

2015

# Organizational Identification: A Context-Specific Mitigating Resource of Work–Family Conflict

Joseph A. Allen

*University of Nebraska at Omaha, josephallen@unomaha.edu*

John Crowe

*University of Nebraska at Omaha, johncrowe@gmav.unomaha.edu*

Benjamin A. Baran

*Northern Kentucky University*

Cliff Scott

*University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/psychfacpub>

 Part of the [Industrial and Organizational Psychology Commons](#)

## Recommended Citation

Allen, Joseph A.; Crowe, John; Baran, Benjamin A.; and Scott, Cliff, "Organizational Identification: A Context-Specific Mitigating Resource of Work–Family Conflict" (2015). *Psychology Faculty Publications*. 129.

<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/psychfacpub/129>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Department of Psychology at DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Psychology Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact [unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu](mailto:unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu).



**Organizational Identification:  
A Context-Specific Mitigating Resource of Work-Family Conflict**

Joseph A. Allen  
Assistant Professor, I/O Psychology  
University of Nebraska at Omaha  
6001 Dodge Street  
Omaha, NE 68182  
JosephAllen@unomaha.edu

John Crowe  
Graduate Student, I/O Psychology  
University of Nebraska at Omaha  
6001 Dodge Street  
Omaha, NE 68182  
JohnCrowe@unomaha.edu

Benjamin E. Baran  
Assistant Professor, Management  
Haile/US Bank College of Business  
Northern Kentucky University  
Nunn Drive  
Highland Heights, KY 41099  
baranb1@nku.edu

Cliff Scott  
Associate Professor, Communication  
University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
9201 University City Blvd.  
Charlotte, NC 28223  
cscott@email.uncc.edu

Word Count: 7069 (All inclusive)

**Abstract**

The tension between work and non-work life remains a critical issue in contemporary careers. This study explores the role of organizational identification (OI) in reducing work-family conflict (WFC) within demanding and high-stakes jobs in dynamic, uncertain, and potentially dangerous contexts (e.g., firefighting). Survey data from 341 firefighters suggest that, congruent with conservation of resources theory and scarcity theory, OI may serve as a resource that mitigates WFC in these contexts. Additionally, the data suggest that the negative relationship between OI and WFC is stronger when trauma is low. For practice, this study provides important implications for employees in similar contexts concerning potential ways to mitigate work-family conflict as well as recommendations concerning exposure to trauma.

Keywords: Organizational identification, Work-family conflict, Work behavior, Trauma

### **Organizational Identification:**

#### **A Context-Specific Mitigating Resource of Work-Family Conflict**

Organizational identification (OI), defined as an ongoing behavioral process in which a member experiences a sense of oneness with the organization (Mael & Tetrick, 1992) and seeks to “select alternatives with the interests of the organization—as best they can be determined—uppermost in mind” (Cheney & Tompkins, 1985, p.114), develops through social interactions and relationships at work (Cardador & Pratt, 2006; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998).

OI in the context of dynamic, uncertain, and potentially dangerous situations is practically and theoretically relevant because these instances are likelier to feature the very type of work environments that demand employees’ coping resources in ways that traditional occupations do not (Brief, Schuler, & Van Sell 1981; Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980). And yet, because such environments typically feature high levels of physical risk, strong values for trust and certainty, and negative social consequences for the open discussion of resource strain (Bierly & Spender, 1995), their members are often less able to remediate strain via socially supportive interactions with coworkers or family members. For example, studies of firefighters and correctional officers have described organizational cultures that emphasize unusually strong values for interpersonal trust and attach high social costs to the discussion of job related role strain and conflicts between the demands of work and home (Scott & Myers, 2005; Tracy & Scott, 2006). This barrier may become especially problematic when traumatic events occur in the work environment. Given the unique constraints faced by organizational members, exploring OI in this context would add considerably to scholars’ understanding both OI itself and its outcomes.

Thus, one aim of this study is to provide insights into the lives of those who work in dynamic, uncertain, and potentially dangerous situations. In particular, one crucial manifestation of such specific demands on employees is interference between work and family life. For the purposes of this article, we

refer to work-family conflict (WFC) as representing work interference with family as opposed family interference with work (Byron, 2005). Research suggests that family obligations remain just as demanding and time-consuming as in previous years, while the pressures of the work force have increased (Berg, Kalleberg, & Appelbaum, 2003; Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005). For the typical nine-to-five job, several predictors have been proposed to indicate why such conflict occurs (Perrewe & Hochwarter, 2001). Many of the predictors of WFC may not translate well into high-hazard contexts due to the unpredictability of these occupational settings.

Namely, some occupations (e.g., firefighting) tend to experience extreme conditions, such as witnessing trauma, that are not experienced as frequently in other occupations (Scott & Trethewey, 2008; Tracy, Myers, & Scott, 2006). Traumatic, sense-threatening events in the work environment may be particularly challenging for open discussion of negative feelings about trauma because it may breed distrust and disapproval of peers as well as anxiety and concern from loved ones. Here, identification may function as a resource for the management of trauma and the WFC it can bring about.

