ANTICIPATED WORK-NONWORK BALANCE AND CONFLICT AS PREDICTORS OF JOB CHOICE: IDENTITY SALIENCE AS MODERATOR

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ABSTRACT

This study examines individual job choice decision making with the foreknowledge that such choices will impact the quality of a person’s future work-nonwork roles. It is likely that job applicants have at least some anticipation of the work-nonwork conflict (WNC) and work-nonwork balance (WNB) they will face if they accept a certain job offer. Although most research has provided reasons for organizations to promote WNB and reduce WNC in the workplace, little research has examined the influence of anticipated WNB and WNC on applicant job choice. The present study explores this question and considers whether a person’s work and nonwork identity salience might further influence the effects of anticipated WNB and WNC. Work and nonwork identity salience represents the underlying value a person places on his/her work and nonwork role domains. In the present study, anticipated WNB was expected to positively correlate with job choice likelihood ratings, and anticipated WNC was expected to negatively correlate with job choice likelihood ratings. These relationships were also hypothesized (H3) to differ depending on individuals’ underlying work and nonwork identity salience. To test these hypotheses, participants consisting of upper-level undergraduate and graduate university students (N = 219) indicated the likelihood of accepting an otherwise attractive job offer that was also likely to include: (a) high WNB and low WNC, (b) low WNB and high WNC, (c) low WNB and low WNC, and (d) high WNB and high WNC. Participants also reported their work and nonwork identity salience and other demographic details. A combination of means-comparison techniques supported H1 and H2. H3 was partially supported.
DEDICATION

This final product is dedicated to my late friend Gunther. Your memory will not be forgotten.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

WNB, Work-nonwork balance
WNC, Work-nonwork conflict
UTC, The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

It is unclear whether the phenomenon commonly referred to as the “war for talent” (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001), has increased due to workforce demographics and skills shortages (McDonnell, 2011), or decreased due to the recent economic recession (Baum & Kabst, 2014). Regardless of current labor trends, all organizations will inevitably be faced with the retirement of many older workers and the need to recruit and retain younger job seekers (Twenge, Campbell, Hoffman, & Lance, 2010). Researchers and employers should give special attention to the factors that influence applicants’ attraction to an organization and ultimately job choice.

Although there is considerable research relating to applicants’ attraction to jobs or organizations, much less research has been dedicated to understanding the factors that influence whether an applicant actually chooses to accept a job offer when it is made. This void in the research literature is likely due to job choice being the most difficult aspect of the hiring process to predict (D. S. Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005). D. S. Chapman et al. (2005) showed that many of the characteristics that predict initial applicant attraction do not end up predicting job choice. The present study is designed to explore one factor that is likely to influence an ultimate job choice, the degree to which accepting a particular job is believed to affect the quality of a person’s work and nonwork life roles.

There exists a small body of literature on anticipated work-nonwork conflict (WNC) and work-nonwork balance (WNB) (e.g., Cinamon, 2010; Gaffey & Rottinghaus, 2009),
however very little research has been done regarding their influence of on job seekers’ organizational attraction and ultimate job choice. While it is possible that applicants are blind-sided with WNC and WNB only after they have entered a new job role, a more likely scenario is that applicants and employers have at least some idea ahead of time that a particular job opportunity may pose challenges to a person’s ability to successfully manage work and nonwork roles. Understanding these challenges and opportunities as a job applicant may factor into attraction and choice decisions, and knowing this could help organizations more effectively recruit and retain new talent.

The bulk of the literature pertaining to WNC has demonstrated its negative effects on mental health and physical health (Hammig & Bauer, 2014), as well as a host of other well-being related outcomes. This literature base has garnered increasing attention from occupational health researchers, but the present study is designed to demonstrate why anticipated WNB and WNC is also relevant to more traditional industrial and organizational psychology issues such as recruitment and job choice.

This is a challenging issue to explore, because WNB is a subjectively experienced personal state of being (Cunningham, 2009; Guest, 2002). What constitutes “balance” depends on many factors, including a person’s stage of life and his/her underlying values, needs, and motivations. For this reason, explorations of work-nonwork role balancing need to also consider the potential influence of an individual’s personal identity salience. Specifically, work and nonwork identity salience has been shown to influence individual perceptions of WNB (White, 2011). Cunningham (2005, 2009) demonstrated that individual attraction to organizational characteristics varies based on a person’s work and nonwork identity salience: work-salient applicants ended up preferring salary while nonwork-salient applicants preferred cultural support
from organizations. Work and nonwork identity salience may influence how much an individual is concerned with the anticipation of WNB and WNC when making a job choice.

The goal of the present study is to expand our thinking about job attraction and choice by exploring the possible influence of applicants’ anticipated WNC and WNB, and underlying work and nonwork identity salience. The following sections provide the necessary background that supports this endeavor.

**Applicant Attraction**

Applicant attraction is generally defined as positive attitudes or emotions of the applicant towards an organization, coincident with the applicant’s desire to form some type of work relationship with the organization (Aiman-Smith, Bauer, & Cable, 2001). There are many job and organizational characteristics that can influence applicant attraction (Carless & Imber, 2007). A meta-analytic review of recruiting outcomes by D. S. Chapman et al. (2005) extensively examined evidence from 71 studies and found that specific job–organization characteristics (e.g., work environment, organization image), perceptions of the recruiting process, and perceived fit with the organization were all significant predictors of job-organizational attraction.

