2010

Work/life practices and the recruitment and retention of large school districts' foodservice professionals

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Work/life practices and the recruitment and retention of large school districts’ foodservice professionals

by

Mary Kate Harrison

A dissertation submitted to the graduate faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Major: Foodservice and Lodging Management

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Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
2010
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several years ago, I began a journey to earn a doctoral degree in a new program known as The Child Nutrition Leadership Academy at Iowa State University (ISU). Initiated by Dr. Jeannie Sneed and Dr. Mary Gregoire, it brought leaders together to not only study, but also to live together during two unforgettable summers. I never imagined how challenging the process would be as a “returning student” to make good grades and finish the necessary requirements while dealing with the rest of my chaotic life. And, I did not realize the support I would need to cross the finish line. But I made it, even with the many starts, stutters, and stops along the way.

I will always be grateful for Dr. Mary Gregoire’s counsel and encouragement during those years. As an extraordinary leader in a demanding job, she took time to retain me as a student, even after leaving ISU for a career change at Chicago’s Rush Medical Center. She spent countless hours reviewing drafts and offering helpful suggestions. Most recently, I would like to acknowledge the rest of my committee, Drs. Robert Bosselman, Catherine Strohbehn, Jessica Hurst, and Maurice MacDonald. Their guidance and feedback were essential during the final stretch of this journey.

The encouragement of my mother, Margaret Harrison, and my loving husband, Gordon Newman, whom I married during the process, kept me moving toward my goal (through prayer and prodding, as needed). Both are grateful that this will be “one less thing for Mary Kate to worry about.” But lastly, I want to dedicate this journey to my Daddy, who was not with us when I started, but I often heard his voice in my most discouraging moments, cheering me on—I am sure he’s looking down from the heavenly skies as my “proudest” angel.
ABSTRACT

With the forthcoming retirement of school foodservice directors, the increasing pressures faced by employees at home and work, and the financial constraints of school districts, recruiting and retaining skilled and diverse employees will be challenging. Marketing work/life benefits to potential employees and supporting these policies to current employees may enhance school districts’ recruitment efforts.

Previous research has shown a turnover culture in the hospitality industry, where employees enter the market and work until they find a better job elsewhere. Other studies have shown organizations that offer work/life benefits can positively influence an employee’s commitment to the employer and, thus, their intent to leave.

This study answered three questions of school foodservice professionals in large school districts: (a) Which work/life benefits are important to you? (b) Do these work/life benefits relate to your commitment to your district? and (c) Does the presence of work/life policies influence your intent to leave or decision to stay in the district?

A response rate of 25% (n=126) was received on a questionnaire sent to 500 school foodservice professionals in 50 school districts with over 75,000 students. The findings implied that flextime, wellness programs, and employee assistance programs were important to respondents, even though value did not necessarily mean use. Benefits geared toward individuals raising families were neither used nor perceived as important.

A strong correlation was found between intent to leave and organizational commitment. Respondents between the ages of 20 and 40 had significantly higher intent-to-leave scores than did respondents over the age of 40. Respondents reported pride in their school district and a willingness to go above and beyond their job requirements. Employees
did not want to move to other jobs in the district, which suggests that they value their commitment to profession.

There was a weak relationship between management support and work/life balance. The employees’ answers corresponded with other research that shows a supportive work environment relates to an employee’s attachment to his or her organization above and beyond the availability of work/life benefits.
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Jim Collins, author of Good to Great (2001) said, “People are not your most important asset. The right people are.” He continued by saying an organization’s culture uses the “right people to do the right thing and deliver the best results, regardless of any incentive system.” Yet for years executives have focused on a culture of downsizing and re-engineering to help improve profits and contain costs, a trend that has alienated employees’ loyalty to an organization (Bailyn, Fletcher, & Kolb, 1997). While managers were trying to boost the bottom line, they were largely neglecting their internal customers—the employees. They transformed their greatest asset into their biggest liability. Employees no longer had a strong sense of loyalty to their organization, so they moved to new positions that offered more compensation, better benefits, and greater job satisfaction (Gustafson, 2002). More than half (52%) of employees who would like to have jobs with greater responsibility have sought employment elsewhere (Families and Work Institute, 2005). The departure of employees, who take needed skills and expertise to competitors, poses a challenge to employers who must achieve long-term financial results and meet business goals (Bailyn et al.).

The hospitality industry, often seen as a “pass-through” industry, needs to retain current employees and attract potential applicants (Woods, 1999). Many of its workers have been simply “passing through,” beginning at a young age and on the way to other careers. The hospitality industry has been considered as an employer of necessity for many workers, especially the very young and the old, instead of the employer of choice.

Hospitality companies have traditionally utilized the principles of top-down management, according to which employees are treated as another resource to be used in the effort to achieve organizational goals (Lucas & Deery, 2004). Multiple generations worked in
the same organization, but they were usually separated from each other by virtue of their job
descriptions and system hierarchy. Generational mixing was rare because veteran employees
made decisions that were handed down to younger workers through the line supervisor.

Employees entered the hospitality industry expecting to work for a minimum amount of time.

In a workplace that requires collaboration and cooperation among multigenerational
workers, this top-down approach of management has likely influenced retention efforts
adversely (Gursoy, Maier, & Chi, 2008). Hospitality employees who have had to work the
typical long, irregular hours, holidays, and weekends and who often have to sacrifice a
personal life to “get ahead,” have been more likely to feel job dissatisfaction and a desire to
move to another career. With a 61% turnover rate (Ebbin, 1999), the hospitality industry has
created and reinforced a turnover culture characterized by its failure to promote long-term
commitment to employees (Iverson & Deery, 1997).

Creative managers have been reversing this trend by treating employees not simply as
an expense but as a key asset that is critical to profitability (Bailyn et al. 1997). These
managers hoped to reduce turnover by creating a workforce that not only improved the
bottom line but did so by building a “customer-centric” business in which their customers
were their employees (Woods, 1999). To keep employees satisfied and loyal, management
often provided incentives, such as bonuses and merit raises.

In recent years, major lodging companies, such as Marriott, Hilton, Hyatt, and Ritz
Carlton, have realized that value-added policies are essential to achieving their goals of
quality and customer care (Gursoy et al., 2008). They have been developing programs and
policies to create a work environment that enabled employees to have a satisfactory
experience at work, good relationships with their superiors and peers, and a fair reward for
the effort they have contributed. However, the reasons people either stay with or leave an organization often have more to do with work climate than with financial compensation. Organizations that adopt a family-friendly culture are enabling employees to better integrate their work with their personal lives.

Research has indicated that many employees have been searching for more “work/life” benefits or flexibility in balancing their professional responsibilities with their lives outside of work (Institute of Management and Administration [IOMA], 2004). Work/life benefits contribute to an employee’s loyalty and commitment, and employers who offer these benefits show respect for the employee’s role at work and at home. Offering these benefits can contribute to a facilitative climate of support, which gives employees greater control over their work responsibilities and career goals (Galinsky & Stein, 1990). When employees know that their organization supports them, they reciprocate with greater effort (Galinsky & Stein). Research has shown that employees who are satisfied with their benefit program are approximately three times more likely to be content with their job and to feel loyalty toward their employer than their peers are (IOMA, 2003).

The need for employees to balance work and family has increased as the numbers of dual-earner families and working mothers and the demand for eldercare have increased. Many of the more than 70% of working mothers with children 18 years old or younger do not want to choose a life that is either all business or all work (Hymowitz, 2004). Furthermore, more than 75% of married female professionals in the Hymowitz study reported that they experience a daily conflict between work and family responsibilities. Organizations that adopt work/life policies signal to prospective female employees that they value their pool of
female managerial talent and that they are taking steps to attract and retain female managers (Dreher, 2003).

When work interferes with family, negative attitudes, such as job dissatisfaction, anxiety, burnout, work-related stress, and lower productivity, are observed (Marchese, Bassham, & Ryan, 2002). These conflicts can lead to a decline in the physical and mental health of employees, which may ultimately have adverse consequences for employees, employees’ families, and organizations.

Employers have failed to use benefit packages as a tool for attracting and retaining hospitality employees (Burzawa, 2002). This was illustrated in a MetLife Trends Survey (2007), which reported employers were still giving employees the same traditional mix of benefits, such as medical, dental, and life insurance. When employers were asked in this survey what they hoped to accomplish by giving their employees these benefits, 43% said “retention,” 36% said “greater employee productivity,” and 35% said “greater employee job satisfaction” (IOMA, 2003). A 2001 work survey (cited in Burzawa) illustrates the inconsistency that is often found between what is offered and what is desired by the workforce. The survey showed that the nontraditional benefit of flexible scheduling was ranked 14th in importance by employers, yet the same survey showed that employees at all levels perceived that this incentive had a strong impact on workplace commitment (Burzawa).

For more than 50 years, school foodservice programs have benefited from veteran, primarily women, professionals. Many of these managers have stayed in their jobs for 30 years or longer often because of a work calendar that closely follows the same school schedule as their children and traditional benefits, such as medical insurance and retirement.
Over 98% of larger school districts have offered general medical insurance benefits to all employees, 85% offer dental insurance, and 80% offer life insurance. Pay incentives offered by 24% of school districts were used only for teachers working in less desirable locations or in a specialty area where there was a shortage (Garofano & Sable, 2008).

This generation of “boomer” school foodservice managers has held onto their jobs for so long that they may be preventing newer employees from gaining the experience and skills needed to climb the managerial ladder. With the impending retirement of these baby boomer directors, it will be increasingly important for school organizations to attract and retain a skilled and diverse workforce.

**Problem Statement**

Directors of nonprofit school foodservice programs are challenged to find cost-effective and creative ways to recruit employees and reduce voluntary turnover. Directors will need to fill vacancies amid intense competition from other foodservice industries, including healthcare, retail, and contract service. However, recruiting skilled foodservice professionals may be difficult, considering the budget restrictions that most school districts are facing.

The pool of potential foodservice professionals in school foodservice will be far more diverse than a generation ago and smaller in number. More minorities will be competing for the same management jobs. Technology and lifestyle changes will increase demands for flexible schedules and more family time. The aging of the U.S. workforce will place new demands on employee benefit programs. Generation X, that is, adults between the ages of 25 to 39, and Generation Y, or millennials, who are under 25 years of age, want not only good pay and interesting work, but large amounts of freedom and flexibility on the job, as well as
opportunities for self-development (Families and Work Institute, 2005; Gursoy et al., 2008). College students enrolled in hospitality management schools are interested in working in luxury, or high-end, hotel and restaurant chains, as opposed to the less exciting on-site foodservice markets, such as schools (Schuster, 2005).

Typically, school district management has not only been unable to offer competitive compensation packages when attracting professional employees, but has also been restricted from giving additional monies when trying to retain valuable staff members. Because the traditional mix of health and retirement benefits remains costly, many school districts will need to explore nontraditional pathways to reduce turnover and to attract and retain skilled employees.

A review of the literature suggested that employers offering work/life benefits have seen larger profits and a lower turnover rate with committed and more productive employees than have organizations that focus strictly on the bottom line. The literature does not show that the on-site foodservice segment and, specifically, school foodservice programs have used these incentives. With the forthcoming retirement of a large percentage of the nation’s school district foodservice directors, and given the increasing responsibilities and pressures at home and at work as well as the changing demographics of the available workforce and the growing complexities of administering federal foodservice programs, school districts will need to look aggressively for ways to attract new talent (Lipowski, 1999). Furthermore, they will need to develop new standards of human resource management in order to connect successfully with a multigenerational workforce.
**Research Questions**

The research questions that will be examined in this study are:

1. To what extent are work/life benefits important to current school foodservice managers?
2. What relationship exists between work/life benefits and a school foodservice manager’s commitment to the organization?
3. What relationship exists between work/life benefits offered and a school foodservice manager’s intention to leave?

**Definitions of Terms**

Common terms used in this dissertation are defined below.

*Intention to leave:* deciding to leave a job voluntarily

*On-site foodservice segment:* provides foodservice as a secondary activity to a business in which the foodservice operation is located. For example, a hospital’s primary business is health care, but meals are provided for those directly involved with the facility, such as patients and staff. Other examples include schools, colleges and universities, correctional facilities, and military bases. The segment is sometimes referred to as noncommercial or institutional (Gregoire, 2010).

*Organizational commitment:* an active, rather than a passive, relationship between an individual and an organization, in which the individual’s beliefs and opinions, as well as actions, contribute to an organization’s well-being (Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979).

*Turnover culture:* a state of affairs in which turnover, or the voluntary departure from a job, is accepted as part of the workgroup norm (Iverson & Deery, 1997).
Work/life: a collection of programs, policies, and practices, such as flexible hours and child care that employers offer to address the personal needs of employees, thereby creating a family-friendly organizational culture (Galinsky & Stein, 1990; Saltzstein, Ting, & Saltzstein, 2001).

Work/family conflict: occurs when an employee’s role at work is made more difficult by his or her family role and vice versa (Boyar, Maertz, Pearson, & Keough, 2003).
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Projection for the Foodservice Industry’s Labor Force

The National Food Service Management Institute has conducted studies to draw attention to a projected labor shortage of managerial talent in the school foodservice market. Findings from a survey conducted by Conklin, Sneed, and Martin (1995) showed that approximately 43% of school nutrition managers and directors have worked between 11 and 20 years in the school foodservice industry. Another 30% had more than 20 years of experience. The authors believed that it was likely that a large number of school foodservice managers would retire in the first decade of the 21st century. In a similar study, 50 directors of state child nutrition programs were asked about their perceptions of a labor shortage of school foodservice directors. Of the 42 respondents, 26% agreed or strongly agreed that there would be a shortage of foodservice management in the 21st century (DeMicco, Williliams, Oh, Maurice, McElwain, & Boss, 1997). Nettles and Carr’s (2006) study of child nutrition programs in 232 large school districts also confirmed a future labor shortage. Of the 97 respondents, almost 40% indicated that they would be retiring in the next 5 years. In their 2006 survey of school foodservice directors in school districts with more than 30,000 enrolled students, Nettles and Carr reported that 36.9% of the respondents indicated they would retire in 5 years. Another 14.7% indicated that they were considering retirement.

The National Restaurant Association’s (NRA’s) 2006 State of the Restaurant Industry Workforce study reported that the number of foodservice occupations was expected to grow between 2006 and 2016. It has been projected that new service jobs will be generated by increases in population, household income, and a demand for convenience, in both ready-to-eat meals and restaurant meals (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009a). The NRA also projected
that, during this same period, the number of foodservice managers would increase by 12%,
the need for chefs would increase by 16%, and that for servers by 19%.

The NRA report stated that foodservice employees tend to be single women under the
age of 30 whose education did not extend past high school. These nonsupervisory employees
worked, on average, 24.8 hours per week. More than 37% of foodservice workers were under
the age of 24. Close to one out of every five individuals working in foodservice occupations
is Hispanic, 11% are African-American, and 5% are Asian-American (Bureau of Labor
Statistics, 2009a). One out of every four employees reportedly spoke a foreign language at
home. The foodservice industry, the largest employer of minorities, has hired over 1.5
million men and women who were born in another country (Bureau of Labor Statistics,
2009a).

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009b) projected that foodservice manager jobs
would increase 5% between 2006 and 2016, and that 30% of these new jobs would be in
institutional foodservices, such as residential care for the elderly, schools, and healthcare
facilities. The “typical” foodservice manager was a male Caucasian between the ages of 25
and 54. However, the number of female supervisors has continued to increase and now
accounts for 46% of all foodservice managers (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009a). According
to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2009a) women were projected to account for 51% of the
increase in total labor-force growth between 2004 and 2014.

