting a trend that emerged for those that felt management was not supportive in the work-life balance area. As a part of the selection of participants by the agency there were a few individuals who have transitioned from traditional full-time employees to contracted staff. Those individuals still work for the agency, but in a different capacity in that they work from home and on a contract basis. Those employees have been with the company for a significant period of time and have a different perspective on a number of the questions. One trend emerged from this group. They felt that the agency was not supportive of work-life decisions and transitioned out of the traditional full-time positions because of it.

Alice said:

I'll say it. I would say that the males in the office were much more work-oriented because they had wives who stayed at home and their wives could do a lot of things for them. Whereas the women managers obviously were working so the company needed to understand that if you have both people in a house working that you need time to do other things.

This quote shows that work-life balance is evolving and that the traditional family known in the U.S. in the 1950's has evolved to a new definition where it is no longer just men working and women taking care of the home. More women have entered the labor force and that changes the needs for working individuals, regardless of gender, to have work-life balance options. Those needs, such as flex-time and family leave, have led workers to make different choices about their careers. In fact this same employee, Alice, did make the decision to transition from a full-time traditional position to a contract

position. When asked to describe how the company supported her work-life balance Alice said, “I wouldn’t say that they did.”

When discussing if decisions for projects are made based on family status there was a clear trend for men to disagree managers made assumptions or decisions based on family status. However, women tended to agree that assumptions might be made about willingness to take on certain projects, but disagreed that tasks were actually assigned based on family status.

Alivia, a management participant, illustrates this point:

If there is a woman who has an infant or toddler I would not expect them to take on things such as weekend projects or working in the evenings as an employee who has children that are older and more self sufficient.

Management participants were also asked how they perceived employees who chose family over career and vice versa. Some were quick to support choosing family over career such as Alivia who said:

I think that’s great. I am of the opinion that family always comes first and being in public relations I don’t feel like it’s a position where we are responsible for anyone’s life. It’s not like we are emergency responders, or doctors or police officers and if we are not here something tragic can happen and they can lose their lives. I feel like family should always be a priority.

Conversely, Alicia used a similar thought process to say the opposite:

It’s one of the few industries where you have to be on call 24 hours a day similar to a doctor or perhaps attorney. For great client service you have to be available.

Another question asked of managers regarding whether people who prioritize family over career should be given the same opportunities for advancement was very telling. The responses for this question showed that while strides within the agency and

the career field has been made to level the playing field amongst those who choose family over work, there is still work to be done on making that acceptable.

Alivia said when asked about the opportunities:

I think they should receive the same opportunities for advancement. By that I mean that they should still be considered for advancement. Whether or not they get those positions depends on that work-life balance and how much their personal lives affect their ability to do that job.

A final thought on this topic is that all of the traditional full-time managers, who were all female, were the main income earners in their households. The subordinates were mixed in their responses as to who was the main income earner.

These results make it clear that public relations practitioners are making work-life balance choices that have affected their career progression; there is an acceptance of long work hours that restricts advancement of people with family commitments; and work-life balance issues were not factors for employees' eligibility for advancement; however, management did feel that their billable hours and ability to balance the two would affect their selection.

Family Choice Perceptions

The second research question addressed what practitioners at XYZ Public Relations think of family choices among their co-workers. While subordinates were not directly asked about other employees' family choices there were a few telling quotes regarding other family decisions that made it clear that there was a perception about practitioners' ability to juggle both work and family, or what tasks or projects should be given to practitioners who do not have to balance work and family. A trend was that there were assumptions made about willingness to complete certain tasks or take on

assignments based on family status. This was shown through quotes like this one from Alivia, a management participant:

I think that they can. It all just depends on the priorities that you set and the flexibility of your employer. We have some people in senior level management that have children that are grown and in college and starting their own lives so they may work a little bit more than they would if they had children in school and needing a little bit more tending to.