The majority of recent studies regarding applicant attraction have focused on the influence of recruitment practices/processes and recruiter-related factors (Baum, Schäfer, & Kabst, 2015; Chen, Hsu, & Tsai, 2013). For example, applicants are more attracted to advertisements that they perceive to be congruent with the corporate image, resulting in higher organizational attraction (Baum et al., 2015). Job searchers express a dislike for vague and unrealistic job descriptions (Feldman & Klaas, 2002), but limited research has examined whether
competency-based descriptions are more attractive to applicants than traditional job-based
descriptions (e.g., Hawkes & Weathington, 2014).

Methods of recruitment are also increasingly being studied. Specifically, the use of digital
and online recruitment methods appear to impact the level of organizational attractiveness. For
example, Baum and Kabst (2014) found that although websites appear to have a stronger impact
on applicant attraction than printed advertisements, this relationship is mediated by applicant
knowledge of the employer (i.e., beliefs regarding the recruiting company as an employer). In a
separate study, participants were surveyed about recruitment website features and reported that
content, design, and communication features all influenced their attraction to an organization.
Interestingly, eye tracking and verbal protocol analysis (VPA) in the same study suggested that
web-based job seekers focused their visual and verbal attention on text and content over images
or design (Allen, Biggane, Pitts, Otondo, & Van Scotter, 2013).

As previously mentioned, recruiters may impact applicants’ perception of the
attractiveness of an organization. For example, applicants’ perception of a recruiter’s positive
mood is positively related to applicants’ perceptions of the recruiter being competent and
informative, which in turn influences organizational attractiveness (Chen et al., 2013).
Interestingly, though, research on the direct effect of recruiters on applicant attraction has been
mixed. According to Carless and Imber (2007), recruitment interviewer characteristics such as
warmth, friendliness, job knowledge, general competence, and humor all have a significant direct
and indirect effect on attraction. However, other research has failed to find a direct effect of
recruiter behaviors on applicant attraction (Turban, Forret, & Hendrickson, 1998).

Beyond the potential influence of recruiters, most research on applicant attraction has
focused on characteristics of the organization and the job, and the degree to which these
characteristics influence applicant perceptions of the organization. Higher pay levels, flexible benefits, individual-based pay, and fixed pay policies have all been shown to be more attractive to job seekers (Cable & Judge, 1994). Applicant attraction is also positively associated with perceived challenging work, desirable location, and supportive work environment (Turban et al., 1998).

While these characteristics do appear to matter to applicants, it is surprising how little relative attention has been paid to the cognitive and decisional processes that operate within the applicant when processing job relevant information (Cunningham, 2009). This is perhaps especially important to understand now, given that organizations are challenged with recruiting and retaining workers from multiple generations (Twenge et al., 2010), who are likely to perceive recruiters and work-related characteristics very differently and who have been shown to possess very different conceptualizations of what constitutes WNB (Keeney, Boyd, Sinha, Westring, & Ryan, 2013).

**Job Choice**

Although applicant attraction is an important preliminary step in the process of recruiting a new hire into an organization, researchers and practitioners are ultimately interested in a selected applicant’s ultimate job choice (D. S. Chapman et al., 2005). Job choice is distinctly different from organization attraction or job pursuit intentions, and is defined as deciding to accept an actual job offer involving a real job (D. S. Chapman et al., 2005). Unfortunately, job choice outcomes have been very difficult to predict. D. S. Chapman et al. (2005) provide four possible reasons why effect sizes from existing attempts to predict job choice are so low: (1) such choices are dichotomous and therefore not well-modeled with traditional analytical
techniques, (2) applicants tend to reciprocate the rejection given by the employer and choose a different position regardless of any initial attraction, (3) applicants may self-select out of later recruitment stages if they perceive a lack of fit with the organization, resulting in range restriction among candidates who ultimately receive job offers, and (4) there is likely a indirect relationship between the commonly studied predictors of job attraction and job choice.

The four reasons just listed are among the motivations driving the present research. Despite evidence that applicants’ objective and subjective fit with a job or organization is linked to organizational attraction, such general fit perceptions do not consistently correlate with applicants’ ultimate job choice decisions (Judge & Cable, 1997). Aiman-Smith et al. (2001) revealed significant disparities in the predictors of attraction and even job pursuit intentions. These puzzles and inconsistencies are among the reasons the present study aims at investigating job choice instead of simply applicant attraction.

**Work-Nonwork Balance and Work-Nonwork Conflict**

An individual’s nonwork role is multidimensional and can include family, personal, and community obligations as priorities (Hall, Kossek, Briscoe, Pichler, & Lee, 2013). When these nonwork roles are positively managed with one’s work roles, WNB is said to exist. When nonwork roles are not well-managed along with one’s work roles, WNC tends to be experienced. Aside from these very generic definitional statements, defining WNB in more concrete terms can be quite difficult due to the many different ways in which this term is used. Kalliath and Brough (2008) describe various conceptualizations of WNB within the literature as including everything from the absence of conflict to perceived equity, satisfaction, fulfillment, or control across multiple roles. WNB is related to low role conflict, high role enrichment, and is most likely to be
experienced when a person invests largely equal levels of resources (e.g., time, attention) into each of his/her life roles (Haar, Russo, Suñe, & Ollier-Malaterre, 2014). Common threads from these different characterizations of this construct are that individual perceptions of interrole balance are centrally important, as is the fact that perceived WNB can change over time (Kalliath & Brough, 2008). With these points in mind, WNB can be understood as a concept unique to each person that is subjectively determined by each person (Guest, 2002) and dependent on each person’s life values, priorities, and goals (Haar et al., 2014). Perhaps the most satisfactory and encompassing definition of WNB is the, “individual perception that work and non-work activities are compatible and promote growth in accordance with an individual’s current life priorities” (Kalliath & Brough, 2008, p. 326).