The total U.S. labor force is expected to increase an average of only 1% annually
between 2004 and 2014 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2009b) compared to the 1.2% average
annual rate posted between 1994 and 2004. By 2015, the labor force growth is projected to be
a mere .02%. The NRA’s 2006 report emphasized that, even though the number of service
jobs will increase, the available labor pool to fill these positions will decrease. The report projected that the number of young adults (ages 16 to 24) in the total labor force will decline from 15.1% in 2004 to 13.7% in 2014.

With the projected decrease in available labor, and the simultaneous increase in the number of service jobs, the NRA (2006) report found that 3 out of every 10 quick service managers identified recruiting and retaining employees as the primary challenge they expected to face. In addition, one out of every five casual family dining operators also cited recruiting and retaining employees as their top future challenge.

The concern about retaining hospitality employees was also reflected in the fifth annual MetLife (2007) Study of Employee Benefit Trends, in which 1,514 employers and 1,202 employees from a broad range of industries responded to a survey concerning trends in employee benefits. The study reported that 59% of employers in the service industry ranked “retaining employees” as their top goal. Of employers who responded to the survey, 88% expected the competition for talent to increase or remain at current levels over the next 5 years. Controlling costs, increasing employee productivity, increasing employee job satisfaction, and attracting employees were the next four goals for employers.

Of all employees surveyed, 33% stated that benefits were an important reason for remaining with an employer and 28% stated benefits were a factor when accepting a job. Of employees who responded to the survey, 40% said they had changed employers at least once in the past 5 years. However, employees at different life stages weighed benefits differently. For example, 41% of married employees responding to the survey stated that workplace benefits were a top consideration for joining their employer, compared to only 10% of single
employees. For employees 61 years and older, 50% responded that benefits were a primary reason for staying in their job.

**Presentation of On-Site Foodservice to Students**

**Seeking Hospitality Management Careers**

The Society for Foodservice Management, together with the editors of *Food Management* magazine, surveyed 800 hospitality faculty members to understand their perceptions of on-site foodservice and to learn how this segment of the hospitality industry was presented to students ("Benign Neglect," 1998). Results from the 80 respondents indicated that 90% of faculty members reported that teaching students about on-site careers was valuable; however, less than 10% offered hospitality management courses dedicated to on-site foodservice. Industry trade magazines, on-site segment associations, and attendance at conferences offer supplemental information to those who teach these courses. However, several respondents commented that a current textbook was needed to give an adequate idea of the range of management positions in different on-site foodservice segments. The article noted that hospitality educators appeared to lack enough exposure to on-site foodservice to give an adequate idea of the benefits of working in this area.

The educators rated on-site higher than commercial foodservice in terms of benefits, quality of life issues, and financial stability of employers. However, they stated that commercial foodservice was superior with respect to career opportunities, number of job openings, and promotion opportunities. They also reported that it was creative and innovative and, therefore, more attractive to students as a career choice.

In *Training Tomorrow’s FSDs*, Schuster (2005) offered two explanations as to why college students reject on-site opportunities. First, on-site foodservice has often been
associated with hairnets, lab coats, and dull institutional settings. It also lacks the “brand-name glitz” of large hotel and restaurant chains. Schuster suggested that students associate the noncommercial sector with sick people in hospitals or bad memories of their own school meals. Schuster noted that students avoid interviewing for a career in this sector because they would never want to tell parents and friends that they turned down an entry-level position at a five-star hotel and instead accepted a position as a foodservice director in a small school district—even if the later position paid more.

Schuster (2005) went on to state that higher education devotes very little time to discussing career opportunities in schools, universities, hospitals, nursing homes, or employee dining operations. Schuster supported this observation with a statement from Dennis Reynolds, a Washington State University Professor of Hospitality Business Management, who claimed that it was difficult to find people with experience in on-site foodservice management who also have the background to teach at the college level. David Tucker, Associate Professor of Hospitality Management at Widener University, offered a course to educators about integrating an on-site track into the curriculum. He later surveyed these educators and found that no new courses had been offered in on-site foodservice because “there was no interest on the part of students.”

In Schuster’s (2005) article, Karen Greathouse, Professor of Dietetics and Hospitality at Western Illinois University, commented that on-site foodservice must be marketed to make it look attractive, especially given that students make their own assumptions about the nature of these jobs. Mary Molt, Assistant Professor of Hospitality, Management, and Dietetics at Kansas State University, stated that students need to be educated about the advantages of
working in on-site foodservice, especially with regard to work schedules that “will support a much higher quality of life than is often possible with commercial positions.”

Cho, Woods, and Sciarini (2006) examined 20 factors and their effects on students’ decisions to work in different segments of the hospitality industry. More than 900 surveys were given to senior hospitality students at 20 different colleges. The goal was to determine students’ perceptions of prospective hospitality employers and the factors influencing the likelihood of starting a career in one of eight different categories: four foodservice categories, three hotel categories, and one category for private clubs. Thirty-seven percent of the students who responded indicated that they were interested primarily in the luxury hotel segment. The second most popular choice was the private club segment. The students were least interested in seeking careers in quick service restaurants.

The authors found that one of the main factors affecting students’ perceptions of employment options was the positive name recognition and prestige associated with luxury hotels and top-rated restaurants. Experiences as a customer in upscale restaurants also greatly influenced students’ attitudes toward future employment in fine dining. Luxury hotels and fine dining restaurants traditionally attracted many students who needed to fulfill their work experience requirements and thereby improved student’s attitudes toward future employment. Other factors strongly influencing a student’s employment decision included successful employment stories from other students, and alumni and faculty relationships with commercial foodservice employers.

For the contract and on-site foodservice segment, none of the factors had a measurable effect on employment decisions. The authors hypothesized that there was a general lack of student awareness of this segment as a potential starting point for hospitality
careers. Students often set their sights high when considering career options; and segments such as quick-serve restaurants, on-site segments, and economy hotels were viewed as undesirable and less professional careers to pursue.

**Reasons for Employee Turnover in the Hospitality Industry**

Iverson and Deery (1997) replicated and modified Price and Mueller’s turnover model (as cited in Iverson & Deery) to determine an employee’s intent to leave a job in the lodging industry. The authors hypothesized that employees entered the hospitality industry with the expectation of working a minimum amount of time for one employer before moving to the next, thus promoting the belief among hospitality workers that high turnover is acceptable.

Their model had four categories of variables: structural variables, which included role conflict, work overload, pay, job security, promotional opportunities; pre-entry variables, relating to an individual’s positive or negative personality traits; environmental variables, which focused on job opportunity and turnover culture; and the union variable or last category, which consisted of union membership and loyalty. The authors proposed that there would be a relationship between the variables and job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job search, and intent to leave.

To test their model, the authors surveyed 310 management employees at six upscale hotels; correlated the findings with employees’ age, tenure, and education; and then, using the statistical technique of LISREL, examined relationships among the four categories and the intervening variables of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job search, and intent to leave. The findings from the 246 respondents showed that job satisfaction significantly increased when employees experienced greater variety in their work, had role
expectations similar to their employers’ expectations, were provided advancement opportunities, and found satisfaction in both their personal and professional lives.

Organizational commitment was positively correlated with job satisfaction, union membership, and career development. The intervening variable of job search was increased when employees had little loyalty to the organization. Age and gender had both negative and positive effects on intent to leave; younger employees had a higher propensity to leave than did older employees, and male employees were less likely to stay than were females.

The researchers concluded that the hotel industry had created and reinforced a turnover culture that could be reversed by developing career paths, offering promotional opportunities, cross-training, and creating an internal labor market that supplied trained and qualified workers. The authors argued that these strategies influenced an employee’s job satisfaction and commitment to an organization and thereby reduce turnover.

After an extensive review of the literature on employee turnover, Allen and Griffeth (1999) proposed that there was a need to learn which, as well as how many, individuals were leaving an organization. They believed that individual performance levels influenced overall job satisfaction and voluntary turnover in one of three ways. First, turnover might be the result of an employee’s attitude toward job satisfaction and commitment, which could influence that employee’s desire to leave or stay in his or her current job. Specifically, the authors proposed that high performers were dissatisfied when rewards are not based on performance and that they are therefore more likely to leave. The authors noted that a manager’s decision whether or not to use a pay-for-performance system could be a contributing factor in intent-to-leave decisions, especially for employees who are high performers.
Second, turnover might be the result of an individual’s perception of mobility in the labor market. High-performing employees perceived that they were attractive to a greater number of prospective employers. This is especially true if an individual’s performance in areas such as executive management or academics is highly visible by their peers. In this case, if the job performance of some employees is not rewarded, the better performers are more likely to leave. The authors noted that when visibility is high, organizations should be concerned about the probability of losing their best performers, unless they are rewarding them accordingly.

Third, they discussed turnover as a result of performance-related “shocks.” These were defined as events, such as unsolicited job offers or a negative job appraisal, which led an individual to make a decision about remaining in or leaving his or her job. Allen and Griffeth (1999) concluded that turnover of high performing employees is often influenced by the availability of contingent rewards and their perceptions of their marketability to other employers.

Hinkin and Tracey (2000) proposed a relationship between separation costs and the cost of recruiting, selecting, and hiring hospitality employees. They believed that hospitality managers demonstrate the “warm body” syndrome of recruiting unselectively to fill a position, even though the results of this practice can negatively impact profit margins. To confirm this effect, they interviewed 40 human resource professionals in two hotel companies and used the information they gathered to develop a computer program to calculate costs associated with the departure of a single employee in a variety of positions. For example, the replacement cost of a front desk manager was 30% of the annual salary for
that position. They concluded that increasing an employee’s wages to encourage retention decreases overall labor costs by eliminating recruiting, selection, and training costs.

Simons and Hinkin (2001) compared employee turnover rates with gross operating profits and average daily room rates in 105 hotels to examine the relationship between employee turnover and overall profitability. After analyzing operational and financial records, and comparing them to employee turnover rates, they found that turnover was lower in larger properties and in those with higher room rates. Hotels with an average daily room rate of more than $100 had a 27% turnover rate, compared to hotels that charged less than $60 a night, which reported a turnover rate of 59%. A similar correlation could be seen when comparing the number of rooms with the turnover rate. Hotels with fewer than 150 rooms had a turnover of 63%, whereas hotels with 350 or more rooms had an average turnover of 37%.

Simons and Hinkin (2001) also established that employee turnover is strongly associated with decreased hotel profits. The authors predicted that, even though turnover rates were almost 50% higher in less expensive hotels than in more expensive hotels, employee turnover would be more costly to the bottom line in luxury hotels. They noted that jobs in large hotels are more complex and more difficult to master, and therefore, that separation costs in these hotels, which include recruiting, selection, hiring, training, and lost productivity, results in a decrease in gross operating profits. Simons and Hinkin concluded that an employee turnover drop of just 2% justifies a large hospitality company’s investment in a retention program that includes adequate pay and benefits, training in complex operating systems, promotional opportunities, and incentives.
Ghiselli, La Lopa, and Bai’s (2001) study of over 1,200 foodservice managers from eight companies investigated the relationship between job satisfaction and life fulfillment to job turnover. The average age of the 459 respondents was 32, they worked an average of 57 hours a week, and they had been working at their current employer for an average of 5.5 years. The researchers used three different questionnaires: the Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire by Weiss, Dawis, England, and Lofquist (as cited in Ghiselli et al.); Quinn and Staine’s Life-Satisfaction scale (as cited in Ghiselli et al.); and Kopelman, Greenhaus, and Connolly’s Inter-Role Conflict scale (as cited in Ghiselli et al.). They also included questions on intent to stay or leave in the short term and within 5 years.

The job satisfaction questionnaire showed the highest mean scores for job activity, social service, job security, and moral values. Compensation, recognition, company policies and practices, and social status were rated the lowest. Job satisfaction varied with the manager’s salary, especially for employees with children. The authors divided the respondents into four salary groups: those who earned less than $28,900, those with incomes between $29,000 and $37,900, those who earned $38,000 to $46,900, and those whose earnings exceeded $47,000 per year. Satisfaction increased as salary increased, and the respondents who had the highest salaries had the highest satisfaction scores. However, job satisfaction did not vary with gender, marital status, ethnicity, education, or length of industry experience.

The life satisfaction survey determined the respondent’s present perception of life. The majority indicated that their lives were “interesting,” yet they were either not exceptionally happy or they were not satisfied in the way they were spending their lives.
Respondents reporting the highest satisfaction scores were married or living with a partner and were paid the highest salaries.

The Inter-Role Conflict scale measured the strain that resulted when work conflicted with family responsibilities. The respondents agreed with survey statements about the “amount of time spent at work prevented them from spending as much time with their families or others” and “they were often too tired to do other activities.” However, they did not feel that working extra hours made it difficult to relax when they were away from work.

Job satisfaction also varied with the type of foodservice operation. The questions about intent to leave or stay showed that more than 25\% of managers intended to leave their job in the near future and over half of those responding indicated they would look for a position in fields other than hospitality management. Managers in commercial cafeterias were the least likely to leave, and quick service restaurant managers were the most likely to leave. Over 17\% of those with intent to leave were doing so because of salary and benefit packages; 10\% indicated that long hours, family issues, and quality of life forced them to look elsewhere for another position.

The researchers found a significant correlation between intent to leave and intrinsic job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and age. The regression coefficients indicated that older managers who were satisfied with the intrinsic components of their job and more satisfied with their life were less likely to leave their position. They concluded that younger managers initially find their jobs intrinsically rewarding, but that, over time, job satisfaction decreases if salary does not significantly increase. Even though respondents ranked compensation low on the job satisfaction survey, managers who earned the high salaries scored in the uppermost percentiles on the job satisfaction and life satisfaction surveys. Because of the
young average age of respondents, the authors stated that the hospitality industry might have difficulty retaining employees as those employees gain more experience because a large number of foodservice employees and managers have a “short-term mentality” for foodservice jobs. The authors proposed that to retain employees as length of service increased, foodservice companies need to offer benefits that contribute to job satisfaction, such as advancement, recognition, independence, and possible social status, all components that respondents identified as missing from their current jobs.

Carbery, Garavan, O’Brien, and McDonnell (2003) predicted turnover intentions of hotel managers with a proposed model based on four sets of variables: demographic, human capital, psychological, and hotel. The demographic variables included age, gender, and marital status. Human capital included education, experience, and salary. Psychological included job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and career expectations. Hotel characteristics included size and location of the hotel and the number of “stars” the hotel had earned. Each of these variables was correlated with intent to leave and the hotel characteristics of where the manager was employed.

To determine the validity of their model, they surveyed 280 hotel managers and received a 31.8% response. Of the four variables that the authors tested, the psychological variable offered the greatest amount of support for the model because managers who had the highest scores in the areas of job satisfaction and organizational commitment reported the lowest desire to leave a job.

Of the other hypotheses proposed by the researchers, only five were partially correlated with the turnover tendencies of hotel managers. Within the demographic variable, older managers responded with the lowest score on intent to leave. Turnover tendencies were
identical between men and women and between married and unmarried. The human capital variable showed that managers with the highest level of education had a greater intent to job search. Managers with more managerial experience and those earning lower salaries were less likely to leave an organization. The hotel characteristic variable proved that managers working in lower rated hotels reported a greater intent to leave.