And Alice was another participant who felt that single people were equally pigeonholed based on their family status:

I would definitely say that for the single people at the office. Because, you know this is kind of a reverse of what the question is meaning. But the single people were definitely looked at as more available to do more work because the people with the families would get really upset if they were given extra assignments.

Alicia, a management participant, was able to balance her work-life decisions with a bit more ease based on her responses to questions about management support. Interestingly she has transitioned from subordinate to management after her manager was supportive of her decision.

I was pregnant for example and you go to the doctor frequently and you have to track time here and have so many billable hours in the day. My manager, she just reassured me don't stress about it, family comes first, and just that reassurance was important to me.

Each of these quotes add to the finding that long hours were accepted as a by-product of a public relations career and the need to complete billable hours is still a factor in the possible advancement of a person who balances work and family.

Domestic roles, division of labor

The third question asked if the perceptions of the domestic division of labor and roles in the home and workplace were different for males versus females or management

versus non-management within agency XYZ. The preference for an equal domestic division of labor was agreed upon without regard to respondent gender or management level. Of those interviewed, most preferred to describe a family as one where two partners contribute equally to the housework and care of the children. There were three participants, two were managers that preferred to describe a family where the wife has a less demanding job and shares a larger burden of the housework and all of them were female. This shows that there were just two preferences for the domestic division of labor, however it was not unanimous. Since this was a selection of a choice, and not open ended it did not allow for further discussion or conversation on why a participant chose these choices.

Most participants disagreed that it was the husband's job to earn the money and wife's to look after home and family. Most participants also disagreed that being a housewife was just as fulfilling as working for pay. Most participants preferred to have a paid job, unless their partner made a reasonable living. However, when asked what influenced participants' decisions to work rather than not work or do something else the women tended to lean toward a financial need and men responded with a self-worth reason.

Arthur: Satisfaction of feeling accomplishment throughout the day and working in a professional environment.

Where Alice responded to the same question with:

I like to be active, self-sufficient.

And Amber stated "financial reasons."

Most agreed with the statement that there are no significant differences in abilities between men and women. This supports Hakim's assertion that today "men do not surpass women in ability and talents" (Hakim, p.9, 2007). A few though had to qualify their statements. In fact, Ashley stated:

I think as far mental abilities or professional skills then definitely without reservation. If you're talking about strength or something like that sometimes not [i.e., women and men are not equal]. I mean we want to be equal but unless you're like a weight-lifting woman, probably not.

A contradiction in choice

Most disagreed with the statement that the ideal is for men to have a job and for women to take care of the family. A question asked only of married participants was to agree or disagree that if their spouse earned enough money they would rather stay home. A majority of those that responded agreed they would stay home. What was unique about this result is that the majority also felt that they did not find being a housewife as fulfilling as working for pay. The contradiction of this result creates a point that may change the way Preference Theory is viewed. It points to the possibility that women's choice may change over time. The scenario women find themselves in may cause the ambivalence of choice. If their husbands made enough money they would stay home. If they did not make enough money they may work. If there were other factors in their lives or workplace they may make a different decision. All of this may add to the theory by showing that the women are not making true free choice. Instead, they are making choices within the constraints of their environments.

This finding however, furthers some of Preference Theory's tenets that new scenarios created by policy changes in society have created opportunities for women to

make new choices and those choices are becoming more heterogeneous. The cause of the heterogeneous choice is not clear.

Evolution of work-life flexibility

One interesting result outside of specific research questions in the interviews was the recognition by several employees of a shift in management flexibility with work-life balance. Participants responded to questions of support and use of policies with quotes like this one from Anika, a management participant:

Um, there are now. I've noticed over the last maybe 6 months there has been a newer executive woman who joined the company who has been really pushing on that type of thing so you have more flex time hours now for people if you have families and that's definitely new.