Perceived WNB differs from perceived WNC in that the former represents a “positive management of competing role demands” (White, 2011, p. 8), while the latter is experienced when competing demands are not well-managed. Research shows WNB to positively correlate with life and job satisfaction and negatively correlate with anxiety and depression across multiple cultures (Haar et al., 2014). Brough et al. (2014) also found that WNB negatively correlates with work demands, turnover intentions, and psychological strain. Perceived WNC and other forms of interrole conflict are threatening to WNB (Hammig & Bauer, 2014; Qu & Zhao, 2012; Reichl, Leiter, & Spinath, 2014). Hammig and Bauer (2014) found WNC to be strongly associated with poor self-rated health, sickness absence, musculoskeletal disorders, sleep disorders, stress, and burnout (see also Reichl et al., 2014). In contrast, employees who perceive low levels of WNC tend to carry positive aspects from their daily life over into the workplace (Qu & Zhao, 2012).
The Present Study

The present study is designed to focus research attention not on the earliest stages of applicant attraction, but rather on the applicants’ ultimate job choice stage. Specifically, the purpose of the present study was to examine the influence of anticipated WNC and WNB, and work and nonwork identity salience on job choice for applicants. Although detailed more fully in the subsequent Method section, participants in this study responded to a series of hypothetical job choice scenarios, indicating their likelihood of accepting a job offer with certain WNB and WNC conditions.

Research suggests that jobs in organizations with policies and cultures that support WNB are more attractive to applicants (Carless & Wintle, 2007; Cunningham, 2005, 2009). This combined with previously mentioned information regarding WNC and its negative effect on multiple areas (Hammig & Bauer, 2014; Qu & Zhao, 2012; Reichl et al., 2014) make for a compelling case for the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Anticipated WNB is associated with higher job choice likelihood ratings.

Hypothesis 2: Anticipated WNC is associated with lower job choice likelihood ratings.

Considering the positive outcomes associated with WNB and negative consequences associated with WNC, as well as the present context pertaining to job choice, the following related general research question also emerges: Are certain individuals less concerned with WNB or affected by WNC than others?
Identity salience. One possible individual difference factor likely to influence applicants’ perceptions of person-organization fit and ultimately applicants’ job choice is an individual’s underlying work and nonwork identity salience. According to Stryker and Serpe (1994), identity salience represents a “readiness to act out an identity as a consequence of the identity’s properties as a cognitive structure or schema” (p. 17). An individual’s identity is influenced by the roles they take on, however the most prevalent role is referred to as being salient (White, 2011).

Most individuals possess multiple identities associated with their various life roles, and these identities are hierarchically ordered within each person (Bagger, Li, & Gutek, 2008). Depending on the situation, certain characteristic behaviors, cognitions, and attitudes associated with these identities are more or less likely to be demonstrated (Stryker & Serpe, 1994). Likewise, a person is more likely to seek out opportunities that are aligned with identities that are higher in a person’s salience hierarchy (Stryker, 1968).

Cunningham (2005) explained that work and nonwork identity salience signifies the underlying value a person places on work and nonwork role domains respectively. Lobel and St. Clair (1992) found that individuals with career salient identities were more willing to give extra effort at work than family salient individuals. With this in mind, it is possible that applicants’ work and nonwork identity salience may lead them to choose jobs with certain characteristics over others.

As previously mentioned, research on the predictors of job choice is limited, mainly because predicting dichotomous outcomes is difficult (e.g., D. S. Chapman et al., 2005). The literature on recruitment, WNC, WNB, and identity salience identifies specific job and organizational characteristics that predict applicant attraction or job choice. Work by
Cunningham (2005) suggests that applicants vary in their attraction to specific job characteristics that are more or less associated with work and nonwork aspects of life. Similarly, Bagger et al. (2008) found that the effects of family interfering with work were more negative for employees who had low levels of family salience than for employees who held identities strongly tied to their family lives.

Given the preceding background and findings, it is conceivable that applicants’ work and nonwork identity salience may influence their job choices. As such, it was expected that:

Hypothesis 3a: An individual’s work and nonwork identity salience moderates the effect of anticipated WNB on job choice likelihood. Anticipated WNB has a weaker effect on individuals with high levels of work-salience verses nonwork-salience.

Hypothesis 3b: An individual’s work and nonwork identity salience moderates the effect of anticipated WNC on job choice likelihood. Anticipated WNC will have a weaker effect on individuals with high levels of work-salience verses nonwork-salience.
CHAPTER II
METHOD

Participants

Participants were junior and senior undergraduate students, and graduate students recruited at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC), a medium-sized public university in the southeastern United States of America. The sample was composed of students from a variety of disciplines to be as representative of the student body as possible. This sample is at least somewhat representative of typical populations of applicants recruited by companies throughout the country, given the large amount of college recruitment conducted by companies nationwide (Rynes & Boudreau, 1986).