Cho, Woods, SooCheong, and Erdem (2006) evaluated the impact of 12 different human resource management (HRM) practices on organizational performance by surveying the HRM director in 219 publicly traded hotel and restaurant companies. Their survey produced a 38% response rate. The 12 HRM practices were: information sharing, job analysis, internal recruiting, attitude surveys, labor–management participation program, incentive plans, grievance procedure, pre-employment tests, compensation linked to performance, performance appraisal, promotion criteria, and training.

Organizational performance was correlated with the turnover of nonmanagerial employees, turnover rate of managerial employees, labor productivity, and return on assets (ROA). The companies reported an average of 5,376 employees and average turnover rates of 115% for nonmanagerial employees and 35% for managerial employees. Labor productivity was calculated by dividing total revenue by the total number of employees. ROA and total revenue were collected online from Hoover’s database and Compact Disclosure. Using multiple regression analyses, the authors examined the relationships between each of the 12 HRM practices and the turnover rate of nonmanagerial employees, turnover rate of managerial employees, labor productivity, and ROA to determine if any of the HRM practices had more influence on a firm’s performance than the others did.
The results indicated that the 12 HRM practices had a positive relationship only on the turnover of nonmanagerial employees; they had no significant effects on managerial employees, labor productivity, and ROA. One practice that had a significant relationship in reducing turnover rates of nonmanagerial employees was the expansion of incentive plans to all employees. Companies that offered pay for performance plans to a greater number of employees showed the lowest turnover rate of nonmanagerial employees. Two HRM practices—pre-employment tests to select the right person for the right job and labor–management participation programs—also influenced low turnover rates of non-managerial employees.

Using previous research showing that both organizational commitment and job satisfaction were related to a person’s intent to leave, Silva (2006) investigated the relationship of these two factors to five personality traits through a survey of 670 nonmanagement employees at two major hotel chains. Of the 159 employees who responded, the average age was between 31 to 40 years of age, the average time in their current job was 3 to 4 years, and 75% of the sample made $35,000 or less.

Silva (2006) hypothesized that the personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and intellect would predict an employee’s commitment to the organization and degree of satisfaction at work. He also predicted that there would be a significant relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. Silva measured organizational commitment using a questionnaire developed by Mowday et al. (1979). Fifteen items were scored on a 7-point Likert-type scale. Nine facets of job satisfaction were measured using a 36-item survey developed by Spector (1985). Job satisfaction components included pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent
rewards, operating conditions, coworkers, nature of work, and communication. The five personality factors, measured using Goldberg’s “big-five” markers (as cited in Silva), were extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability, and intellect.

The results showed there was support for his hypothesis that all the components of job satisfaction were significantly related to organizational commitment. The components that correlated strongly with job satisfaction included supervision, contingent rewards, coworkers, and nature of work.

Concerning the relationship between organizational commitment and personality, there was a significant positive correlation between organizational commitment and the personality traits of extraversion, conscientiousness, and emotional stability. Silva (2006) proposed that extraverted, conscientious, and emotionally stable individuals were more likely to be committed employees and were thus less likely to leave an organization. He noted that since organizational commitment was related to turnover and intent to leave, organizations would benefit from creating job requirements that correspond to individuals who are extraverts, conscientious, and emotionally stable.

There was also a significant relationship between facets of job satisfaction and four of the five personality traits. Extraversion, agreeableness, emotional stability, and conscientiousness were strongly correlated to both organizational commitment and job satisfaction. Silva (2006) believed that these same personality traits are strong predictors of work performance, especially given that the same traits have a significant relationship with both variables. He concluded by stating that personality traits related to an individual’s commitment and feeling about his or her job are important not only to ensure that the right candidate is hired but also in decreasing future employee turnover.
Influence of Work/life Incentives on Employee Recruitment, Retention, and Turnover

Recent studies have looked at nonmonetary benefits, especially work/life benefits and their influence on employee retention. Professionals typically have unique skills and traits that are valuable to an organization. These same employees often have childcare responsibilities during their years of peak productivity, thereby creating a work/family conflict that can impact turnover, absenteeism, tardiness, reduced work effort, and lack of concentration (Konrad & Mangel, 2000).

According to one survey conducted by the Institute of Management and Administration (2004), the years between 1996 and 2003 saw tremendous growth in the area of nonmonetary benefits that contributed to balancing work/life in a variety of industries. For example, requests to use flextime increased from 32% to 71%, telecommuting increased from 9% to 50%, and percentage of employees working a “compressed” week increased from 16% to 44% (IOMA, 2004).

A 1998 Special Report on Best Practices in Work/Life by the Family Connection, Inc. (as cited in Tratt, 2000) stated that employers who offer family-friendly policies could benefit from keeping talented people, increasing productivity, enhancing commitment, raising employee morale, cutting healthcare costs, appealing to consumers as responsible corporate citizens, and safeguarding the future well-being of society. This same report gave the following examples of companies offering work/life benefits: Scott Paper Company, Sears, and Felpro. Scott Paper Company reported that its work/life programs increased productivity by 35%. Sears reported that when an employee’s attitude improved by 5%, customer satisfaction increased by 1.3% and store sales by .05%. Felpro employees, an
automotive supply manufacturer, reported that 70% of their employees remained with the company because of its work/life benefits.

Aryee, Luk, and Stone (1998) hypothesized that a flexible work schedule and supervisor support for work/life policies would show a positive correlation with organizational commitment and a negative relationship with turnover intentions. They also proposed that women would show a stronger relationship with these variables than men would. To test these hypotheses, they conducted a survey of 500 full-time working parents in one large government human services agency on work/life issues, organizational commitment, and intent to leave. Of those surveyed, 45%, or 228 parents, responded.

Respondents felt that flexible schedules for professionals were important in preventing a loss in productivity. Inflexible work schedules made it difficult for employed parents to balance the competing demands of work and family. Conversely, flextime gave employees greater options in work schedules and helped to reduce tardiness and absenteeism.

Data supported the researchers’ belief that supervisor support for work/life policies has a significant effect on both organizational commitment and turnover intentions. Supervisor support was as strongly associated with organizational commitment among men as it was among women. The authors stated that an employee’s relationship with a supervisor is linked to the perception of whether or not that employee could balance work and family demands.

They concluded that organizations need to recognize that men and women who benefit from work/life policies tend to be highly committed to the organization, presumably owing to the resolution of the work/family conflict. They also emphasized that organizations should empower supervisors to support and promote work/life policies.
Konrad and Mangel (2000) surveyed human resource senior executives in almost 3,000 public and private organizations about 19 work/life activities offered to employees. They targeted only large organizations because they felt these companies would have formal Human Resource departments accustomed to dealing with staffing challenges. The mean organizational size was 7,406 employees.

The authors predicted that the extent of companies’ work/life programs would have a positive relationship on productivity. They also hypothesized that employing a higher percentage of professionals, and especially women, would influence the future development of new work/life benefits in companies.

Data were collected on 19 work/life activities currently offered to employees, including on-site daycare, sick childcare, sick days for childcare, paternity and adoption leave, flextime, job sharing, spouse placement, voluntary reduced time, and extended maternity leave. A work/life index number between 0 and 19 was assigned to each survey. Productivity was measured by the logarithm of sales per employee in each company. The survey received a 28% response rate from employees working in management, sales, secretarial, and technical support.

Data analysis revealed that organizations with not only a high percentage of professionals but also more professional women than men showed a stronger relationship between the provision of work/life benefits and productivity than did organizations that hired less skilled and lower paid workers. Firms employing larger percentages of women achieved more productivity gains from work/life programs because work/family conflicts generally caused greater interference in the work of women than that of men. Conversely, firms who
hired hourly paid workers found that productivity benefits from work/life initiatives were negligible.

The authors concluded that professionals who have childcare responsibilities early in their career benefited when companies helped them manage work/family conflict. Conversely, by reducing tardiness, distraction, and absenteeism, the company benefited with an increase in efficiency and productivity. The authors also stated that firms that adopt work/life programs give professionals a reason to stay with their employer and, thus, increase long-term commitment and retention.

Boyar et al. (2003) reported that family-friendly policies can minimize stress from the family, limit the interference between work and family, and allow employees to focus on work activities. In their research, 432 factory workers responded to a survey on work stress, family responsibility, work/family conflict (WFC), family/work conflict (FWC), and turnover intentions. WFC was defined as work activities that conflicted with family responsibilities, and FWC was defined as family responsibilities that prevented employees from completing work. The authors predicted that work stress would influence WFC conflict and thereby negatively impact employees’ personal lives. They also hypothesized that family responsibility would influence FWC by preventing an employee from finishing projects, and that both WFC and FWC would be positively correlated with turnover intentions.

The authors reported that role conflict and role overload, both associated with work stress, was positively correlated with WFC. However, no relationship was found between handling family responsibilities and completing work assignments. They speculated that this finding was probably influenced by the fact that only 38% of the respondents reported having
young children at home. Both WFC and FWC were positively correlated with intent to quit the organization.

Haar and Spell (2004) examined the relationship between the knowledge and value of work/life practices and organizational commitment. The authors hypothesized that, in organizations where work/life benefits were provided in name only or where employers failed to provide adequate information to employees about the availability of work/life benefits, employees would hold negative views about the organization.

Haar and Spell (2004) surveyed 622 employees in a large government organization concerning their knowledge of work/life practices offered by their employer, the value each of these practices had for them, and their use of the practice. The organization offered the following six work/life practices: paid parental leave, flextime, compensation time, childcare subsidies, unpaid leave, and reimbursement of childcare costs if the employee had to work out of town. Of the 38% who responded to the survey, 73% were blue-collar employees and 27% were white-collar employees.

The results of the survey showed that employees who were parents were more knowledgeable about work/life practices than were nonparents. Females ages 44 years or younger regarded the childcare subsidy and paid parental leave as more valuable than did either males or older females. Even though respondents valued this benefit, there was a negative relationship between the subsidy and organizational commitment, primarily because the subsidy was very low.

The authors reported that a higher valuation of a work/family practice did not always increase an employee’s commitment to the organization. In the study, employees placed the greatest value on flextime, yet this high valuation showed no significant correlation to
organizational commitment. The authors proposed that since flextime was used by 99% of employees, it was seen, not as a “special” benefit enhancing an employee’s commitment to the organization, but as something expected. The authors concluded that employers who provide adequate information to the employee, and make the communication process sincere and transparent, enhance their employee’s value of work/life benefits and their loyalty toward the organization.

Grandey, Cordeiro, and Crouter (2005) looked at the effect of work interfering with family (WIF), and family interfering with work (FIW), on job satisfaction. They predicted that WIF would be a better predictor of job satisfaction than would FIW. They also hypothesized that the long-term effect of WIF on job satisfaction would be stronger in women than in men. The authors collected data in home interviews of 201 middle-class, dual-income couples with dependent children, living in the central part of Pennsylvania. Participants were interviewed about work/family conflict, job satisfaction, mood, and job characteristics. The same participants were interviewed again, one year later.

Results showed that job satisfaction at the beginning of the study was strongly correlated with job satisfaction one year later for women ($r = .52$) and men ($r = .66$), supporting the author’s hypothesis that job attitudes toward work would be stable. WIF and FIW were significantly correlated for women ($r = .48$) and men ($r = .29$), but the feeling that work interfered with family and the feeling that family interfered with work were much stronger for women than for men. The results support the claim that WIF is a significant predictor of a woman’s job satisfaction, the reason being that a woman’s job is perceived, both by the woman herself and by her spouse, as interfering with her family role. When work
is seen as interfering with time and energy needed at home, working mothers become dissatisfied with their jobs.

Even though the correlation of WIF to job satisfaction was greater for women than for men, the difference between genders was not significant. However, the authors noted that men increasingly value their family role and become dissatisfied when a job removes them from that responsibility. Even though this research showed a strong relationship between women’s job satisfaction and WIF, the authors concluded that organizations that want to increase the job satisfaction of their employees should consider implementing policies for both men and women that allow for a balance between work and family responsibilities.

Based on an analysis of research in work/life practices, Mulvaney, O’Neill, Cleveland, and Crouter (2007) took three components—the organization, the individual, and the family—and proposed a framework for the hospitality industry to use when incorporating family-friendly policies into workplace culture. The authors stated that the hospitality industry is well known as being one in which managers have to make personal sacrifices in their family life. Yet, the industry is also known for its excessive turnover. They stressed that hospitality organizations need to blend family-friendly policies and practice into organizational strategy to gain an advantage through better recruitment, retention, and productivity. They proposed that by using this framework, hospitality organizations could establish family-friendly cultures and, thereby, enhance job performance.

In their discussion of the organizational level of the framework, the authors focused on the influence of absenteeism on job performance. Employees with a high level of reported family/work conflict were more likely to be absent or move to a job they perceived would
have less conflict, especially if they have to keep the long and irregular hours associated with the hospitality industry.

On the individual level, the authors focused on the relationship between job satisfaction and organizational commitment. They proposed that certain moderators influence an individual’s response to family/work conflicts. Specifically, gender differences contribute to conflict and the resulting consequences. Women allowed the home role to interfere with their satisfaction at work, whereas men allowed work obligations to interfere with their satisfaction at home. Another moderator to an individual’s response was personality. Those who were extroverted, open to new experiences, and positive were more likely to see a work challenge as an opportunity than as a threat.

The discussion of the family level focused on marital relations, parent–child relations, and family opportunities. The authors noted that, because of long hours, often at nights and on weekends, employees working in hospitality industry have had an increased likelihood of marriages ending in separation or divorce. They showed that nonstandard work hours have been associated with problem behaviors and educational challenges among the children of employees, especially for employees with young children. They suggested offering employees’ family opportunities, such as free hotel rooms, that would enable a family to take a vacation they would not otherwise have been able to afford.

Haar (2007) conducted qualitative research on the benefits of flextime with 22 users and 8 nonusers of the benefit. He defined flextime as a work/family practice that allows employees to have flexible start and finish times, without changing the total number of hours worked. He interviewed employees in a small public organization to learn if (a) flextime would be positively related to job satisfaction and (b) positive job satisfaction would be
similar between users and nonusers. In a series of interviews, Haar learned that all respondents, regardless of whether they did or did not use the benefit, were “strong, positive, and supportive of flextime.” Respondents stated that it allowed them to balance work and family commitments and helped them in managing stress. They also stated that because the organization supported work/family policies, they were more likely to be satisfied with their job and, therefore, committed to the organization.

The authors noted that even though both male and females reported that flextime was a positive benefit, there were considerable differences between the sexes in how the time was used. Working mothers used the flextime for their children, whereas men used it on themselves, not their families. Respondents without dependents, irrespective of gender, were seldom users of flextime.

Gursoy et al.’s (2008) research examined generational differences and similarities in the goals, expectations, and work philosophies of hospitality managers and employees. The researchers conducted focus group discussions with managers and employees of a North American branded hotel chain, classified as mid to upper scale, with over 50 units. From the company’s employee database, employees were grouped into one of the following three categories: (a) baby boomers, born between 1943 and 1960; (b) Generation X, born between 1961 and 1980; and (c) Generation Y, or Millennials, born between 1981 and 2000.

Within each category, 15 employees and 15 managers were selected from two different geographical regions to participate in the research. In each region, one focus group was conducted for employees and one for managers. A total of 91 employees participated in four focus group discussions that revealed generational characteristics.
The researchers found that boomers “live to work” and respect authority and hierarchy in the workplace. They were loyal to their workplace and, in return, expected job security. They were willing to work through the ranks, abide by the rules, and wait their turn for promotions and rewards. They tend to be very resistant to change. They are detail-oriented and have a hard time multitasking because they did not need to do that growing up. They view younger staffers as inattentive to detail and scattered.