Another participant, Amy a management respondent, also noted shifts in company policy based on a realization that families need support. She said:

I think other people struggled with it. When I first started it was a very young group and nobody had kids. I think that's different than what we have now. It is much more flexible when it comes to working from home, or if your child is sick. I never needed to experience those policies but I know that there was frustration when that was there and that led to them creating new policies.

Also an interesting finding, when describing where they would like to be in 10 years there was a distinct difference between how management and non-management envisioned their futures. Allison, a non-management participant said:

I think I might like to take a heavier focus on the non-profit sector, or possibly writing or publishing.

Where Alicia, a manager said this about her career in 10 years:

I would say I still want to be working in PR doing day-to-day public relations strategies and tactics.

Chapter 5

Discussion

This section addresses how the interviews affect our understanding of how Preference Theory possibly explains the inequity between the number of women in PR and number of female PR leaders. This section expands on the results and interprets them for the purpose of outlining areas for further research.

After completing the interviews it appears that women make work-life decisions that affect their career path. As evidenced by the discussions with women who transitioned from full-time to contract roles it is clear that women have chosen not to pursue more responsibility in order to allow for a better work-life balance. Additionally, there is an acceptance of long work hours that may restrict advancement of people with family commitments. Finally, work-life balance issues were not factors for employees' eligibility for advancement; however, management did feel that their billable hours and ability to balance the two would affect their selection.

Understanding how the findings relate to Preference Theory requires a discussion of this information within the theory's tenets.

Preference Theory use

Preference Theory Tenet 1

According to Preference Theory's first tenet, changes in society and the labor market are producing a qualitatively different and new scenario of options and opportunities for women. This tenet appears present in the results as we see a variety of responses from women regarding their preferences to work versus their *need* to work. It

also appears apparent in the fact that there was a mixed response regarding who is the main income earner within their household. More women have the opportunity to not be the breadwinner and instead be a secondary income earner. New choices to work or not work also caused there to be a trend in the women participants who said they did not find being a housewife as fulfilling, but would stay home if their husband earned enough money. This also supports the second tenet of the theory.

Preference Theory Tenet 2

Tenet two asserts that women are heterogeneous in their preferences and priorities and based on the changes in society now have a choice in creating their own work pattern choices. While women did support their preference for a shared domestic division of labor, there were a wide variety of scenarios where women could continue to choose to work, or not work, with little effect on their household income. In addition, while they disagreed that being a housewife would be as fulfilling as working, and they preferred to have a paid job instead of not working, yet they were also willing to stay home if money were not an issue. This shows that women feel ambivalent about their life choices and that economic security may play into their decisions more significantly. Additionally, this contradiction shows that while women's choices are ambivalent they are also constrained by the work place. The women are not making free choices. They are making a choice based on available options. Women's choices are also not static. They change over time and based on the scenarios they find themselves in. The participants' choices being heterogeneous lead to the third tenet.

Preference Theory Tenet 3

This tenet asserts that the difference in women's preferences and priorities creates

conflict between groups of women, which creates an advantage for men, whose interests are the same. This tenet was not necessarily directly discussed. Internal competition for positions may need to be analyzed in order to have a finding in this area, which is an opportunity for future research.

Preference Theory Tenet 4

The final tenet believes that women's heterogeneity is the main cause of women's variable response to social engineering policies in the new scenario of modern societies. Generally speaking, this means that women making new and different choices have made it difficult for society to create a way to support the popular choices made for work-life balance. Instead society has to have many options [i.e. policies to allow flex-time] available to support the many possible choices women make when it comes to work-life balance. It would appear, based on trends within the responses here that the wide variety of scenarios for female practitioners within public relations could make their response, goals and career paths difficult to predict. However, future research would have to be done in order to make the results generalized.

Limitations

Generalizing these results is not possible and would not be applicable to the public relations career field as a whole. The intentions of doing this research were not to generalize, but instead to establish a richer understanding of the choices and decisions that men and women have made in their careers and how they believe it has affected their opportunities for advancement.