The final set of participants included 219 individuals. The median age for participants was 21 years old with a range of 18 to 51. Of these individuals, 161 were female and 58 were male. In terms of race and ethnicity, 13 reported being Hispanic or Latino and 198 non-Hispanic or Latino, while 173 primarily identified as white, 31 black or African American, 5 Asian, and 1 Native American or Alaskan Native. In terms of relationship status, 7 were married or living as married, 54 were in a serious relationship, 152 were single, and 5 were divorced or widowed. Most participants reported no dependents or children, specifically: (a) 193 reported having no dependents, 11 having one dependent, and 12 having two dependents and (b) 210 reported having no children, 4 having one child, 1 having two children, and 1 having four children. In terms of academic standing, 113 of the participants were Juniors in colleges, 81 were Seniors,
and 25 were graduate students. Finally, 22 of the participants reported working full time, 127 working part time, and 70 not currently working.

**Study Design and Procedure**

The study was a within-subjects survey design. As noted in the stated hypotheses, the independent variables (IV) of interest are anticipated WNB, WNC, and work and nonwork identity salience. Prior to gathering data, pilot tests of the measures were given to graduate industrial-organizational psychology students at UTC. The data was collected through an unproctored and internet-based survey/rating activity delivered via the Qualtrics online survey system. The outcome or dependent variable was participants’ likelihood of accepting hypothetical job offers. The study also gauged participants’ preference for a variety of different organizational characteristics shown in previous studies to influence applicant attraction and job choice, specifically: pay (Cable & Judge, 1994), schedule flexibility (Rau & Hyland, 2002), geographic location (D. Chapman & Webster, 2006), opportunities for promotion (D. S. Chapman et al., 2005), and overall sense of fit with the organization (D. S. Chapman et al., 2005). In addition to these characteristics, job scenarios with different degrees of anticipated WNB and WNC were given to participants to determine their influence on job choice.

Junior, senior, and graduate level students were recruited through two methods. Upper level students who lived in on-campus housing were contacted through UTC Housing and Residence Life. On November 17, 2015, these students were emailed an invitation to participate and an anonymous link to an online survey. In the last two weeks of February, additional students were recruited in Junior and Senior, graduate level classes from departments in psychology, biology, social work, health and human performance, and communication. Although
no incentives were offered by the researchers, some professors offered extra credit for those who participated. Students wrote their contact information on a sheet of paper and were eventually sent an individualized Qualtrics link to the survey. Participants totaled in 268.

Students who express an interest in participating receive an email linking to the online survey through the Qualtrics. After a brief explanation and introduction, participants began by electronically signing an informed consent form. For those that indicated their willingness to continue were then provided several questions regarding their demographic information including age, sex, number of dependents, number of kids, marital status, etc. Next the participants were given the Job Choice measure to assess the influencing of anticipated WNB and WNC on job choice, followed a WNB and WNC importance measure. Last, participants completed Cunningham (2005) work and nonwork identity salience measure.

Measures

All measures are included in Appendix A.

Demographics. For the purpose of sample description, all participants were asked to report their age, sex, race, ethnicity, marital status, number of dependents, number of children, status as a student, college level, highest level of education, working status, and hours worked per week.

Job choice likelihood. A job choice measure adapted from Cable and Judge (1996) was used to assess participants’ job choice likelihood for hypothetical job choice scenarios. This ratings measure was separated into different rating elements. The first portion asked participants to rate the importance they place on specific job characteristics when considering a particular job offer, such as pay, flexible hours, location, promotion opportunities, and perceived
organizational fit. Participants rated the significance of these characteristics by sliding a Qualtrics slider scale from 1 to 100 to indicate increasing importance of a given characteristic. Participants were then asked to indicate how likely they would be to accept this job offer, followed by if they would describe it as their “ideal job”. These answers were also measured using Qualtrics sliders from 1 to 100.

Participants were then given four job choice scenarios with differing levels of anticipated WNB and WNC for a given work week. They were instructed to indicate the likelihood of accepting this attractive job offer that was also likely to include: (a) low WNB and low WNC, (b) low WNB and high WNC, (c) high WNB and low WNC, and (d) high WNB and high WNC. Although options (b) and (c) clearly signify predominately WNB or WNC outcomes, (a) and (d) represent mixed or conflicting signals an applicant could receive about a job (ex. low likelihood of balance and low likelihood of conflict).

**WNB/WNC importance.** A self-designed measure was developed to assess the importance of anticipated WNB and WNC. Participants indicate how much significance they place on WNB and WNC when forming their decision to accept or reject a job offer by sliding a Qualtrics scale from 1 to 100.