Unlike the boomers, Generation X’ers “worked to live” and leave work at work. They wanted instant gratification with rewards, recognition, and promotions. They have learned from their parents’ experiences that following company rules does not necessarily guarantee a job. They look at every job as temporary and a stepping-stone to another job. Their job provides the means to enjoy life outside work. For that reason, professions requiring overtime do not match their desire to avoid long hours and to keep their work and their personal lives separate. They prefer companies with flexible schedules, independence, and time off.

Millennials believe “the more the merrier.” Although they had not been in the workplace for long, they showed a strong will to get things done through collaboration and teamwork. This may be a result of their participation in a number of organized sports and activities from a very young age, and growing up in a diverse culture. Work is not a priority for them because their main concern is having fun with friends and family. They are likely to challenge workplace norms, such as dress codes, employee supervisor relations, and the inflexibility of the standard workday. Like the Gen X’ers, they keep their career options open.
The purpose of Chen and Choi’s (2008) research was to identify work values perceived by hospitality managers and supervisors from a major tourism destination in the southeastern United States. The researchers ranked the importance of work values to hospitality managers and supervisors from the baby boomers, Generation X, and Millennials, to see if different values were held by the three generations. Mok and White defined work values as the “underlying preferences and beliefs that should be satisfied in people’s career choices” (as cited in Gursoy et al., 2008).

A questionnaire, using a 5-point Likert-type scale, was sent to 500 managers and supervisors to gather data on demographic profiles and work values. The values included achievement, way of life, altruism, intellectual stimulation, supervisory relationship, creativity, independence, security, economic return, prestige, variety, surrounding, management, associates, and aesthetic. The response rate was 79%.

Demographic responses showed that 40% of the participants were in lodging and nearly 35% were in food service. Managers and supervisors had an average of 10 years’ work experience. Two-thirds of the managers reported that they were satisfied with their current job: 41% of the Generation X’ers, 32% of the Millennials, and 27% of the baby boomers.

Baby boomers ranked the value of achievement as the greatest work value, followed closely by way of life. Both Generation X’ers and Millennials ranked way of life as the greatest work value. Generation X’ers ranked achievement as their second most important value, and Millennials ranked supervisory relationship as their next value. Way of life, achievement, and supervisory relationship ranked in the top five work values across the generational lines. For way of life, results indicated that respondents from all three generations expected a balance between professional and private lives.
Altruism, intellectual stimulation, security, independence, and economic return were ranked differently. Altruism was viewed higher by the baby boomers than by the other two generations. Gen X’ers ranked security and independence higher than either the boomers or the Millennials did. They were less concerned about personal growth issues, such as achievement and intellectual stimulation, but more concerned about economic return. They also valued the supervisory relationship much higher than the others did because they believed it necessary to achieve their goals of quick promotion and high salary. Boomers ranked personal growth issues higher than both of the younger generations, whereas Millennials valued work environment more than baby boomers and Generation X’ers did.

The researchers concluded that the differences in generational values and priorities may contribute to the justification for different recruitment and retention strategies in the hospitality industry. They recommended that management be flexible in addressing the specific needs of employees in order to get “buy in” and a willingness to commit to an organization.

**Theoretical Support for Work/Life Benefits and Its Relationship to Organizational Commitment**

Theoretical evidence supports the relationship between work/life benefits and commitment to the organization. Both Frederick Herzberg’s (1987) motivation–hygiene theory, discussed in a reprint of his original 1968 article, and George Homans’s (1958) social exchange theory helped to explain the relationship between nonmonetary benefits and organizational commitment. In the practical application of both motivation–hygiene theory and social–exchange theory, organizations that provided nonmonetary benefits may experience outcomes such as reduced turnover or greater employee commitment.
Herzberg’s (1987) motivation–hygiene theory of job satisfaction offered a rationale as to why employees may be more productive, creative, and committed to their employer when they work in an environment that promotes job satisfaction. Guided by the two premises that the opposite of job satisfaction is not job dissatisfaction, but rather no job satisfaction, and similarly the opposite of job dissatisfaction is no job dissatisfaction, Herzberg developed a study that employed a list of factors he believed are inherent to either job satisfaction or job dissatisfaction.

When conducting 12 separate studies to determine the causes of job satisfaction and dissatisfaction, Herzberg (1987) interviewed 1,685 employees from the following groups: professional, supervisory, military officers, technicians, nurses, engineers, food handlers, and teachers. He asked each employee about specific actions of the employer, peers, or subordinates that may have influenced their feeling of either extreme satisfaction or extreme dissatisfaction with their job.

By dividing the interview responses into percentages of total positive job events and total negative job events, Herzberg (1987) arrived at his theory that there are two dimensions of job satisfaction: motivation and hygiene. Motivation factors contributed to extreme satisfaction by fulfilling individual needs for personal meaning; they included achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth. Hygiene factors included company policy, amount of supervision; relationships with supervisor, subordinates, and peers; work conditions; salary; personal life; status; and security. These factors were related to the organization’s environment and culture. The results of all interviews suggested that the factors that resulted in job satisfaction and motivation were separate and distinct from the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction.
Of all the factors contributing to job satisfaction, 81% were motivators. Of the factors contributing to an employee’s dissatisfaction with work, 69% involved hygiene elements. The achievement factor contributed the greatest to job satisfaction, and company policies contributed the greatest to dissatisfaction with a job. Herzberg (1987) believed that motivators can create satisfaction by fulfilling an individual’s need for meaning and personal growth. However, he emphasized that only after hygiene areas were addressed can motivators successfully promote job satisfaction and encourage production. For example, if company policies were inadequate and not fair and equal, such as a lack of work/life benefits, then it may be more difficult for motivators to produce job satisfaction and encourage productivity. The impact of both motivation and hygiene factors can influence an employee’s commitment to the organization and his or her intention to leave or stay.

Homans’s (1958) social exchange theory also provided an explanation of why work/life programs promote employee initiative and the desire to stay with an organization. Homans believed that a social exchange between one party, such as an organization, and another party, such as the employee, whereby the organization provided a benefit or reward to the employee, imposing an obligation on the employee to reciprocate by providing some benefit in return. If employees repaid their perceived obligation through an increased commitment to the organization, then this might mutually benefit the social exchanges in a successful relationship between the employee and employer.

Social exchange theory suggested that employees feel a conscious obligation to work harder when they received additional benefits from their employers, such as flextime, even though these benefits were not, strictly speaking, contingent on any individual contribution. If employees value flextime because it enhanced their work/family balance, they would
reciprocate with enhanced commitment and loyalty to their organization because they felt morally obligated to repay their employer. Conversely, a person may see the cost of a relationship as outweighing the perceived benefits; the theory predicted that such a person would choose to leave the relationship.

Meyer and Allen (1991) proposed a three component model of organizational commitment after reviewing existing theory and research. A correlate to organizational commitment had always been tenure, or the opposite, turnover. They believed that organizational effectiveness depended on more than maintaining a stable workforce; instead, employees would be willing to engage in activities that go beyond role requirements. They proposed that their model would clarify and simplify the existing research and serve as a framework for future studies. The model was designed to a large extent inductively from the results of previous studies and subsequent preliminary investigations conducted by a number of different researchers.

The three-component model of organizational commitment included affective, continuance, and normative components—all of which can define employees’ relationships with the organization and influence their decision to stay or leave the organization. They defined affective commitment as a person’s emotional attachment and involvement in the organization. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue employment because they want to do so. Continuance commitment reflects a need to remain with an organization, either because of the costs associated with leaving, such as a pension plan, or the lack of other viable career options. Normative commitment reflects a feeling of obligation or loyalty to continue employment because individuals feel that they ought to remain with an organization. The authors stated that the components were not mutually exclusive, but an
employee could experience all three forms of commitment in varying degrees, with each one influencing work-related behavior. For example, the feelings of what one wants to do and what one ought to do may not be completely independent.

The authors believed that each employee has a commitment profile reflecting his or her degree of desire, need, and obligation to remain. They concluded that the likelihood of leaving an organization decreased when any one of the three components increased in strength.

**Conceptual Framework**

This study proposes the conceptual framework shown in Figure 1 to understand the influence that work/life benefits have on foodservice professionals’ organizational commitment. The framework also shows the moderating effect that work/life benefits have on the intention of employees to leave their current position.

![Figure 1. Conceptual framework.](image-url)
Summary

A review of the literature revealed that the hospitality industry has seen high turnover rates because of low compensation, inadequate benefits, long hours, conflicts between work and family life, and, in general, lack of job satisfaction on the part of employees. Industry employees perceive limited career development and promotional opportunities within this industry. Iverson and Deery (1997) stated that the hospitality industry had created a “turnover culture,” which has contributed to an increase in costs and a decrease in profits to the company and in quality of service to customers. The literature showed that reversing this culture to one of “employee ownership,” in which employees are seen not just as an expense but as a key asset, is necessary to recruit and retain the best talent in all segments of the hospitality industry.

The literature was helpful in showing predictors of turnover and the reasons employees decided to leave or stay with an organization. Existing models of turnover showed different paths people take when leaving organizations. Some research studies highlighted a positive relationship between innovative human resource and management practices and organizational commitment.

Research indicated that employees have been searching for work/life benefits or opportunities to have flexibility in balancing their professional responsibilities with their life outside of work. Research shows that, in some industries, nonmonetary incentives have been used successfully to improve employee productivity and job satisfaction, while reducing turnover. Effectiveness of these practices may vary by industry; few studies have been conducted about the use of work/life benefits to reduce turnover in the foodservice industry and particularly in the larger public school districts.
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey research design utilizing quantitative methods was used to gather information regarding participants’ views of work/life benefits in their current organizations, their commitment to their organizations, their intention to leave their organizations, and demographic variables. A questionnaire was developed based on previous literature in the area of work/life benefits and the hospitality industry. This questionnaire was pilot-tested, and the final version was e-mailed to a sample of school foodservice professionals.

Sample Selection

The target population included professional school foodservice directors and managers working in large public school districts (those whose student enrollment numbered 75,000 or more. Based on enrollment records from the U.S. Department of Education there are 50 school districts in this category (Garofano & Sable, 2008). Because of their size, these districts employ large staffs, with different skills and talents, who may be easily recruited from, or to, other industry sectors. For example, large metropolitan school districts need individuals who can manage a complex maintenance system for foodservice equipment and analysts who can build and support a technology system that tracks large numbers of managerial processes.

“Professional staff” was defined as hourly or salaried employees who were based in the district school foodservice office and classified with titles such as a specialist, manager, coordinator, supervisor, or director. Within this sample, the school foodservice directors of the 50 districts with 75,000 or more students received the questionnaire. From those same 50
districts, the foodservice director was asked to forward the questionnaire to other professional school foodservice professionals in the central office (assumed to be approximately 10 staff for each district). This sample of approximately 500 professionals, included only foodservice staff in the school district’s central office because the probability of using work/life benefits to attract school-based hourly employees may be limited and impractical.

**Use of Human Subjects in Research**

The use of human subjects in this study required approval from Iowa State University’s Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research. Researchers involved with this study had completed human subject training and had been certified by Iowa State University. The research was reviewed and approved by the Iowa State University’s Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research (Appendix A).

**Instrument Design**

An online questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection (Appendix B). The questionnaire was divided into five parts. Statements in Part A examined the respondents’ perceptions of their current work environment to determine if the demands of work and home are supported by school board members, the superintendent, and senior administrators. Part B explored the level of importance that employees place on benefits in an organization, regardless of whether they were offered by their current organization or not. Part C addressed the respondents’ commitment to their current employer, and Part D looked at the employees’ intentions to leave their current organization. Parts A, B, C, and D used five- and seven-point Likert-type scales. Part E included demographic questions about the
professionals related to such topics as age, college major, job title, and length of service in their present position. Measurements of constructs in each category are described below.

**Part A: Balancing Work to Life**

This part sought information about whether respondents’ current work environment allowed them to balance the different responsibilities of work and life. Practices were drawn from Bardoel’s (2003) research on the provision of formal and informal work/family practices and from Galinsky and Stein’s (1990) research on those characteristics of organizations that are responsive to an employee’s work/family needs. This part included 14 work/life practices, which each respondent rated using a five-point scale, ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*.

**Part B: Organizational Benefits**

To learn how different organizational benefits were valued, respondents first indicated whether their current organization offered a benefit. Secondly, they indicated whether they had taken the advantage of the benefit. Lastly, they indicated how important the different benefits were to them, using a five-point scale that ranged from *very unimportant* to *very important*.

The list of benefits were compiled from Bardoel (2003) and Lingard and Francis’s (2005) research. Bardoel developed initiatives to be used when measuring the extent to which an organization provided 23 work/family practices. An index of an organization’s overall work/family responsiveness was determined by the sum of all 23 individual practices.

Lingard and Francis’s (2005) initiatives were drawn from research on the decline of the traditional family and on managing a diverse workforce. To determine an employee’s preference for work/life benefits, the researchers developed a scale using 21 work/life
benefits categorized under four headings: childcare support, alternative work arrangements, assistance support, and wellness and personal development that were rated on a five-point Likert-type scale. The alpha coefficients for these four types of benefits, which were .93, .77, 79 and .87, respectively, showed that the scale possessed good internal consistency and reliability.

**Part C: Organizational Commitment**

The part of the questionnaire on organizational commitment listed a series of indicators representing not only expressions of individuals’ beliefs and opinions about an organization but also their willingness to contribute actively to its well-being. The respondents reacted to each statement by using a scale that ranged from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The questionnaire was adopted from an instrument Mowday et al. (1979) developed to measure employee commitment to work organizations. Their instrument used 15 items rated on a seven-point Likert-type scale. It was developed over 9 years of testing, with over 2,500 employees from nine different work organizations. The questionnaire’s internal consistency between all organizations was high, with a median alpha coefficient of .90.

**Part D: Intent to Leave**

To assess an employee’s intent to leave the organization, respondents indicated their level of agreement (five-point scale: *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*) with five statements drawn from Wayne, Shore and Liden’s (1997) research on perceived organizational support and leader–member exchange, which used a five-point Likert-type scale. Their research concluded that intent to stay with an organization is best predicted by the perception of support from the organization as opposed to perceptions of support by individual leaders.
Part E: Demographics

This section of the questionnaire requested key demographic information from participants that was deemed relevant to this study. Lingard and Francis’s (2005) research on the decline of the traditional family and on managing a diverse workforce showed that personal background and family circumstances can influence an employee’s response to work/life benefits. Information solicited included age, years of experience, marital status, gender, dependents, elder care responsibilities, number of hours worked, and educational background.

Pilot Test

The questionnaire was first evaluated by a sample of approximately 12 food service professionals employed in five Florida districts, each of which has a student enrollment of 50,000 or fewer. These experts were asked to evaluate the clarity of the instrument’s instructions and questions, the length of the questionnaire, its format, and the perceived usefulness of the questions. Based on feedback from 12 professionals, one two-part question in Section B, Organizational Commitment, was changed to two separate questions in order to make it easier to understand and answer.