While these data offer compelling insights, a limitation of this type of research is the sensitivity of the topic. Asking professionals to discuss how their family choices and

perceptions have affected their leadership and how that has fit in with their company's culture provides challenges when it comes to explicit details and true feelings on the matter. To counter this, the researcher gave the subjects anonymity. In addition, the sensitivity of the topic and how it relates to a possible perception of the agency made access difficult. Significant access issues were discovered as the researcher progressed through the interviews and the agency only allowed certain individuals to interview. This limited the possibilities for research and discussion.

A majority of participants were married and only four currently had children, which is a limitation of the study.

Finally, this research is on a sensitive topic and addresses personal preferences and how they interplay at a participant's current place of employment. This made both the agency and the respondents naturally hesitant with someone they did not know well. This may have discouraged some respondents from providing truly accurate answers or offering more depth in their responses.

Future Research

The goal of this research was to establish the possibility that work-life balance choices could be a reason there is a disparity between the number of women in public relations and the number of women in management roles within public relations. This thesis opens the possibility for a number of future research options including quantitative studies on work-life balance decisions in public relations, quantitative studies on work-life balance in agencies versus corporate roles, and qualitative studies on practitioners transitioning from an agency role to a corporate role. Additionally, a study of how the evolution of women's choice to enter the labor force has affected men could contribute to

our understanding of the changing roles of men in society.

A quantitative study on the number of public relations practitioners who have made work-life decisions that have affected their career progression is clearly an ideal research project to follow-up on this thesis. A survey study could analyze women who have made the choice to balance a family and career and what level of responsibility they take on at work. It would be important to look at the timing of the decisions to have children and how it affected their career both immediately and later. Age of the respondent, number and ages of the respondents' children, marital status and whether the respondents were a primary or secondary earner would all be variables to assess. The research could also analyze the difference in decision timing and whether having children sooner in the career or later affected the level of impact on progression. That research could follow Preference Theory's tenets and establish the number of practitioners who have chosen not to rise to senior management roles in order to choose to balance work and life. It could also analyze the number of practitioners who have chosen to focus on only family, or only life.

Another interesting future research project would be analyzing quantitatively if women's decisions to balance work and life have affected their career progression equally if they are in an agency role versus a corporate public relations role. A number of participants in this research project pointed to billable hours and the need to track time. A corporate public relations practitioner is much less likely to have the need to track billable hours and may not be as affected as agency practitioners are.

Finally, a project on the reasons why a public relations practitioner transitions from an agency to a corporate role could shed light on why there are so few women

remaining in the competitive agency field and rising to senior management roles. It was clear through the results of the study that women made work-life balance decisions that required a transition in roles. It would be important to have a better understanding as to why those decisions are made and if they can be tied to Preference Theory's beliefs that they are doing so because they believe in work, life or a balance of the two and make decisions on their career based on those beliefs.

In contrast to the research analyzing females in PR, a study from the male perspective would be important to look at how the evolution of female choice has changed their preferences and perspectives. As women have encountered new work-life scenarios, so have men as a result of women's decisions. A study analyzing the change of the domestic division of labor preferences and looking to see if preferences are different in a two-worker home versus one where this is only a single breadwinner would be interesting. Also, further investigation might analyze if men have made decisions not to pursue work roles with increased responsibility because their wives also work and there is less pressure to be the breadwinner.

The utility of the Preference Theory within Public Relations is one that deserves additional attention. Its use could help scholars further understand more about choice, the ambivalence behind women's choices, and open the door to a look at the structural constraints to their available choices. Expanding this theory's second tenet to understand more about how free women really are to make these choices would help to build a stronger theoretical framework. It is possible, based on this research project, that while choices are available women, many women may not make those decisions solely on preference. Instead they may make their choices based on preferences within the

constraints of their career field or place of employment. Additionally, women's choices and preferences may change over time. The changing of their own personal scenario may cause their ambivalence.