**Identity salience.** The work and nonwork identity salience of participants was measured using Cunningham’s (2005) 10-item scale (e.g., “I view my work as the most important aspect of my life.”). Responses are made along a seven-point Likert scale of agreement such that higher scores on each subset of items reflect stronger work or nonwork salience. The difference between scores of work and nonwork salience was calculated in order to determine the predominance of either work or nonwork identity salience in a participant. This scale has
previously reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .86 for work-salience and .83 for nonwork-salience (Cunningham, 2005).
CHAPTER III
RESULTS

Analysis Prework

Data from all participants collected from the study were entered into SPSS for analysis. To prepare the data for analyses, the following steps were taken. Although most incomplete surveys were included for analysis, several \( n = 20 \) were omitted because they failed to answer the vital questions of the study, making them irrelevant to testing the hypotheses. Of the participants that remained, a few \( n = 29 \) were excluded for not being Juniors, Seniors, or graduate students in college. The final sample for analysis included 219 participants. The hypotheses for this study were tested using a variety of means comparison techniques, as detailed in the following paragraphs.

Hypothesis Tests

Hypothesis 1 (that anticipated WNB is associated with higher job choice likelihood ratings) and Hypothesis 2 (that anticipated WNC is associated with lower job choice likelihood ratings) were jointly tested. First, a repeated measures ANOVA (with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction due to violations of sphericity) showed that mean job choice scores differed significantly for participants across the four work-nonwork conditions, \( F(2.61, 483.13) = 195.77, p = .00, r = .95 \). Specifically, and as illustrated in Figure 1 and revealed in post hoc tests using the Least Significant Difference correction, mean job choice likelihood ratings were significantly
higher for scenarios in which high balance and low conflict were anticipated, than for scenarios in which low balance and high conflict were anticipated.

A paired-samples t-test was also conducted to compare participants’ mean job choice likelihood between low versus high levels of work-nonwork conflict and balance. The results of this alternative test of Hypotheses 1 and 2, summarized in Figure 2, revealed that job choice likelihood ratings were (a) significantly higher toward job scenarios in which participants anticipated high versus low balance, $t(188) = -17.58$, $p = .00$, $r = .79$, and (b) significantly lower toward job scenarios in which participants anticipated high versus low conflict, $t(189) = 14.00$, $p = .00$, $r = .71$. These results collectively support Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2.

Figure 1  Job choice likelihood with anticipated WNB and WNC
Prior to the analysis of H3, the difference between work and nonwork salience scores was calculated, dividing participants into either predominately work or nonwork salient. A 2 (predominantly work vs. nonwork salient) x 2 (high vs. low anticipated WNB), mixed between- and within-subjects ANOVA was used to test Hypothesis 3a, that an individual’s work and nonwork identity salience moderates the effect of anticipated WNB on job choice likelihood. Anticipated WNB was expected to have a weaker effect on individuals with high levels of work-salience versus nonwork-salience. As indicated in Figure 3, a mixed design ANOVA with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction (due to violations of sphericity) revealed a significant interaction $F(1, 220) = 4.37, p < .05, r = .14$. 

Figure 2  Job choice likelihood with high verses low levels of WNB and WNC
A similar 2 (predominantly work vs. nonwork salient) x 2 (high vs. low anticipated WNC), mixed between- and within-subjects ANOVA was also used to test Hypothesis 3b, that an individual’s work and nonwork identity salience moderates the effect of anticipated WNC on job choice likelihood. Anticipated WNC was expected to have a weaker effect on individuals with high levels of work-salience versus nonwork-salience. A mixed design ANOVA with a Greenhouse-Geisser correction revealed no significant interaction as indicated in Figure 4, \( F(1, 221) = 1.79, p > .05, r = .09. \)

Figure 3  Job choice likelihood with anticipated WNB and identity salience

Figure 4  Job choice likelihood with anticipated WNC and identity salience
CHAPTER IV
DISCUSSION

The present study tested the effects that varying levels of anticipated WNB and WNC have on job choice likelihood. Also examined was whether these effects are moderated by individuals’ underlying work and nonwork identity salience. This work begins to fill a gap in the research and understanding of how work-nonwork considerations may affect applicant decision making in the pre-hire stage of recruitment.

Hypothesis 1, that anticipated WNB would be associated with higher job choice likelihood ratings was supported. When participants anticipated high levels of WNB and low levels of WNC, their job choice likelihood ratings were higher than for every other WNB/WNC condition (i.e., low WNB and low WNC, low WNB and high WNC, and high WNB and high WNC). The alternative paired-samples t-test analysis showed that job choice likelihood ratings for scenarios with high levels of WNB were higher than scenarios with low levels of WNB. These results support the expectation that applicants will be more likely to accept job offers with the foreknowledge of that they are likely to have an opportunity to effectively balance their work and nonwork role demands.

Hypothesis 2, that anticipated WNC would be associated with lower job choice likelihood ratings was also supported. Participants who anticipated high levels of WNC and low levels of WNB reported lower job choice likelihood ratings than for every other WNB and WNC condition (i.e., low WNB and low WNC, high WNB and low WNC, and high WNB and high
WNC). The paired-samples t-test analysis showed that job choice likelihood ratings for scenarios with high levels of WNC were lower than for scenarios with low levels of WNC. These results support the expectation that applicants will be less likely to accept job offers with the foreknowledge that they are likely to experience conflict between their work and nonwork role demands.

In considering the preceding findings, it is important to remember that each of the four WNB and WNC job choice scenarios represented a unique combination of differing levels of WNB and WNC. It is interesting to note that job choice likelihood ratings for the low WNB and low WNC scenario were not statistically different from ratings for the high WNB and high WNC scenario. Participants were equally as likely to accept a job when in a typical work week when they expected a small chance of WNB and WNC verses a good chance of WNB and WNC. The ratings for both of these potential environments averaged around the 50%, much lower than ratings when high balance and low conflict was anticipated. The implication from this is that mixed or conflicting signals of what to anticipate regarding WNB and WNC do result in applicants having a lower likelihood of accepting a job offer.