Distributing the Questionnaire

A cover letter (Appendix C) with a link to the online questionnaire, located on SurveyMonkey™, was e-mailed to directors in districts with a student enrollment of 75,000 or more. A list of districts was obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics (Garofano & Sable, 2008). This cover letter explained the purpose of the study, encouraged participants to complete the questionnaire, assured participants of anonymity and confidentiality, and gave the timeline for returning the information. E-mail addresses were
obtained from the Director’s Consortium of Large School Foodservice Authorities (2009), a group that consists of directors from districts with a student enrollment of 75,000 or more.

Directors were asked to distribute the questionnaire to professional/managerial staff in their school district’s foodservice office. To improve the response rate, a reminder was e-mailed after 2 weeks. After 2 more weeks, a second reminder and a second questionnaire was e-mailed. To improve the response rate, a third letter and questionnaire was e-mailed after another 3 weeks.

**Data Analysis**

Questionnaire data was downloaded from the internet questionnaire tool, SurveyMonkey™, to Excel and then imported into SPSS (version 16). Data were checked for normality and linearity. Normality was assessed by visual inspection of the histograms and examining the skewness and kurtosis values, with values greater than +/-1 indicating nonnormal distributions. Linearity and the presence of outliers were assessed by examining the scatterplots of measured variables.

For each scale (Work to Life Benefits, Organizational Benefits, Organizational Commitment, and Intent to Leave), the items were summed and divided by the number of items in the scale to create a summary score for each scale. The internal consistency of each scale was computed using Cronbach’s alpha and the inter-item correlation. The relationship between work/life benefits and organizational commitment and work/life benefits and intent to leave was assessed using correlation.

**Assumptions**

Several assumptions are inherent in any research design that uses volunteer participants to complete a questionnaire. First, the assumption was made that every school
district with 75,000 in student enrollment and over had a district director. Secondly, based on the researcher’s experience in large districts, an assumption was made that there was a total of approximately 10 school foodservice professionals who worked in the central office of these large districts. Therefore, the approximate target sample size was 500 school foodservice professionals.

It was assumed that all directors received the questionnaire, understood the questions, and were truthful in their response. The assumption was made that directors would forward the survey to all other school foodservice professionals working in a district’s central office. Lastly, the assumption was made that these professionals understood the questions and answered them to the best of their knowledge.
CHAPTER IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An online questionnaire was sent to 50 school foodservice directors working in public school districts with an enrollment of more than 75,000 students, according to the National Center of Educational Statistics (Garofano & Sable, 2008). Directors were asked to forward the questionnaire to other professionals who worked in the central office and had district-wide responsibilities. Professional staff responding to the questionnaire totaled \( N = 126 \), a 25% response rate, from approximately 500 employees.

**Demographic Characteristics of School Foodservice Professionals**

As shown in Table 1, approximately 85% of the respondents were over the age of 40. Most of the respondents were female (81.4%) and Caucasian (88.6%). The large number of Caucasian females in a leadership position was not found in other research on foodservice segments. The typical foodservice manager in restaurant management was male, with females comprising most of the staff positions (NRA, 2006).

Over three fourths of the respondents (77.8%) reported having a spouse or partner living with them, but less than half (41.4%) reported having dependent children. Few respondents (11.2%) reported being caregivers for one or more adults. In Ghiselli et al.’s (2001) research of foodservice managers, those who were married or living with a partner had the greatest life satisfaction, which carried over to job satisfaction. Both factors together can influence turnover intent.

More than three fourths of the respondents (75.9%) reported having received a bachelor or higher degree. Of those respondents who indicated that they had received a college degree, 44.1% reported having majored in dietetics, whereas 15.1% said their major was in foodservice or hospitality management. Of the 34.4% of respondents who reported a
Table 1.

*Demographic Characteristics of School Foodservice Professionals*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age (n = 118)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40 years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50 years</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-60 years</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-70 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender (n = 118)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>81.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of education (n = 116)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some continuing education after high school</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate degree</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s degree</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>33.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate degree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>College major (n = 93)a</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dietetics</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>44.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foodservice or Hospitality Management</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and Consumer Science</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic background (n = 126)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>88.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic American</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Multiple responses allowed.

major other than the ones listed, the most commonly awarded type of degree was business-related. The small number of employees who came from a hospitality background correlates with Schuster’s (2005) and Cho, Woods, and Sciarini’s (2006) research, which showed hospitality students were not interested in school foodservice as a career choice because it was perceived to lack glamour and prestige.

As seen in Table 2, more than half of the respondents (55.6%) had worked at least 10 years in their present school foodservice program. This longevity trait agrees with Conklin et al.’s (1995) research that showed approximately 43% of school nutrition managers and directors have worked between 11 and 20 years and another 30% had more than 20 years of experience.

Slightly more than 70% of respondents worked between 40 and 49 hours per week, and 23.7% of respondents worked more than 50 hours per week. The long hours tied to previous research that showed professionals in the hospitality industry traditionally have an extended work week. Yet, the long hours did not necessarily indicate a work/family conflict.
Table 2.

Employment Traits of School Foodservice Professionals in Large Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years in present school foodservice program (n = 117)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0–4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5–9</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>23.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10–14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15–19</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours worked per week (n = 118)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20–29</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30–39</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40–49</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>70.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50–59</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisory status (n = 118)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonsupervisor</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor who gives performance evaluations</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>51.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manager who evaluates at least one other supervisor</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>31.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job title (n = 108)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant director</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District manager</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business manager</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traits</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student enrollment ($n = 115$)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75,000 or less</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76,000–100,000</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>101,000–150,000</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>151,000–200,000</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>201,000–250,000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>251,000+</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Boyer et al. (2003) found no negative relationship between handling family responsibilities and completing job assignments when working extra hours. Ghiselli et al.’s (2001) research also showed that foodservice managers were able to handle long hours and balance family demands.

More than 80% of respondents said that their contract with their school district required them to work, on average, more than 241 days per year. Over two-thirds of respondents (69.3%) characterized their work schedule as fixed; almost 30% characterized it as flexible. Most of those who responded (83.1%) have supervisory status and gave performance evaluations.

Almost 17% of the respondents were directors and almost one third (31.5%) had the job title of supervisor. Approximately 19% of respondents reported their job title as “other”: their job titles ranged from executive director to different types of coordinators.

Respondents came from large school districts with various enrollments. Approximately 36% indicated a student enrollment of 100,000 or fewer; 27% reported a
district enrollment of between 100,000 and 150,000 students. Approximately 36% of
respondents came from school districts with more than 150,000 students enrolled. Almost all
respondents characterized their school foodservice program as self-operated (99.1%) and
public (96.6%). Even though the questionnaire was sent to districts based on a 2006 list from
the National Center for Education Statistics (Garofano, & Sable, 2008), 20 districts reported
below the target sample of 75,000 students. This may be explained by families, hit hard by
the housing decline or unemployment since 2006, moving from large urban areas to other
parts of the country to seek less expensive housing options and jobs. This may have been
especially true in Florida, Texas, and California, all states that have the largest proportion of
big districts.

Support of Work/Life Practices in Large School Districts

Respondents indicated the extent of their agreement or disagreement with items
describing work/life practices at their school district by using a 5-point scale (1 = strongly
disagree to 5 = strongly agree). As seen in Table 3, respondents overall had a neutral attitude
to most items that described positive work/life practices in their school district. Means for
these positive work/life practices ranged from 2.90 to 3.88, with more than half of the
respondents agreeing that their supervisors were supportive of the balance between home and
work. The majority of respondents denied that negative work/life practices existed in their
school district.

Work/life benefits may not, by themselves, be enough to bring forth a sense of
obligation that translates into commitment to the organization. The employees’ answers
corresponded with other research that showed a supportive work environment relates to an
Table 3.

**Accommodation of Work/Life Practices in Large School Districts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Work-life practices</th>
<th>SD n (%)</th>
<th>D n (%)</th>
<th>N n (%)</th>
<th>A n (%)</th>
<th>SA n (%)</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>My manager/supervisor is supportive when home/life issues interfere with work.</td>
<td>3 (2.4)</td>
<td>7 (5.6)</td>
<td>15 (11.8)</td>
<td>78 (61.9)</td>
<td>23 (18.3)</td>
<td>3.88 (0.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>My manager/supervisor is sensitive to my balance between work and home.</td>
<td>4 (3.2)</td>
<td>10 (7.9)</td>
<td>20 (15.9)</td>
<td>66 (52.4)</td>
<td>26 (20.6)</td>
<td>3.79 (0.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I am satisfied with the balance I have achieved between my work and my family life.</td>
<td>4 (3.2)</td>
<td>19 (15.1)</td>
<td>10 (7.9)</td>
<td>71 (56.3)</td>
<td>22 (17.5)</td>
<td>3.70 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>It is usually easy for me to manage the demands of both work and home life.</td>
<td>2 (1.6)</td>
<td>23 (18.3)</td>
<td>14 (11.1)</td>
<td>72 (57.1)</td>
<td>15 (11.9)</td>
<td>3.60 (0.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>There is senior level support for work/life issues.</td>
<td>4 (3.2)</td>
<td>15 (12.1)</td>
<td>29 (23.4)</td>
<td>62 (50.0)</td>
<td>14 (11.3)</td>
<td>3.54 (0.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There is recognition that work/life issues are integral to maintaining good business practices.</td>
<td>8 (6.3)</td>
<td>13 (10.3)</td>
<td>27 (21.5)</td>
<td>62 (49.2)</td>
<td>16 (12.7)</td>
<td>3.52 (1.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>There is support for non-work responsibilities that were once seen to be personal in nature.</td>
<td>4 (3.3)</td>
<td>20 (16.5)</td>
<td>33 (27.4)</td>
<td>51 (42.1)</td>
<td>13 (10.7)</td>
<td>3.40 (1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>My employer prefers employees to keep work and non-work as separate worlds.</td>
<td>5 (4.0)</td>
<td>46 (36.8)</td>
<td>34 (27.2)</td>
<td>36 (28.8)</td>
<td>4 (3.2)</td>
<td>2.90 (0.97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>There is training to help manage work/life balance.</td>
<td>13 (10.6)</td>
<td>41 (33.3)</td>
<td>22 (17.9)</td>
<td>40 (32.5)</td>
<td>7 (5.7)</td>
<td>2.89 (1.14)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>If I could find another job where I could have more flexibility, I would take it.</td>
<td>25 (20.3)</td>
<td>39 (31.7)</td>
<td>31 (25.2)</td>
<td>24 (19.5)</td>
<td>4 (3.3)</td>
<td>2.54 (1.12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Work/life practices</th>
<th>SD n (%)</th>
<th>D n (%)</th>
<th>N n (%)</th>
<th>A n (%)</th>
<th>SA n (%)</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>My job keeps me from maintaining the quality of life I want.</td>
<td>25 (19.8)</td>
<td>73 (57.9)</td>
<td>13 (10.4)</td>
<td>14 (11.1)</td>
<td>1 (0.8)</td>
<td>2.15 (0.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>My career path is limited because of demands at home.</td>
<td>38 (30.2)</td>
<td>65 (51.6)</td>
<td>9 (7.1)</td>
<td>13 (10.3)</td>
<td>1 (0.8)</td>
<td>2.00 (0.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>My manager/supervisor is often inflexible or insensitive to my personal needs.</td>
<td>36 (28.8)</td>
<td>67 (53.6)</td>
<td>11 (8.8)</td>
<td>9 (7.2)</td>
<td>2 (1.6)</td>
<td>1.99 (0.90)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>My employer believes that work/life issues only affect women employees.</td>
<td>49 (39.2)</td>
<td>55 (44.0)</td>
<td>16 (12.8)</td>
<td>4 (3.2)</td>
<td>1 (0.8)</td>
<td>1.82 (0.83)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Measured on a 5-point scale with 1 = strongly disagree (SD), 2 = disagree (D), 3 = neutral (N), 4 = agree (A), 5 = strongly agree (SA).

*aItem no. corresponds with item number on original questionnaire.

employee’s attachment to his or her organization, above and beyond the availability of work/life benefits. Aryee et.al. (1998) research showed that supervisor support for work/life policies had a significant effect on organizational commitment and turnover intentions with both men and women. Harr and Spell (2004) concluded that employers, who provided adequate information to the employees and made the communication process open and accessible, enhanced their employees’ value of work/life benefits and thus, loyalty toward the organization.

**Organizational Benefits Offered in Large School Districts**

Respondents were given a list of benefits and asked three questions about each: (a) Did they received the benefit? (b) Did they take advantage of the benefit? and (c) How
Table 4.

*Organizational Benefits Offered in Large School Districts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Employees who receive this benefit</th>
<th>Employees who have taken advantage of this benefit</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$n$</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee assistance program</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>88.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bereavement leave</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellness programs</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional counseling</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>76.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid maternity leave</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>63.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phased retirement</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent part-time work</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paternity leave</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbatical leave</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work hours</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary part-time work during family crisis</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility to work in another location</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compressed work week</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended part-time work after childbirth or adoption</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job sharing</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childcare facilities</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
important was the benefit to them? As seen in Table 4, over three-fourths of respondents reported receiving the benefits of professional counseling (76.2%), wellness programs (78.3%), bereavement leave (82.6%), and an employee assistance program (88.0%). Less than 20% of respondents said they received the benefits of a compressed work week (18.9%), extended part-time work after childbirth or adoption (15.2%), job sharing (11.4%), or childcare facilities (10.3%). Some respondents indicated that, although they were offered certain benefits, they did not always take advantage of them.

Although 88% of respondents said they had access to an employee assistance program, only 16.8% of those respondents reported taking advantage of that benefit. Professional counseling was taken advantage of by only 11.3% of the respondents, even though 76.2% of them said that they received this benefit. This small number may be explained by a finding in Lingard and Francis (2005) research that showed single employees had the strongest preference for wellness and employee assistance programs. This study had just over 22% who reported that their marital status was single.

A compressed work week was available to almost 19% of the total respondents. Of these employees, 80.0%, or 16 employees, reported they had taken advantage of this benefit. Flexible work hours were offered to 31.5% of the respondents, with almost 59% of them using the benefit. Ayree et.al (1998) showed that flextime gave employees greater options in work schedules and helped to reduce tardiness and absenteeism, thereby preventing a loss in productivity. Konrad and Mangel (2000) showed that organizations with not only a high percentage of professionals, but more professional women than men, showed a strong relationship between the provision of work/life benefits and productivity.
Table 5.