The results of this study have created an opportunity to further the use of the Preference Theory within public relations research. It has created an opportunity to further explore these issues through a quantitative means. It has also opened the door to looking into women's choices from the perspective of ambivalence and constraint.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The goal of this research was to establish the existence of work-life balance decisions affecting career progression within public relations and identify whether the agency side of public relations is an environment where it may be necessary to make decisions that affect career progression which could lead to affecting the disparity between the number of women in public relations and the number of women in management roles within public relations.

Using the Preference Theory tenets the researcher examined the perceptions of work-life choices, family status, and preferences on the domestic division of labor to establish that decisions made in reference to their preferences could contribute to the disparity. There is room for future research on a generalized scale that could establish that women's choice to balance work and life is the reason there is a disparity between the number of women in public relations and the number leading the career field.

The research contributed to the data available as it relates to Preference Theory by finding the existence of an environment where women have made work-life decisions that have affected their career. In addition, the participants in the survey were generally at the same education and experience levels, but had made clear decisions, they called personal, and affected their career progression.

The 10 depth interviews with public relations professionals at an agency found:

- 1) Public relations practitioners are making work-life balance choices that have affected

their career progression. They have deemed the decision to be a “personal” one, rather than one attributed to the career field being unsupportive. If policies were in place to make employment within the agency setting more flexible their career progression may have been different.

2) There is an acceptance of long work hours that restricts advancement of people with family commitments. A number of mentions of billable hours, work-load requirements and a perception that members with families are less willing to take on certain projects have led to an environment where having a family can make it difficult to compete with someone who does not have a family and does not have to battle assumptions.

3) Work-life balance issues were not factors for employees’ eligibility for advancement; however, management did feel that their billable hours and ability to balance the two would affect their selection.

The study found that work-life balance does contribute to career progression within this firm and that the environment within an agency can equally contribute to a woman’s ability to progress within public relations. To establish a definitive, generalized relationship between these factors and whether they truly influence how women progress in public relations opens up opportunities for further research, including quantitative studies that will generalize the insights to a larger population.

The study also gave a hopeful look to the future with a move toward improving work-life balance attitudes as evidenced by practitioners discussions of how far XYZ has come in flexibility and support for employees’ decisions.

A lot of policies have changed over the past few years since I’ve been here that make it a lot more family friendly environment. Part of that is due to a lot of our staff members getting married and having children. So I think they are starting to realize they need to be more flexible and meet the needs of working moms.

The agency was not perfect yet, but consistent mention of recent policy additions from flex-time to family sick leave show that the agency is working toward providing an environment where the needs of the agency's bottom line and those of the employees can be met.

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Appendix-A

Subordinate Interview Questionnaire:

- 1) Tell me about your job at XYZ Public Relations?
- 2) How long have you been with the company?
- 3) How long have you worked in public relations?
- 4) What is the highest level of education you have achieved?
- 5) Why did you choose to achieve this level of education?
- 6) [If appropriate] What is the highest level of education your husband has achieved?
- 7) People talk about the changing roles of husband and wife in the family. Here are three kinds of family. Which of them corresponds best with your ideas about the family?
 - A family where the two partners each has an equally demanding job and where housework and the care of the children are shared equally between them.
 - A family where the wife has a less demanding job than her husband and where she does the larger share of housework and caring for the children.
 - A family where only the husband has a job and the wife runs the home.
 - None of these three cases
- 8) How would you describe your family currently?
- 9) If without having to work you had what you would regard as a reasonable living income, would you still prefer to have a paid job, or would you rather not bother?
- 10) What influenced your decision to work instead of not working or doing something else?
- 11) Now I would like to talk to you about your future job plans. What kind of work would you like to be doing 10 years from now?
- 12) Do you feel a career in public relations allows for work-life balance?
- 13) Do you feel managers support a work-life balance culture? How?
- 14) Are there specific policies at your agency that support a work-life balance?
- 15) If policies exist, do people feel it's OK to use them [men and women?]
- 16) Describe a manager in your experience who has supported a work-life balance?
- 17) What did they do to support and encourage that balance?
- 18) How does XYZ Public Relations support your family status?
- 19) Describe a manager in your experience that did not support a work-life balance?
- 20) What did they do that made them unsupportive?
- 21) Do you feel that managers make assumptions about your willingness to take on challenges based on your family status?