The final objective of the present study, detailed in Hypothesis 3, was to examine whether individuals’ work and nonwork salience might moderate the effects of anticipated WNB and WNC on job choice likelihood. Hypothesis 3a was supported by the results; a statistically significant, albeit small interaction effect was observed between WNB and identity salience on job choice ratings. Specifically, anticipated WNB had a weaker effect on work-salient individuals compared to those who were nonwork-salient. The implication of this finding is that when choosing whether or not to accept a job offer, applicants who were more predominantly
nonwork-salient (vs. work-salient) were more concerned with the anticipation of balance between work and nonwork.

Hypothesis 3b was not similarly supported by the statistical analyses, in that work and nonwork identity salience did not significantly moderate the effect of anticipated WNC on job choice likelihood. As is evident in Figure 4, there is some evidence of a very small interaction effect that might be evident in a study with stronger statistical power. From the present results, however, the implication is that anticipated WNC does not appear to have a weaker effect on work-salient individuals compared to nonwork-salient individuals. Stated differently, when applicants are working through the recruitment process, the anticipation of conflict between one’s work and nonwork roles effects applicants equally, regardless of their underlying work and nonwork identity salience.

Although not a stated hypothesis, the WNB/WNC Importance measure was created to assess the level of significance participants placed on the anticipation of WNB and WNC when forming a job choice about an already attractive job offer. The results revealed that participants considered both the anticipation of successfully and failing the manage work and nonwork domains to be highly important when considering a job offer. These results indicate that even when job offers contain attractive characteristics, additional information regarding WNB and WNC is of high value to applicants.

**Limitations**

A few limitations for this study are important to note. The generalizability of the present findings suffers from the typical limitations associated with using college students as participants. In this case, participants were primarily white, female, and young. It should be
noted, however, that college recruitment accounts for a large volume of organizational selection and tends to be successful in filling vacancies (Rynes & Boudreau, 1986). In addition, only data from junior and senior undergraduate, and graduate students were used, meaning that all data came from participants who most likely have some experience with job searching.

Another limitation for this study is the common method used for data collection. Internet based surveys rely on the accurate self-reporting of information from each participant. There is always the possibility that, instead answers that reflect themselves, participants might respond to such survey questions in ways that make them seem more appealing or consistent with the expectations of the researcher. In the present situation, the risks of faking and possibility of succumbing to such biases seems limited, given no incentive for the participants to respond in this way. It is also important to note that the present research questions may not be testable through any other means (i.e., how can the effects of anticipated WNB and WNC be examined without self-reported information?).

Implications and Future Directions

The findings from this study provide evidence that the anticipation of WNB and WNC may be a factor likely to influence applicants’ reactions to job offers. Future researchers should investigate the effect of job and organizational characteristics on applicants’ actual job choices. The present findings also indicate that predominantly nonwork-salient individuals are more influenced than predominantly work-salient individuals by anticipated WNB associated with a job choice. These findings and previously cited work (e.g., Cinamon, 2010; Cunningham, 2005; White, 2011) suggest that more research is needed on the influence of individuals’ work and nonwork identity salience on attraction and choice-making in a recruitment context.
As noted in the previous subsection, a limitation of the present study was its reliance on students as participants. Future researchers are encouraged to replicate and extend this work with other samples of older, already working adults and adults with and without complex nonwork responsibilities (e.g., children, elder care responsibilities). Such additional work can help to establish boundaries on when and why anticipated WNB and WNC are likely to matter. Another limitation mentioned was high ratio of female participants. Future researchers should attempt this type of research with a more gender balanced sample. In addition, researchers should investigate any race, ethnic, and gender differences regarding WNB, WNC, and job choice.

In addition to the points already made, there are other implications to directly emphasize. The considerable observed influence of anticipated WNB and WNC on participants’ job choice likelihood ratings in the present study suggests that employers may want to very seriously consider their messaging and signaling in recruitment and job offer communications. It is important to also remember that participants had a low likelihood of accepting a job offer when they anticipated the likelihood of WNB and WNC to be either both low or both high. The results here reveal the negative impact that mixed or conflicting signaling can have on applicants’ job choice. Because job choice likelihood ratings were so much higher for job scenarios involving clear expectations of high WNB and low WNC, organizations should make strong efforts to give clear messaging to applicants about good WNB probability if they accept a job offer, and avoid sending mixed signals or signals of high WNC.