Perceived Importance of Organizational Benefits by School Foodservice Professionals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>VU n (%)</th>
<th>NI n (%)</th>
<th>N n (%)</th>
<th>I n (%)</th>
<th>VI n (%)</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bereavement leave</td>
<td>3 (2.5)</td>
<td>5 (4.2)</td>
<td>14 (11.6)</td>
<td>48 (40.0)</td>
<td>50 (41.7)</td>
<td>4.14 (0.96)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work hours</td>
<td>4 (3.3)</td>
<td>4 (3.3)</td>
<td>17 (14.1)</td>
<td>65 (53.7)</td>
<td>31 (25.6)</td>
<td>3.95 (0.91)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wellness programs</td>
<td>4 (3.4)</td>
<td>4 (3.4)</td>
<td>22 (18.4)</td>
<td>62 (52.1)</td>
<td>27 (22.7)</td>
<td>3.87 (0.92)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee assistance program</td>
<td>5 (4.2)</td>
<td>3 (2.5)</td>
<td>22 (18.7)</td>
<td>63 (53.4)</td>
<td>25 (21.2)</td>
<td>3.85 (0.93)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phased retirement</td>
<td>5 (4.3)</td>
<td>14 (12.1)</td>
<td>27 (23.2)</td>
<td>45 (38.8)</td>
<td>25 (21.6)</td>
<td>3.61 (1.09)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary part-time work during family crisis</td>
<td>8 (6.7)</td>
<td>11 (9.2)</td>
<td>24 (19.9)</td>
<td>57 (47.5)</td>
<td>20 (16.7)</td>
<td>3.58 (1.08)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional counseling</td>
<td>10 (8.5)</td>
<td>9 (7.6)</td>
<td>34 (28.8)</td>
<td>46 (39.0)</td>
<td>19 (16.1)</td>
<td>3.47 (1.12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid maternity leave</td>
<td>21 (17.8)</td>
<td>19 (16.1)</td>
<td>12 (10.2)</td>
<td>30 (25.4)</td>
<td>36 (30.5)</td>
<td>3.35 (1.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compressed work week</td>
<td>8 (6.7)</td>
<td>13 (10.9)</td>
<td>42 (35.3)</td>
<td>44 (37.0)</td>
<td>12 (10.1)</td>
<td>3.33 (1.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexibility to work in another location</td>
<td>11 (9.4)</td>
<td>18 (15.4)</td>
<td>31 (26.5)</td>
<td>38 (32.5)</td>
<td>19 (16.2)</td>
<td>3.31 (1.19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent part-time work</td>
<td>11 (9.2)</td>
<td>19 (16.0)</td>
<td>51 (42.8)</td>
<td>24 (20.2)</td>
<td>14 (11.8)</td>
<td>3.09 (1.10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbatical leave</td>
<td>12 (10.2)</td>
<td>19 (16.1)</td>
<td>47 (39.8)</td>
<td>32 (27.1)</td>
<td>8 (6.8)</td>
<td>3.04 (1.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paternity leave</td>
<td>23 (19.2)</td>
<td>22 (18.3)</td>
<td>29 (24.2)</td>
<td>25 (20.8)</td>
<td>21 (17.5)</td>
<td>2.99 (1.37)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respondents were also asked to rate the importance of various benefits on a 5-point scale (1 = *very unimportant* to 5 = *very important*), regardless of whether or not they received the benefit. As seen in Table 5, bereavement leave had the highest mean ($M = 4.14$, $SD = 0.96$), indicating that it was, on average, an important benefit to respondents. Even though this benefit may be important, it would only be used by a few employees, and would never be used on a recurring basis.

Other benefits may be used by all employees on a routine basis. Flexible work hours ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.91$), wellness programs ($M = 3.87$, $SD = 0.92$), and employee assistance programs ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 0.93$) had higher means, indicating that these benefits were of some importance to many respondents. On average, respondents were neutral about the importance of several benefits. Benefits that were rated lower than the rest include paternity leave ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 1.37$), job sharing ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.00$), extended part-time work
after childbirth or adoption ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.22$), and childcare facilities ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 1.31$). The lack of importance placed on these benefits may relate to the fact that close to 75% of respondents were 41 years of age or older. This finding agrees with previous research that suggested as respondent’s age, they have less family obligations; therefore benefits useful to those raising small children would be less important to them (Boyer et.al. 2003).

**Organizational Commitment**

Using a 7-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*), respondents reported on the extent of their agreement or disagreement with items that described behaviors and attitudes reflecting commitment to their school district. As shown in Table 6, for almost all items describing positive attitudes, the mean ratings were greater than 5.00, indicating respondents’ agreement to these items. Only two items—”I find that my values and the district’s values are very similar” ($M = 4.82$, $SD = 1.74$) and “I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this school district” ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 1.89$)—had mean ratings below 5.00. Meyer and Allen (1991) stated that employees become committed to organizations with which they share values. They work toward the success of these organizations, because in doing so they are behaving in a manner consistent with their own values.

One item reflecting negative attitudes had a mean greater than 5.00: “I could work for a different district as long as the type of work was similar” ($M = 5.34$, $SD = 1.48$). All other items describing negative behaviors and attitudes had mean ratings of less than 4.00, indicating respondents’ disagreement to these items.
Table 6.

**Organizational Commitment of School Foodservice Professionals in Large Districts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SD n (%)</th>
<th>MD n (%)</th>
<th>SLD n (%)</th>
<th>N n (%)</th>
<th>SLA n (%)</th>
<th>MA n (%)</th>
<th>SA n (%)</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected in order to help this district be successful.</td>
<td>6 (5.0)</td>
<td>6 (0.8)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
<td>9 (7.6)</td>
<td>32 (26.9)</td>
<td>70 (58.8)</td>
<td>6.21 (1.44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I really care about the fate of this school district.</td>
<td>4 (3.4)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>2 (1.7)</td>
<td>5 (4.2)</td>
<td>7 (5.9)</td>
<td>33 (27.7)</td>
<td>68 (57.1)</td>
<td>6.21 (1.33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I am proud to tell others that I am part of this school district.</td>
<td>1 (0.8)</td>
<td>3 (2.5)</td>
<td>2 (1.7)</td>
<td>9 (7.6)</td>
<td>17 (14.3)</td>
<td>27 (22.7)</td>
<td>60 (50.4)</td>
<td>6.02 (1.32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>In general, I am satisfied with my job.</td>
<td>4 (3.3)</td>
<td>1 (0.8)</td>
<td>1 (0.8)</td>
<td>9 (7.6)</td>
<td>12 (10.0)</td>
<td>45 (37.5)</td>
<td>48 (40.0)</td>
<td>5.92 (1.36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I talk up this district to my friends as a great place to work</td>
<td>1 (0.9)</td>
<td>4 (3.4)</td>
<td>3 (2.6)</td>
<td>11 (9.3)</td>
<td>18 (15.4)</td>
<td>35 (29.9)</td>
<td>45 (38.5)</td>
<td>5.79 (1.37)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The school district is a great place to work.</td>
<td>2 (1.7)</td>
<td>6 (5.1)</td>
<td>3 (2.5)</td>
<td>11 (9.3)</td>
<td>14 (11.9)</td>
<td>38 (32.2)</td>
<td>44 (37.3)</td>
<td>5.70 (1.50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I am extremely glad I chose to work in this school district over others I considered during my job search.</td>
<td>5 (4.3)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>4 (3.4)</td>
<td>20 (17.1)</td>
<td>15 (12.8)</td>
<td>27 (23.1)</td>
<td>46 (39.3)</td>
<td>5.61 (1.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I could work for a different district as long as the type of work was similar.</td>
<td>4 (3.4)</td>
<td>3 (2.6)</td>
<td>4 (3.4)</td>
<td>16 (13.7)</td>
<td>28 (23.9)</td>
<td>35 (29.9)</td>
<td>27 (23.1)</td>
<td>5.34 (1.48)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>This school district is able to attract high-quality employees.</td>
<td>4 (3.4)</td>
<td>7 (5.9)</td>
<td>11 (9.3)</td>
<td>11 (9.4)</td>
<td>21 (17.8)</td>
<td>36 (30.5)</td>
<td>28 (23.7)</td>
<td>5.19 (1.67)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The culture and environment established in my district motivates me to do my job to the best of my ability.</td>
<td>10 (8.4)</td>
<td>3 (2.5)</td>
<td>15 (12.6)</td>
<td>11 (9.3)</td>
<td>21 (17.6)</td>
<td>27 (22.7)</td>
<td>32 (26.9)</td>
<td>5.01 (1.87)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6. (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>MD</th>
<th>SLD</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>SLA</th>
<th>MA</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>(SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I find that my values and the district’s values are very similar.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>(1.74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>It does not matter where I work, as long as I can work in my chosen profession.</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>(1.85)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this school district.</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>(1.89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Often, I find it difficult to agree with this district’s policies on important matters relating to its employees.</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.39</td>
<td>(1.77)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>There’s not much to be gained by staying with this district indefinitely.</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>(1.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this school district.</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>(1.68)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I feel very little loyalty to this school district.</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.17</td>
<td>(1.78)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Measured on a 7-point scale with 1 = *strongly disagree* (SD), 2 = *moderately disagree* (MD), 3 = *slightly disagree* (SLD), 4 = *neutral* (N), 5 = *slightly agree* (SLA), 6 = *moderately agree* (MA), 7 = *strongly agree* (SA).
The finding that a supportive work environment influences employee’s commitment to their organization is consistent with other studies. Ayree et al (1998) found that supervisor flexibility had a significant effect on both organizational commitment and turnover intentions. Meyer and Allen (1991) reported positive correlations between the affective component of commitment and work experiences. This included variables such as equity in performance-based awards, organizational support and dependability, job challenge, and participation in decision making. They stated that these types of work experiences created feelings of comfort and personal competence and influence an employee’s desire to stay with an organization.

Bardoel (2003), Boyer et al. (2003), Iverson and Deery (1997), and Silva (2006) found that organizations that promoted and supported work/life policies had employees who not only experienced job satisfaction, but also demonstrated greater commitment to the organization.

**Intent to Leave**

Using a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), respondents reported the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with five items describing intentions to leave their current positions. As seen in Table 7, all items describing intentions to leave had mean ratings of less than 2.00, indicating that, on average, respondents disagreed with these statements. Overall, respondents were noncommittal ($M = 3.68, SD = 1.34$) about the statement “I think I will still be working in this organization five years from now.”
Table 7.

School Foodservice Professionals Intention to Leave Their Current Position in Large Districts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>SD n (%)</th>
<th>D n (%)</th>
<th>N n (%)</th>
<th>A n (%)</th>
<th>SA n (%)</th>
<th>M (SD)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>I think I will still be working in this organization five years from now.</td>
<td>14 (12.0)</td>
<td>10 (8.5)</td>
<td>15 (12.9)</td>
<td>39 (33.3)</td>
<td>39 (33.3)</td>
<td>3.68 (1.34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>As soon as I can find a better job, I will leave.</td>
<td>55 (46.6)</td>
<td>28 (23.7)</td>
<td>22 (18.7)</td>
<td>8 (6.8)</td>
<td>5 (4.2)</td>
<td>1.98 (1.15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I often think of quitting my job.</td>
<td>61 (52.1)</td>
<td>19 (16.2)</td>
<td>20 (17.2)</td>
<td>13 (11.1)</td>
<td>4 (3.4)</td>
<td>1.97 (1.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I am actively looking for a new job.</td>
<td>66 (55.5)</td>
<td>31 (26.1)</td>
<td>14 (11.7)</td>
<td>5 (4.2)</td>
<td>3 (2.5)</td>
<td>1.72 (1.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I am seriously thinking of quitting my job.</td>
<td>70 (59.3)</td>
<td>29 (24.6)</td>
<td>14 (11.9)</td>
<td>3 (2.5)</td>
<td>2 (1.7)</td>
<td>1.63 (0.91)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note*. Measured on a 5-point scale with 1 = strongly disagree (SD), 2 = disagree (D), 3 = neutral (N), 4 = agree (A), 5 = strongly agree (SA).

**Factor Analysis**

Principal components analysis (PCA) is a statistical technique used to reduce a number of possibly correlated variables to a smaller number of uncorrelated variables called components. For each scale used in the study, PCA was used to obtain the underlying factor structure of each measurement scale. Factor loadings 0.40 and greater were considered minimally necessary for the interpretation of structure (Hair, Black, Banin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006). The internal consistency of each scale was assessed using Cronbach’s alpha using a minimal value of .70 as a guideline to retain each component (Harr et al.).
Work/Life Practices

Because the items on this scale were taken from various sources, there was no prior hypothesis as to how many underlying factors may have existed for the given data. In all PCA solutions for the Work/Life Practices, negative loadings were reported for items 2, 3, 11, 12, 13, 14, and these items were reverse-scored. Reliability was computed for all questionnaire items and found to be unacceptable at $\alpha = .59$. Therefore, PCA was undertaken to improve reliability and interpretability of the questionnaire items.

The initial solution consisted of three components explaining 59% of the total variance. However, item 8 (“My manager/supervisor is sensitive to my balance between work and home”) loaded on factors one and two. Reliabilities for the three components were as follows: for component 1, $\alpha = .85$; for component 2, $\alpha = .77$; for component 3, $\alpha = .58$. The reliability for components 1 and 2 were acceptable, but the reliability for component 3 was not acceptable. Deleting any item on component 3 would not have improved the reliability.

A second solution with two components was specified in an attempt to remove the cross-loading of item 8 and improve reliability. The two components explained 51% of the total variance. Component 1, labeled “Management Support,” consisted of items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, and 14. Component 2, labeled “Work/Home Role Balance,” consisted of items 5, 7, 9, 12, and 13. No cross-loadings were reported, but items 5 and 14 had low loadings of .48 and .44, respectively. Table 8 displays these two components.
Table 8.

Component Loadings for Work/Life Practices Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item no.</th>
<th>Work/life practices</th>
<th>Management Support</th>
<th>Work/Home Role Balance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>There is support for non-work responsibilities that were once seen to be personal</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>in nature.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11r</td>
<td>My manager/supervisor is often inflexible or insensitive to my personal needs.</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td>.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>There is senior level support for work/life issues.</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>My manager/supervisor is supportive when home/life issues interfere with work.</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>My manager/supervisor is sensitive to my balance between work and home.</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2r</td>
<td>My employer believes that work/life issues only affect women employees.</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There is recognition that work/life issues are integral to maintaining good</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>business practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3r</td>
<td>My employer prefers employees to keep work and non-work as separate worlds.</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14r</td>
<td>If I could find another job where I could have more flexibility, I would take it.</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>It is usually easy for me to manage the demands of both work and home life.</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I am satisfied with the balance I have achieved between my work and my family life.</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12r</td>
<td>My job keeps me from maintaining the quality of life I want.</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13r</td>
<td>My career path is limited because of demands at home.</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>There is training to help manage work/life balance.</td>
<td>.38</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. PCA with varimax rotation. Total variance explained was 51%. “r” indicates this item was reverse-scored. Items with loadings $>.40$ are in bold.
Table 9.

*Relationship Between Management Support and Work/Life Roles*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>No. of items</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management Support</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>1.22</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/Life Role Balance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.71</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>5.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Measured on a 5-point scale with 1 = *strongly disagree* (SD), 2 = *disagree* (D), 3 = *neutral* (N), 4 = *agree* (A), 5 = *strongly agree* (SA).

Reliability for both components was acceptable and deleting any items from either component would not have substantially improved reliability. Reliability for Management Support was reported at \( \alpha = .85 \). Reliability for Work/Home Role Balance was reported at \( \alpha = .71 \) (Table 9).

Work/Life Practices were computed using the mean score of the items loaded on each component. Higher scores on Management Support and Work/Home Role Balance indicate respondent’s perception of more support from management in the respondent’s organization and better work/home balance, respectively. Mean scores on both components indicated neutral perceptions of Management Support and Work/Life Role Balance.

**Organizational Commitment**

This 17-item scale was adapted from the scale used by Mowday et al. (1979). The first 13 items on the current scale were taken from Mowday et al., and the remaining 4 items were added for the current study. Six items were reverse-scored: 4, 6, 10, 11, 12, and 17. The reliability of all scale items was acceptable at \( \alpha = .88 \). However, because additional items
were added to the scale, factor analysis was used to investigate any possible underlying factor structure.