- 22) Do you feel that managers give you tasks and assignments based on your family status?
- 23) Who is the main income-earner in your household?
- Is it both of you jointly?
 - Your partner/spouse?
 - Yourself?
 - Or someone else?
- 24) Would you agree with the following statements?
- A husband's job is to earn the money and a wife's job is to look after the home and family
 - Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay
- 25) Would you agree with the following statements?
- There are no significant differences of abilities between men and women
The ideal is for men to have a job and for women to take care of the family
If my husband earned enough money I would rather stay at home as a housewife
(asked only of married women)
- 26) How old are you?
- 27) Are you married?
- 28) Divorced?
- 29) Single, never been married?
- 30) Do you have children?
- 31) How many?
- 32) What would you say is the number one factor that determined the number of children you have?
- 33) Any other thoughts?

APPENDIX-B
Manager Interview Questionnaire

- 1) Tell me about your job at XYZ Public Relations?
- 2) How long have you been with the company?
- 3) How long have you worked in public relations?
- 4) What is the highest level of education you have achieved?
- 5) Why did you choose to achieve this level of education?
- 6) [If appropriate] What is the highest level of education your husband has achieved?
- 7) Now I would like to talk to you about your future job plans. What kind of work would you like to be doing 10 years from now?

- 8) What influenced your decision to work instead of not working or doing something else?

- 9) Do you feel that XYZ Public Relations supports your family decisions?

- 10) Are there specific policies at your agency that support a work-life balance?
- 11) If policies exist, do people feel it's OK to use them [men and women?]
- 12) Do you feel that you are supportive of your employee's family choices?

- 13) Do you feel a leader or manager in public relations can achieve work-life balance?
- 14) How do you feel about employees who prioritize family over career?
- 15) How do you feel about employees who prioritize career over family?
- 16) Should people who prioritize family over their career receive the same opportunities for advancement? Why or why not?
- 17) Do you feel you make assumptions about an employee's willingness to take on challenges based on their family status?

- 18) Do you feel that you have ever given a task or assignment based on an employee's family status?

- 19) People talk about the changing roles of husband and wife in the family. Here are three kinds of family. Which of them corresponds best with your ideas about the family?
 - A family where the two partners each has an equally demanding job and where housework and the care of the children are shared equally between them.
 - A family where the wife has a less demanding job than her husband and where she does the larger share of housework and caring for the children.
 - A family where only the husband has a job and the wife runs the home.
 - None of these three cases

- 20) How would you describe your family currently?
- 21) If without having to work you had what you would regard as a reasonable living income, would you still prefer to have a paid job, or would you rather not bother?
- 22) Who is the main income-earner in your household?
- Is it yourself?
 - Your partner/spouse?
 - Both of you jointly?
 - Or someone else?
- 23) Would you agree with the following statements?
- A husband's job is to earn the money and a wife's job is to look after the home and family
 - Being a housewife is just as fulfilling as working for pay
- 24) Would you agree with the following statements?
- There are no significant differences of abilities between men and women
 - The ideal is for men to have a job and for women to take care of the family
 - If my husband earned enough money I would rather stay at home as a housewife (asked only of married women)
- 25) How old are you?
- 26) Are you married?
- 27) Divorced?
- 28) Single, never been married?
- 29) Do you have children?
- 30) How many?
- 31) What would you say is the number one factor that determined the number of children you have?
- 32) Any other thoughts?