The present findings also show that recruitment messaging is not perceived equivalently by all applicants. The results suggest there may be value in creating more targeted messaging that appeals to applicants who are more work or nonwork salient, specifically in regards to anticipated WNB. However, even though work-salient applicants may be slightly less effected by

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the anticipation of WNB, emphasizing organizational strengths in terms of WNB will likely still be an effective strategy for increasing job choice likelihood. As previously stated, work and nonwork identity salience did not moderate the effects of anticipated WNC. The implication to clearly state here is that organizations should continue to work toward reducing WNC in any positions for which this has become a common feature and should message to all applicants such efforts, given that anticipated WNC negatively impacted job choice likelihood ratings for all individuals, regardless of underlying work and nonwork identity salience.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore WNB, WNC, work and nonwork identity salience, and job choice. Few studies have investigated the effects of anticipated WNB and WNC, and even fewer have looked at their impact on applicant job choice. The results of this study revealed that participants were very likely to accept job offers with an anticipation WNB, and were very unlikely to accept job offers with the anticipation of WNC. The results also indicated that work-salient participants appear to be slightly less effected by the anticipation of WNB when making a job choice than nonwork-salient participants. There was however, no significant difference in the job choice of work and nonwork salient participants with the anticipation of WNC.

These insights reveal the significance that applicants place on the belief that accepting a job will help balance or cause conflict between their work and nonwork domains. A goal of this study was to add to the limited literature on job choice. This will hopefully promote the further investigation of job choice, arguably the most important step of the recruitment procedure, and cognitive and decisional processes that operate within the applicant when
processing job relevant information. Lastly, this study will be the first of many to help fill in the research gap on work-nonwork conflict and balance, and their impact on job choice.
REFERENCES


APENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL LETTER
MEMORANDUM

TO: Christopher R. Hudson, Jr.  
Dr. Chris Cunningham  

FROM: Lindsay Pardue, Director of Research Integrity  
Dr. Bart Weathington, IRB Committee Chair

DATE: 10/23/15

SUBJECT: IRB #15-120: Anticipated Work-Nonwork Balance and Conflict as Predictors of Job Choice: Identity Salience as Moderator

The IRB Committee Chair has reviewed and approved your application and assigned you the IRB number listed above. You must include the following approval statement on research materials seen by participants and used in research reports:

The Institutional Review Board of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (FWA00004149) has approved this research project # 15-120.

Please remember that you must complete a Certification for Changes, Annual Review, or Project Termination/Completion Form when the project is completed or provide an annual report if the project takes over one year to complete. The IRB Committee will make every effort to remind you prior to your anniversary date; however, it is your responsibility to ensure that this additional step is satisfied.

Please remember to contact the IRB Committee immediately and submit a new project proposal for review if significant changes occur in your research design or in any instruments used in conducting the study. You should also contact the IRB Committee immediately if you encounter any adverse effects during your project that pose a risk to your subjects.

For any additional information, please consult our web page http://www.utc.edu/irb or email instrb@utc.edu

Best wishes for a successful research project.
APENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
Purpose of the study
This study is being conducted by Christopher Hudson, a graduate student in the Industrial and Organizational Psychology program at The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. This research is being conducted under the supervision of Dr. Chris Cunningham. The purpose is to examine job choice making. Please note that participants in this study must be at least 18 years of age. If you do not meet these criteria, you may not participate in this research.

What will I experience?
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to respond to a brief internet-based survey (requiring approximately 15 minutes of your time). This survey includes questions about your preferences with assessing a job offer and your identity salience. Several demographic questions are also included.

Benefits of this study
You will be contributing to a growing base of knowledge regarding applicant attraction, job choice, and possible influence of factors associated with applicants' work and nonwork identities.

What are the risks to me?
The risks of this study are anticipated to be limited to the inconvenience of taking the survey. If you feel uncomfortable with a question, you can withdraw from the study at any time. If you decide to quit at any time before you have finished the questionnaire, your answers will NOT be recorded. Please note, however, that we can only make use of fully complete surveys, so we greatly appreciate your full cooperation.

What about my privacy?
You are able to participate in this study anonymously; no names or personal contact information will be requested from you. In addition to this protection, all data will be securely gathered and stored in password protected files accessible only by the researchers.

Voluntary participation
It is your choice to participate in this research and you may withdraw from this study at any time. As noted above, however, we really need complete information from all participants, so if you are willing to participate, we hope you will respond to all questions included in the survey.

How will the data be used?
Data gathered in this study will be analyzed and presented educational settings and at professional conferences. Results of this work may also be published in a professional journal in the field of psychology.

Contact information:
If you have concerns or questions about this study, please contact the chair of UTC’s Institutional Review Board, Dr. Bart Weathington at bart-weathington@utc.edu or 423-425-4289, or the supervisor of this study, Dr. Christopher Cunningham at chris-cunningham@utc.edu or 423-425-4264. By completing and returning this survey, you acknowledge that you have read this information and agree to participate in this research, with the knowledge that you are free to withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

Thank you in advance for your assistance and participation.

Sincerely,
Christopher R. Hudson, Jr.

Christopher J. L. Cunningham, Ph.D.
The University of Tennessee Chattanooga

_The Institutional Review Board of the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (FWA00004149) has approved this research project # 15-120_

Q23 I have read the above and am willing to participate in this research.