The initial solution consisted of four components that explained 63% of the total variance. Item 2 (“I talk up this district to my friends as a great place to work”) and item 3 (“I am proud to tell others that I am part of this school district”) loaded both on component 1 and component 2. A second solution was attempted forcing three components in an effort to resolve the cross-loadings; 56% of the total variance was explained in this way. However, cross-loadings existed with items 2, 3, and 7 (“I am extremely glad I chose this school district to work for over others I was considering during my job search”) loading on both components 1 and 2. A third solution was attempted forcing two components in another attempt to resolve the cross-loadings. The total variance explained by this third solution was 48%. Items 1, 2, 3, 7, 8 (“The culture and environment established in my district motivates me to perform my job to the best of my ability”), and 9 (“I find that my values and the district’s values are very similar”) loaded on both components.

Because none of the solutions were clearly interpretable and the reliability of all items was acceptable at $\alpha = .88$, the scale was used as a whole (Table 10). A scale score for Organizational Commitment was computed by taking the mean of all items. Higher scores on this scale indicate stronger organizational commitment. The mean score of 5.19 on the 7-point scale indicated respondents slightly agreed to statements reflecting their commitment to their organization.
Table 10.

*Descriptive Statistics for Organizational Commitment Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of items</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Commitment</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Measured on a 7-point scale with 1 = *strongly disagree* (SD), 2 = *moderately disagree* (MD), 3 = *slightly disagree* (SLD), 4 = *neutral* (N), 5 = *slightly agree* (SLA), 6 = *moderately agree* (MA), 7 = *strongly agree* (SA).

**Intent to Leave**

Item 5 was reverse-scored according to scale instructions. Reliability of all items was acceptable at α = .89 (Table 11), and factor analysis confirmed all items loaded on one component. Deleting item 5 would have only slightly improved the reliability to α = .92; therefore, it was kept as a scale item. A score for Intent to Leave was computed by taking the mean of all the items. Higher scores indicate stronger intent to leave respondent’s current organization. The mean score of 1.93 on the 5-point scale indicated that respondents disagreed with statements reflecting intent to leave their organization.

Table 11.

*Descriptive Statistics for Intent to Leave Scale*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of items</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intent to Leave</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Measured on a 5-point scale with 1 = *strongly disagree* (SD), 2 = *disagree* (D), 3 = *neutral* (N), 4 = *agree* (A), 5 = *strongly agree* (SA).
Bivariate Relationship of Component/Scale Score Between Demographic Groups

Pearson’s correlation was computed to test the bivariate relationship between components and scale scores. The correlation between Intent to Leave and Organizational Commitment was significant ($r = -.75, p < .001$). Higher scores on the Organizational Commitment scale were associated with lower scores on the Intent to Leave scale. All other components were significantly correlated with one another, but the strength of each relationship was weak (see Table 12).

Table 12.

*Correlation Matrix for Components*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Management Support</th>
<th>Work/Home Role Balance</th>
<th>Organizational Commitment</th>
<th>Intent to Leave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Management Support</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work/Home Role Balance</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>- .23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Commitment</td>
<td>.48**</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>- .75**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intent to Leave</td>
<td>-.40**</td>
<td>-.23*</td>
<td>-.75**</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, two tailed. **p < .01, two tailed.

Comparisons Between Groups of School Foodservice Professionals

The four components or scale scores were used as dependent variables in three independent $t$ tests to compare differences between groups designated by demographic variables. Respondents were categorized into two groups based on whether they had worked less than 10 years or 10 or more years in their present school foodservice program. With regard to the components of management support, work/life balance, and organizational...
commitment, there were no significant differences between respondents who had worked less than 10 years and those who had worked 10 or more years in their present school foodservice program.

A significant difference was found between age groups with regard to the Intent to Leave scale score $t(116) = 2.91, p < .001$. Respondents were categorized into two groups based on age: 20–40 years of age and 41 years of age or older. The age of the respondents were easily divided into these two age groups. Respondents in the age 20–40 category had higher Intent to Leave scores ($M = 2.50, SD = 1.23$) than did respondents who were 41 years of age or older ($M = 1.82, SD = 0.85$). This finding is consistent with Iverson and Deery’s (1997) research that showed age and gender had both negative and positive effects on intent to leave; younger employees had a higher propensity to leave than did older employees, and male employees were less likely to stay than were females. Similarly, Carbery et al. (2003) also found that male and female foodservice managers over the age of 40 who had the highest scores in the areas of job satisfaction and organizational commitment reported the lowest desire to leave a job.

Older employees in school districts may have been more likely to stay with their current employer because of the costs associated with leaving the organization, such as the loss of a retirement pension, giving up seniority-based privileges, or the disruption of moving a family. In school districts, 98% of districts have defined benefit plans, based on years of service (Garofano & Sable, 2008). The type of commitment where employees stay with an organization because it is a matter of necessity was reported by Meyer and Allen (1991) as the continuance component of commitment. The employee recognizes there are costs associated with leaving and is not willing to make a change.
The responses of school foodservice professionals regarding intent to leave may have been influenced by the current economic situation in the country. In light of the recession that officially began in December 2007, the timing of the survey coincided with the rising unemployment in U.S. labor markets. As of May 2010, job losses in the current recession were the largest experienced since World War II (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2010). Continuance commitment of employees can be seen when one chooses to stay in a position because of current economic conditions and the lack of other viable employment options.

A third t test was computed based on whether or not the respondents reported dependent children. No significant differences on any of the components or scale scores were found between respondents who had dependent children and those who did not. This suggests that employees in all family structures, irrespective of age and children, felt that work-life balance was important. This finding is consistent with Lingard and Francis (2005) research that found employees with children were no more likely to use some work-life benefits than employees without children.
CHAPTER V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Previous research has linked work/life benefits with organizational commitment and intent to leave, suggesting that organizations that implement these policies have a lot to gain. The study answered three questions that were asked to foodservice professionals in large school districts: (a) Which work/life benefits are important to you? (b) Do these work/life benefits relate to your commitment to your district? and (c) Does the presence of work/life policies influence your intent to leave or decision to stay in the district? To answer these questions, an internet questionnaire was sent to foodservice professionals who work in the 50 largest school districts. Two follow-up e-mail reminders were sent to obtain data from non-respondents. This chapter presents a summary of findings, a conclusion, limitations of the study, and recommendations for future research.

Summary of Findings

There were several interesting findings that pertain to a school district’s use of work/life practices and a foodservice professional’s commitment to the district. Even though over 79% of the respondents agreed flexible work hours was an invaluable work/life practice, only 31% of employees were given this benefit, and of those, just over half actually used the benefit. However, value was not necessarily associated with use. The positive support of being given flexible work hours by nonusers suggests that even if employees do not use this flexible time, it still gives them a “safety net” if they need to balance work and personal commitments and, thus, reduces the stress associated with prioritizing work and family needs. This is consistent with Haar’s (2007) research that concluded employees were “strong, positive, and supportive of flextime,” regardless of whether they do or do not use the benefit.
A compressed work week was used more than any other benefit offered. Even though only 20 school districts offered this option, 80% of respondents took advantage of it. The fact that a high number of employees were taking advantage of this benefit may be because they already had a chance to try it when districts forced their employees to work a compressed work week during the summer as a means to save dollars. It may be that young single men and women who participated in this study liked the compressed work week because it provided a three-day weekend, optimal for having fun with family and friends. Conversely, Saltzstein et al., (2001) found that the compressed work week was viewed by singles as difficult because of daycare facilities that would close before the long workday was over and the too-short weekday evenings did not give enough time to take care of family responsibilities.

One would expect individuals with families to feel most sharply the conflict between their roles at work and at home. Interestingly, the benefits geared toward younger individuals raising families such as job sharing, paternity leave, extended part-time work after child birth or adoption, and childcare facilities were neither used nor perceived as important. The perceived importance of these benefits may have been influenced by certain demographic indicators, such as the majority of respondents were over the age of 41, and less than 41% had children at home. As the age of parents increase, childcare responsibilities decline. Employees’ use of work/life benefits may differ according to their age and stage of family development.

This evidence also shows that, even when offered, work/life benefits were not utilized by employees. This may be due to the fact that they are not seen as “special,” but rather as something expected because they may have been offered for years and are now taken for
granted. Employees may also choose not to use these types of benefits because their district failed to provide adequate information about the availability of work/life benefits. Haar and Spell’s (2004) study found that managers may adopt policies but fail to provide adequate information on how to use them. Lingard and Francis (2005) also found that an organization could offer work/life practices in name, but discourage employee use through limiting access to information on how to use the practices.

School foodservice professionals demonstrated a level of commitment to their district, as evidenced in their responses to statements about their pride in the school district and their willingness to do something above and beyond their job requirements. They had a strong desire to see their district succeed. Close to 58% indicated that they would not accept another job assignment in the district, outside of foodservice, in order to keep working for the same district. They wanted to continue in the same department, although over 70% of the respondents reported working more than 40 hours per week. This finding supports Silva’s (2006) research that found the kind of work employees do plays an appreciable role in their job satisfaction. If an employee enjoys his or her job, feels it is meaningful, and has a sense of pride about it, there is an expectation he or she is likelier to expend more effort on the job. This study found that employees liked working for school foodservice departments, which suggests that managers value their commitment to the profession of child nutrition.

The respondents desire to go above and beyond lends support to Homans’s (1958) social exchange theory, which predicted that employees will feel obligated to respond when they receive benefits, such as flextime, from their employer. For example, in this study, employee’s value flextime, which in turn enhances their ability to balance work and life commitments, and thus they will reciprocate with enhanced commitment and loyalty to their
organization. Even though there was not a direct relationship between the provision of work/life practices and organizational commitment, the majority of foodservice professionals appeared to show commitment to their job and a desire to stay in their current position.

There was a strong correlation between intent to leave and organizational commitment. This is especially important, considering that the hospitality industry, in general, is noted for a high turnover rate with many employees just “passing through” on their way to better jobs. Konrad and Mangel’s (2000), Haar’s (2007), and Aryee et al.’s (1998) research has shown that work/life programs give hospitality professionals a reason to stay with their employer and, thus, increase long-term commitment and retention. Haar (2007) also concluded that employees who benefit from an organization’s family-responsive policies tend to be attached to the organization, presumably because it minimizes their work-family conflict.

Meyer and Allen’s (1991) research on a three component model for commitment correlates with the affective commitment reflected in the respondents answers. People who experience affective commitment agree with the organization’s values and goals. The degree to which an individual’s goals and values align with the organization was hypothesized by the authors to directly influence the individual’s desire to remain in the organization because they want to do so.

T tests showed respondents between the ages of 20 and 40 had slightly higher intent-to-leave scores than did respondents over the age of 40. Based on Gursoy et al.’s (2008) research on generational differences, this outcome would be expected because the Gen X generation feels that every job is temporary and merely a stepping stone to another. However, findings showed longevity from the “boomer” directors, who value job security in return for
being loyal to an employer (Gursoy et al.). These employees are unlikely to move to other positions because they are already in senior positions and are well vested in defined pension plans. These findings support Meyer and Allen’s (1991) theory that employees who experience a strong continuance commitment remain with an organization because they feel as though they have to do so.

The economic decline that occurred in the country at the same time this study was conducted most likely influenced some findings. Employees who may have previously wanted to make a job change were hesitant to leave a permanent position because of the volatility of the labor market and the lack of other viable employment options.

There were no significant differences between work/home balance, management support, and organizational commitment for employees who had worked less than 10 years and those who had worked 10 or more years in their present school foodservice program. There were also no significant links between work/home balance, management support, and organizational commitment for respondents who had dependent children and those who did not. There was a weak relationship between management support and work/home balance.

Even though the findings lacked a strong significant relationship between components, the respondents indicated they were currently satisfied with the balance they had achieved between work and family life and it was usually easy to manage the demands of both. They also reported that management was supportive when work issues interfered with home and when home interfered with work. The employees’ answers corresponded with other research showing that a supportive work environment relates to an employee’s attachment to his or her organization, above and beyond the availability of work/life benefits.
Conclusion

This research study sought to examine relationships between work/life practices, organizational commitment and intent to leave in school foodservice professionals. Respondents, regardless of age and family status, indicated that some work/life practices seemed especially important, even if they did not currently take advantage of them. Of those studied, having flexible work hours and a compressed work week had strong support, even though only 31% were given a flexible schedule and less than 19% were offered a compressed work week. Because flexible work hours were highly valued, school districts who do not currently offer these practices may want to look at offering employees some control over their work arrangements.

Interestingly, the benefits geared toward younger individuals raising families, such as job sharing, extended part-time work after child birth or adoption, and childcare facilities, were neither used nor perceived as important. The perceived importance of these benefits may have been influenced by certain demographic indicators, such as 75% of the respondents being over the age of 41, and less than 41% having children at home. This suggests that the childcare responsibilities of the majority of foodservice professionals declined by the time they reached leadership positions in school districts, and benefits such as childcare were no longer important to them. Even though these practices were not perceived as important to today’s school foodservice professionals, school districts should consider offering a combination of work/life benefits to be used as professional’s progress through stages of family life. This may be especially effective for recruiting the Gen X and Y generations who are looking for work/life balance and will likely replace current school district leaders.
Even though the results did not show a direct relationship between the provision of work/life practices and organizational commitment, foodservice professionals still appeared to show commitment to their job and a desire to stay in their current position. This was seen in their responses to statements regarding pride in the school district and a willingness to do something above and beyond their job requirements.

Results showed a relationship between intent to leave and organizational commitment. Respondents between the ages of 20 and 40 had slightly higher intent-to-leave scores than did respondents over the age of 40. This group represented just over 15% of the total respondents and ranged from 20 to 40 years of age. It would be expected that some of these would have characteristics of the Gen X generation, which feels that every job is temporary and merely a stepping stone to another. With over 75% of the respondents over the age of 41, these “boomer” directors, who value job security in return for being committed to the district, showed a strong desire to stay in their current position. Furthermore, over 55% of the total respondents had worked at least 10 years or more in their present school foodservice program, a finding that reinforces a school foodservice professional’s longevity with the same district.

There was a weak relationship between management support and work/life balance. Respondents reported that management was supportive when work issues interfered with home and when home interfered with work. The employees’ answers corresponded with other research showing that a supportive work environment relates to an employee’s attachment to his or her organization, above and beyond the availability of work/life benefits. School districts recognize the importance of supporting employees as they balance demands at home and at work.
Overall, the school foodservice professionals who participated in this study appeared to be dedicated to the child nutrition profession, as indicated by their longevity in present positions and desire to stay with their current districts. Even those who came from backgrounds such as finance and business, as opposed to the traditional foodservice and nutrition background, reported that they were committed to their work. The respondents indicated they were currently satisfied with the balance they had achieved between work and family life and it was usually easy to manage the demands of both.

**Limitations**

There were several limitations to this research study. First, the study had only a 25% response rate to the questionnaire, after three internet invitations to participate. Even though e-mail addresses were obtained for all school foodservice directors in the top 50 districts, a list of other school foodservice professionals who worked in these districts was not available. The people reached in the targeted districts were dependent on the foodservice director forwarding the e-mail to others. The potential sample size was unclear because the number of “other school foodservice professionals” was not known. Furthermore, respondents were not asked to identify the district where they worked; therefore, multiple responses may have come from one district and no response from other districts.

Secondly, to make a real difference in any organization and the lives of its employees, a district would have to offer work/life practices for sufficiently long periods of time to influence a participant’s response. The study did not ask how long a work/life practice had been in place. Participants may be unfamiliar with work/life benefits, either because they were never offered, or they were offered, but employees were never encouraged to take advantage of them.
Furthermore, the work/life practices studied might co-vary with other human resource practices used in school districts. Since work/life practices are likely to be part of a collection of practices that can have a positive impact on job commitment it may be difficult to determine if other district benefits positively or negatively affected a participant’s response.

A third limitation relates to the use of work/life practices during an economic downturn. Many school districts have seen employee layoffs because of budget deficiencies. There may be a decrease focus on attracting new employees and a bigger emphasis on improving productivity. Employees may hesitate to ask for work/life benefits, such as compensatory time or flexible hours, out of fear of appearing less committed to their work and, therefore, more expendable.

Lastly, the sample size is not representative of smaller school districts in the country. Foodservice managers living and working in urban areas might answer work/life questions differently than those who work in rural or less-populated areas. This may negatively influence the generalization of results from large school districts to smaller districts.

**Recommendations for Future Research**

This research showed that foodservice professionals are committed to their school districts and have little desire to move to other jobs. Large districts provide support for them to balance their work and family responsibilities. A similar research study could be replicated with smaller districts to compare the practice and support of work/life benefits to those in larger districts.

Graduates of hospitality programs are equipped with knowledge and skills to work in the school foodservice market. Yet hospitality students, the majority who fall in the categories of Gen Y or Gen X, are not attracted to the school foodservice segment because of
its “lack of prestige”. However, these same students want careers where they can balance work with an active personal life. A quantitative study that would measure hospitality student’s perceptions of a school foodservice career could provide valuable information. Analyzing the variety of job benefits that would be of value to students enrolled in hospitality schools would also be important. The results of both studies would be helpful in developing strategies to market a career in school foodservice to students in hospitality programs.

The hospitality industry is expected to become even more diverse than it is now, with multigenerational employees working side by side. Future studies could be conducted on the generational differences and similarities between professionals who work in the on-site foodservice segment and to examine relationships between their work values and variables such as age, work ethics, and organizational commitment.
REFERENCES


Director’s Consortium of Large School Foodservice Authorities. (2009). [List-serve of names and e-mail addresses, Spring 2009].


APPENDIX A. IRB HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

DATE: July 2, 2009

TO: Mary Kate Harrison
16707 Blenheim Drive
Lutz, FL 33549

CC: Dr. Robert Bosselman
31 MacKay Hall

FROM: Jan Canny, IRB Administrator
Office of Research Assurances

TITLE: The relationship of work/life practices on the recruitment and retention of foodservice professionals employed by large district school systems

IRB ID: 09-243 Study Review Date: 2 July 2009

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair has reviewed this project and has declared the study exempt from the requirements of the human subject protections regulations as described in 45 CFR 46.101(b). The IRB determination of exemption means that:

- You do not need to submit an application for annual continuing review.

- You must carry out the research as proposed in the IRB application, including obtaining and documenting (signed) informed consent if you have stated in your application that you will do so or if required by the IRB.

- Any modification of this research should be submitted to the IRB on a Continuing Review and/or Modification form, prior to making any changes, to determine if the project still meets the Federal criteria for exemption. If it is determined that exemption is no longer warranted, then an IRB proposal will need to be submitted and approved before proceeding with data collection.

Please be sure to use the documents with the IRB approval stamp in your research.

Please note that you must submit all research involving human participants for review by the IRB. Only the IRB may make the determination of exemption, even if you conduct a study in the future that is exactly like this study.
APPENDIX B. QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

1. Introductory Letter

Dear Foodservice Professional,

Recruiting and retaining school foodservice professional managers will become more challenging. As part of my doctoral studies at Iowa State University, I am conducting research on the importance of work/life benefits to professionals who work in the school foodservice segment. I am also examining the relationships that may exist between work/life benefits and the recruitment and retention of foodservice professionals in the largest school districts in the country. Iowa State University Institutional Review Board has approved this research project.

You are asked to participate in this very important study. Your participation is voluntary and all responses will be kept strictly confidential. You may skip any question you do not feel comfortable answering. Please answer the question below to state your intent on participating. If you check “Yes” you will be directed to the survey; checking “No” will exit you from the survey page.

If you have any questions about this study or have concerns about participating, please do not hesitate to contact either me or one of my major professors. Our contact information appears below. Your time and attention to completing this survey is valuable to me. Thank you very much for your participation.

Mary Kate Harrison
16707 Blenheim Drive Lutz, Florida 33549
813-624-7771

Dr. Mary Gregoire
Director, Food and Nutrition Services, Rush University Medical Center
1653 West Congress Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60612

Dr. Robert Bosselman
Professor
Iowa State University
31 Mackay Hall, Ames, IA 50011-1120

1. Do you agree to participate in this survey? Please check one of the boxes below.

☐ Yes
☐ No
### Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

#### 2. Balancing Work to Life

This part of the questionnaire explores work/life practices in your current work environment. For each practice, please check one of the following responses:
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

1. **There is recognition in my district that work/life issues are integral to maintaining good business practices.**
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Strongly Agree

2. **My district supervisor believes that work/life issues only affect women employees.**
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Strongly Agree

3. **My district supervisor prefers employees to keep work and non-work as separate worlds.**
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

4. There is support by district senior administrative staff for work/life issues.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

5. There is training offered to help staff employees manage work/life balance.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

6. There is support by my supervisor for non-work responsibilities that were once seen to be personal in nature.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree

7. I am satisfied with the balance I have achieved between my work and my family life.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Agree
   - Strongly Agree
Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

8. My manager/supervisor is sensitive to my balance between work and home.
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Strongly Agree

9. It is usually easy for me to manage the demands of both work and home life.
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Strongly Agree

10. My manager/supervisor is supportive when home/life issues interfere with work.
    - [ ] Strongly Disagree
    - [ ] Disagree
    - [ ] Neutral
    - [ ] Agree
    - [ ] Strongly Agree

11. My manager/supervisor is often inflexible or insensitive to my personal needs.
    - [ ] Strongly Disagree
    - [ ] Disagree
    - [ ] Neutral
    - [ ] Agree
    - [ ] Strongly Agree
Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

12. My job keeps me from maintaining the quality of life I want.
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Strongly Agree

13. My career path is limited because of demands at home.
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Strongly Agree

14. If I found another job where I could have more flexibility, I would take it.
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
### Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

#### 3. Organizational Benefits

This section explores the benefits that your current organization may offer to you, whether or not you have used the benefit, and the importance of the benefit to you, regardless if it is offered in your district.

1. **Indicate below with a Yes or No if you receive this benefit from your current employer.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child care facilities</td>
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<td>Bereavement leave</td>
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<td>Professional counseling</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

2. Indicate below with a Yes or No if you have taken advantage of the benefit provided by your current employer.

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**Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals**

3. Please check the appropriate box to indicate how important each benefit is to you, regardless of whether your current employer offers the benefit OR whether you have used the benefit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Very Unimportant</th>
<th>Not Important</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Important</th>
<th>Very Important</th>
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</table>
Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

4. Organizational Commitment

This section seeks to understand your commitment to your current employer. Please respond to the following statements with one of the following:
- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Slightly Disagree
- Neutral
- Slightly Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

1. I am willing to put a great deal of effort beyond what is normally expected in order to help this district be successful.

   □ Strongly Disagree
   □ Moderately Disagree
   □ Slightly Disagree
   □ Neutral
   □ Slightly Agree
   □ Moderately Agree
   □ Strongly Agree

2. I talk up this district to my friends as a great place to work.

   □ Strongly Disagree
   □ Moderately Disagree
   □ Slightly Disagree
   □ Neutral
   □ Slightly Agree
   □ Moderately Agree
   □ Strongly Agree
Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

3. I am proud to tell others that I am part of this school district.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Moderately Disagree
   - Slightly Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Slightly Agree
   - Moderately Agree
   - Strongly Agree

4. I feel very little loyalty to the school district.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Moderately Disagree
   - Slightly Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Slightly Agree
   - Moderately Agree
   - Strongly Agree

5. I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this school district.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Moderately Disagree
   - Slightly Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Slightly Agree
   - Moderately Agree
   - Strongly Agree
Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

6. It would take very little change in my present circumstances to cause me to leave this school district.
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] Moderately Disagree
   - [ ] Slightly Disagree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Slightly Agree
   - [ ] Moderately Agree
   - [ ] Strongly Agree

7. I am extremely glad I chose this school district to work for over others I was considering during my job search.
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] Moderately Disagree
   - [ ] Slightly Disagree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Slightly Agree
   - [ ] Moderately Agree
   - [ ] Strongly Agree

8. The culture and environment established in my district motivates me to perform my job to the best of my ability.
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] Moderately Disagree
   - [ ] Slightly Disagree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Slightly Agree
   - [ ] Moderately Agree
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

9. I find that my values and the district’s values are very similar.
- [ ] Strongly Disagree
- [ ] Moderately Disagree
- [ ] Slightly Disagree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Slightly Agree
- [ ] Moderately Agree
- [ ] Strongly Agree

10. I could work for a different district as long as the type of work was similar.
- [ ] Strongly Disagree
- [ ] Moderately Disagree
- [ ] Slightly Disagree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Slightly Agree
- [ ] Moderately Agree
- [ ] Strongly Agree

11. There’s not much to be gained by indefinitely staying with this district.
- [ ] Strongly Disagree
- [ ] Moderately Disagree
- [ ] Slightly Disagree
- [ ] Neutral
- [ ] Slightly Agree
- [ ] Moderately Agree
- [ ] Strongly Agree
Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

12. Often, I find it difficult to agree with this district’s policies on important matters relating to its employees.

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Slightly Disagree
- Neutral
- Slightly Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

13. I really care about the fate of this school district.

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Slightly Disagree
- Neutral
- Slightly Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree

14. This school district is able to attract high quality employees.

- Strongly Disagree
- Moderately Disagree
- Slightly Disagree
- Neutral
- Slightly Agree
- Moderately Agree
- Strongly Agree
Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

15. The school district is a great place to work.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Moderately Disagree
   - Slightly Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Slightly Agree
   - Moderately Agree
   - Strongly Agree

16. In general, I am satisfied with my job.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Moderately Disagree
   - Slightly Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Slightly Agree
   - Moderately Agree
   - Strongly Agree

17. It does not matter where I work, if I can work in my chosen profession.
   - Strongly Disagree
   - Moderately Disagree
   - Slightly Disagree
   - Neutral
   - Slightly Agree
   - Moderately Agree
   - Strongly Agree
Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

5. Intention to Leave Employer

This section explores your intent to leave your current organization. Please respond to the following statements by using one of the following:
Strongly Disagree
Disagree
Neutral
Agree
Strongly Agree

1. As soon as I can find a better job I will leave.
   ○ Strongly Disagree
   ○ Disagree
   ○ Neutral
   ○ Agree
   ○ Strongly Agree

2. I am actively looking for a job.
   ○ Strongly Disagree
   ○ Disagree
   ○ Neutral
   ○ Agree
   ○ Strongly Agree

3. I am seriously thinking of quitting my job.
   ○ Strongly Disagree
   ○ Disagree
   ○ Neutral
   ○ Agree
   ○ Strongly Agree
Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

4. I often think of quitting my job.
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Strongly Agree

5. I think I will still be working in this organization five years from now.
   - [ ] Strongly Disagree
   - [ ] Disagree
   - [ ] Neutral
   - [ ] Agree
   - [ ] Strongly Agree
### Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

#### 6. Demographic Information

This section seeks to gather information about you and your school district.

1. **What is your age?**
   - [ ] 20 to 30
   - [ ] 31 to 40
   - [ ] 41 to 50
   - [ ] 51 to 60
   - [ ] 61 to 70
   - [ ] 71 or over

2. **What is your gender?**
   - [ ] Male
   - [ ] Female

3. **What is the highest level of education you have completed?**
   - [ ] High school diploma
   - [ ] Some continuing education after high school
   - [ ] Associate degree
   - [ ] Bachelor degree
   - [ ] Masters degree
   - [ ] Doctorate degree

4. **If you indicated you have a college degree, please indicate your major:**
   - [ ] Dietetics
   - [ ] Foodservice or Hospitality Management
   - [ ] Family and Consumer Science
   - [ ] Finance
   - [ ] Marketing
   - [ ] Other

   Other (please specify)
   
   [ ]
Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

5. How long have you worked in your present school foodservice program?

- 0-4 years of service
- 5-9 years of service
- 10-14 years of service
- 15-19 years of service
- 20-24 years of service
- 25 or more years of service

6. On average, how many hours do you work per week?

- 20-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60 hours +

7. From the following choices, select the following answer that most closely represents the number of workdays required in your contract with the school district?

- 100 days or less (part-time work)
- 101 to 150 days (part-time work)
- 180 to 200 days (10 month position)
- 201 to 220 days (10.5 months)
- 221 to 240 days (11 month)
- More than 241 days (12 month position)
Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals

8. What is your ethnic background?
   - Caucasian
   - African American
   - Hispanic American
   - Asian American
   - American Indian/Native American
   - Other
   Other (please specify)

9. Do you have a spouse or partner who lives with you?
   - Yes
   - No

10. Do you have dependent children?
    - Yes
    - No

11. Are you a care-giver for one or more adults?
    - Yes
    - No

12. What is your supervisory status?
    - Non-supervisor
    - Supervisor who gives performance evaluations
    - Manager who evaluates at least one other supervisor
**Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals**

**13. What is your job title?**

- Director
- Assistant Director
- Supervisor
- Specialist
- District Manager
- Business Manager
- Other
  
  Other (please specify)  

**14. Which work schedule arrangement do you have?**

- Fixed (You have no control over your work schedule OR when you first began working, you agreed on arrival and departure times with your supervisor)
- Flexible (Your schedule allows you to choose your starting time, vary the hours you work, and/or earn "comp time" to allow you to take time off)
- Compressed (You have a fixed starting time and are scheduled to work longer than 8 hours a day in order to work fewer days during the work week or pay period)

**15. What is the range of student enrollment for the district where you are employed?**

- 75,000 students or below
- 76,000 – 100,000 students
- 101,000 – 150,000 students
- 151,000 – 200,000 students
- 201,000 – 250,000 students
- 251,000 students and over

**16. Operation of my school foodservice program is**

- "Self-operated"
- Managed by a foodservice management company

**17. My school district is**

- Public
- Private
**Questionnaire for School Foodservice Professionals**

7. Thank You!

Thank you for responding to this survey. If you would like a copy of the results, please send me an email message and I will be happy to provide a copy.

Mary Kate Harrison
makaharri@aol.com
APPENDIX C. COVER LETTER

Dear Foodservice Professional,

In the future, recruiting and retaining school foodservice professional managers will become more challenging. As part of my doctoral studies at Iowa State University, I am conducting research on the importance of work/life benefits to professionals who work in the school foodservice segment. I am also examining the relationships that may exist between work/life benefits and the recruitment and retention of foodservice professionals in the largest school districts in the country. Iowa State University Institutional Review Board has approved this research project.

You are asked to participate in this very important study. Your participation is voluntary and all responses will be kept strictly confidential. A questionnaire is attached to a URL in this letter. Simply double click on the URL or copy and paste the URL into your web browser.

http://www.surveymonkey.com

Before beginning the survey, there will be a question that asks about your intention to participate. This question must be answered with either a "Yes" or "No". You may skip any other question you do not feel comfortable answering. Your IP address will not be stored in the survey results.

If you have any questions about this study or have concerns about participating, please do not hesitate to contact either me or one of my major professors. Our contact information appears below. Your time and attention to completing this survey is valuable. Thank you very much for your participation.

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Lutz, Florida 33549  
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