☐ Yes (1)
☐ No (2)

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To AgeIf No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey
APENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHICS SURVEY
Demographics Survey

Q1 Please report your current age. Round to nearest whole year and report just the number (example: 22)
[fill in the blank]

Q2 Sex
- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q24 I am
- Non-Hispanic/Latino (1)
- Hispanic/Latino (2)

Q25 I primarily identify as
- White (1)
- Black/African American (2)
- Asian (3)
- Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (4)
- Native American/Alaskan Native (5)
- Arab/Middle Eastern (6)

Q3 Marital Status
- Married/Living as married (1)
- In a serious relationship, but not married (2)
- Single (3)
- Divorced/Widowed (4)
- Other (5)

Q4 Number of Dependents (children and adults) Please report just the number (example: 3)

Q5 Number of Children Please report just the number (example: 3)

Q6 Are you currently a student?
- Yes (1)
- No (2)

If Yes Is Selected, Then Skip To
What level are you in college? If No Is Selected, Then Skip To
Are you currently working?
Q7 What level are you in college?
- Freshman (1)
- Sophomore (2)
- Junior (3)
- Senior (4)
- Graduate (5)

Q8 What is the highest level of education you have received?
- Some high school (1)
- Completed high school (2)
- Some college (3)
- Associate’s degree (4)
- Bachelor’s degree (5)
- Some graduate school (6)
- Master’s degree (7)
- Doctoral degree (8)

Q9 Are you currently working?
- Yes, Full time (1)
- Yes, Part time (2)
- No (3)

Q10 How many hours do you typically work per week? Please round to the nearest hour and report only the number (example: 30)
[fill in the blank]
APENDIX D

JOB CHOICE MEASURE
Job Choice

Imagine you are about to choose to accept a job from among several offers. How much weight or importance would you assign to each of the following job-related features as you try to decide which job offer to accept? Indicate your level of importance by sliding the rating bar from left to right, 1 = not important to 100 = completely important.

- Not at all important
- Completely important

Schedule Flexibility

Pay

Geographic Location

Opportunities for Promotion

Overall sense of "fit" with the organization

Now, imagine that you need to make your job choice. You have received an offer for a job that includes all of the features you identified as important above.

- Definitely No
- Definitely Yes

Would you accept this job offer?

Would you describe this as your "ideal job"?

How likely would you be to accept this job offer?

- Very Unlikely
- Unlikely
- Somewhat Unlikely
- Undecided
- Somewhat Likely
- Likely
- Very Likely

What additional features (if any) would need to be present for this job to be ideal for you?

Additional Feature(s)

None
Now, imagine that while you are trying to decide whether to accept this job offer or not, you learn from current employees in this position that in a typical work week you will have...

A low likelihood (small chance) of successfully managing your work and nonwork roles, and a low likelihood (small chance) of failing to manage your work and nonwork roles.

Definitely No \hspace{1cm} \text{ Definitely Yes}

Would you accept this job offer?

Would you describe this as your ideal job?

A low likelihood (small chance) of successfully managing your work and nonwork roles, and a high likelihood (good chance) of failing to manage your work and nonwork roles.

Definitely No \hspace{1cm} \text{ Definitely Yes}

Would you accept this job offer?

Would you describe this as your ideal job?
A high likelihood (good chance) of successfully managing your work and nonwork roles, and a low likelihood (small chance) of failing to manage your work and nonwork roles.

Would you accept this job offer?

Would you describe this as your ideal job?

A high likelihood (good chance) of successfully managing your work and nonwork roles, and a high likelihood (good chance) of failing to manage your work and nonwork roles.

Would you accept this job offer?

Would you describe this as your ideal job?
APENDIX E

WNB/WNC IMPORTANCE MEASURE
Consider the questions you have just answered. When forming a decision to accept or reject your "ideal" job offer (for a job that includes your preferred mix of pay, schedule flexibility, geographic location, opportunities for promotion, and overall sense of "fit"), how important or critical to you is each of the following?

Not at all important                                   Completely important

The anticipation of being able to manage work and nonwork demands, or *work-nonwork balance*.

The anticipation of being unable to manage work and nonwork demands, or *work-nonwork conflict*.
APENDIX F

WORK/NONWORK IDENTITY SALIENCE SCALE
Work/Nonwork Identity Salience Scale
(alpha = .86 for work-salience & .83 for nonwork-salience)


When responding to these items, think of “work” as being anything related to your academic degree progress or to your part- or full-time job(s) and “nonwork” as anything outside of your working role (like family, friends, community). Please respond to these items indicating the degree to which the following statements describe you.

Note. Responses are on a seven-point scale. 1 = disagree strongly, 7 = agree strongly. Items 1-5= Work-salient, 6-10 = Nonwork-salient

1. I feel most like myself when I am working.
2. Most of the satisfaction I experience in life is due to work-related experiences and accomplishments.
3. My work-related duties come first on my list of priorities, above all other responsibilities.
4. I view my work as the most important aspect of my life.
5. My identity (e.g., who I am) is most strongly based on my working self.
6. I feel most like myself when I am not working, and when I am with family and friends.
7. Most of the satisfaction I experience in life is due to nonwork-related experiences and accomplishments.
8. My nonwork-related responsibilities come first on my list of priorities, above all other duties.
9. I view my nonwork involvements as the most important aspects of my life.
10. My identity (e.g., who I am) is most strongly based on my nonwork self.
VITA

Christopher R. Hudson, Jr. was born to parents Christopher Hudson, Sr. and Eunice Hernandez-Hudson. He was raised along with two younger brothers in Knoxville, TN. He received a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial-Organizational Psychology from Southern Adventist University. He graduated in May of 2016 with a Master of Science in I-O Psychology from The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. While a graduate student, he has spent two years working for UTC Housing and Residence Life. Outside of psychology, Chris has a love for music, politics, and social justice.