Grounded in scarcity theory (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991) and conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), we investigate the impact of OI on both WFC frequency (i.e., how often one experiences WFC) and attitudes (i.e., feelings about WFC). We also investigate an important boundary condition for this relationship, trauma, which is unique to certain high-hazard contexts such as firefighting, the military, and law enforcement.

### **Organizational Identification**

OI is anchored in and builds upon social identity theory, whereby members classify themselves and others into various social categories and view their membership in these self-classified groups based on social roles and role relationships (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995; Stryker & Burke, 2000; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). For many employees, their professional or

organizational identity may be more pervasive and important than ascribed identities based on gender, age, ethnicity, race, or nationality (Hogg & Terry, 2000). In addition, OI allows employees to share in the successes and accomplishments of an organization that would be beyond the scope of their individual work (Delaney & Huselid, 1996) and can cause harmful activities to be viewed as sensible (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Employees who identify with their organizations are more likely to display supportive attitudes toward them (Hogg & Terry, 2000), allowing decision-making to coalesce with organizational objectives in such a way as to foster consistency between the two (Simon, 1997). Due to the relationship between OI and organizational commitment (Tompkins, 2005), positive outcomes of OI include increased motivation, higher job performance and satisfaction, better quality individual decision making, and positive employee interaction and retention (Cheney, 1983; Scott, Corman, & Cheney, 1998).

Socially noble occupations (e.g., firefighters, military, police, etc.) in which greater degrees of OI exist often feature happier employees (Rego, Ribeiro, & Cunha, 2010); however, WFC remains (Barling, 1990). Below, we discuss the nature of WFC. We then outline the potential relationship between OI and WFC.

**The nature of WFC.** WFC is a “within-person across-domains transmission of demands and consequent strain” from work to family life (Bakker, Demerouti, & Dollard, 2008, p. 901). In other words, WFC occurs when reactions to events at work are transferred and hamper family-related work for an individual. Much of previous research has focused on the job demands that relate to WFC such as work pressure, an unfavorable working time scheduled, work-role overload, and emotional job demands (e.g., emotional labor from customers) (Dollard, Winefield, & Winefield, 2001; Bakker, Demerouti, & Dollard, 2008) to the exclusion of job demands involving exposure to traumatic events. Others have studied interventions to mitigate WFC for employees, such as family-supportive supervisor behavior (Hammer, Kossek, Anger, Bodner, & Zimmerman, 2011).

WFC frequency refers to the extent to which the individual perceives conflict arising from experiences at work adversely impacting family life; WFC attitudes refers to the extent to which the individual perceives overt attitudes arising from their work organization that adversely impact family life (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). For example, an employee may perceive numerous discrete incidents in which work adversely impacts family life (frequency). He or she may also be reluctant to take off time for family-related matters because they think that their organizational leaders may look unfavorably upon such behavior (attitudes). As such, frequency and attitudes provide a global view of WFC appropriate for our line of inquiry.

**The relationship between OI and WFC.** Scarcity theory (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991) provides a meaningful explanation for how OI may relate to WFC. Scarcity theory states that human energy and resources are fixed and limited. Thus, people partake in a zero-sum game in which resources are expended in one sphere deplete those available for the other (Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). For example, work stressors and ambiguities create symptoms such as depression, irritability, fatigue, uncertainty and anxiety that often times are carried from one role into the next, causing conflict. The spillover of work strain to the family setting makes it difficult for one to perform adequately in the family setting; hence, conflict arises (Brief, Schuler, & Van Sell, 1981) due to strain-based WFC (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

In dynamic, uncertain, and potentially dangerous contexts, we argue that OI may serve as a critical resource for employees. In other words, OI adds to the fixed and limited resources that employees bring with them to the work context, in this case as a function of their feelings of connection to their work. As such, OI may mitigate the perceived frequency of as well as attitudes towards work-family conflict. Furthermore, OI fosters psychological resources such as a sense of meaning, belonging, and control at work (Kreiner & Ashforth, 2004; Scott, Corman & Cheney, 1998). That is, rather than perceive

challenges as problematic or draining, they reframe the challenges as a meaningful part of their work role that satisfies the self-concept wrapped up in their identification with the organization. The act of reframing may recast the challenge or problem from a drain to an enjoyable aspect of the job itself. Additionally, the positive experience resulting from the reframing provides a resource that allows people in these potentially dangerous environments to take less of their work strain home with them, leading to less WFC. Furthermore, in addition to the beneficial resource effect of OI (Ashforth, 2001), the possibility exists that employee's identification with their organization makes the employee less likely to realize when something from work interferes with family. Thus, the following is hypothesized:

*Hypothesis 1: OI is negatively related to (a) attitudes of WFC and (b) frequency of WFC.*

### **Moderating Role of Exposure to Trauma**

Although OI may directly impact WFC in a beneficial way, this relationship may be hampered by the presence of trauma in some occupations. Traumatic events are those that “generally involve threats to life or bodily integrity, or a close personal encounter with violence and death” (Herman, 1992a, p. 33). The stress associated with these forms of trauma may be above and beyond typical work related stress factors (e.g. fatigue, tension, irritability etc.; Brief, Schuler, & Van Sell 1981; Ivancevich & Matteson, 1980). For example, non-trauma work challenges such as an incompetent supervisor, minor hassles, difficult coworkers, or long hours may be easily mitigated by resources provided by OI. However, trauma has a deeper psychological component that is associated with issues of long-lasting strain such as post-traumatic stress symptoms (Herman, 1992b). It is this long-lasting and more psychologically harmful strain that OI may not be adequate to mitigate.

In terms of the current study, while performing their standard duties (i.e., performing salvage operations, performing various public information or education tasks, making minor repairs to equipment and apparatus), firefighters are expected to witness intense trauma of others (Carlisle, 1999; Scott &



Myers, 2005). Trauma leads to negative outcomes (Van der Kolk, 2003), such as post-traumatic stress disorder (Herman, 1992b), in which dynamic, uncertain, and potentially dangerous organization often experience an increased prevalence and incidence (Beaton & Murphy, 1993). When the symptoms of trauma are produced in one role, it becomes difficult to satisfy the demands of another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Hence if a traumatic instance creates stress in the workplace, the beneficial effect of organizational identification on WFC may not be realized due to the individuals need to deal with the observed/experienced trauma. Going back to the zero-sum game that individuals play with their resources, if all resources are depleted by the intense trauma exposure, then the spill-over will occur.

Consistent with scarcity theory, therefore, we argue that trauma will be an additional resource demand that impacts the relationship between OI and WFC. When individuals witness trauma they likely seek support from others, especially family (Thoits, 1995). Families, however, may not be as willing to support their loved one's engagement their work setting if it regularly exposes them to trauma (Kirschman, 2006). Thus, trauma becomes an organizational context demand that requires resources from the individual employee to manage and may thereby undermine the resource boost from identifying with the organization. This is not to say that OI does not continue to provide additional resources, but that trauma uses them up to a greater extent thereby negating the beneficial gains. Therefore, trauma weakens the beneficial negative relationship between OI and WFC.

*Hypothesis 3a: Trauma moderates the relationship between OI and attitudes concerning WFC such that the negative relationship is stronger when trauma is low.*

*Hypothesis 3b: Trauma moderates the relationship between OI and frequency of WFC such that the negative relationship is stronger when trauma is low.*

## **Method**

### **Participants and Procedure**

Participants for this study consisted of active firefighters from a large municipal fire department in the midwestern United States. A link to the online survey was sent to the firefighters and 341 (59.51%) participants completed to the survey. Most of the respondents were male (94.7%), Caucasian (87.6%), middle-aged ( $M = 40.64$  years,  $SD = 6.45$ ), and relatively experienced ( $M = 11.55$  years,  $SD = 4.87$ ). All respondents indicated that they had, at the minimum, completed high school, with a sizable portion reporting that they attended some college (46.2%) or completed a bachelor's degree (43.1%).

Because of the cross-sectional nature of the data collection process, we attempted to mitigate concerns for common-method bias based on recommendations by Podsakoff et al., (2003). By rearranging the order of the measures, we were able to better control for item-context-induced mood states, priming effects, and other biases related to question context or item location on the survey (Conway & Lance, 2010; Podsakoff, MacKanzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Thus, each survey had a different ordering of variables/scales for participants to assess. Additionally, recent thinking concerning common-method bias suggests that the concern may be overstated and that the processes outlined methodologically and statistically adequately mitigate this concern in many cases (Conway & Lance, 2010). As a second point, the likelihood of the common method bias is less pronounced when testing a moderation (Craighead, Ketchen, Dunn, & Hult, 2011).

## Measures

**Organizational identification.** We assessed OI using Vandenberg's (1994) 10-item measure ( $\alpha = .90$ ), which includes questions such as "I feel a sense of 'ownership' for this organization rather than just being an employee" and "I find that my values and the values of this organization are similar." Respondents indicated "yes", "no", or "I don't know" for each item. The scale was coded as yes being "3", no being "0", and "I don't know" being "1". This is consistent with scaling for similar attitudinal variables (e.g. job satisfaction; Ironson, Smith, Brannick, Gibson, & Paul, 1989).

**Trauma.** Trauma was assessed using a 13 item modified version of the Weiss and Marmar's (1997) Trauma Quotient assessment ( $\alpha = .87$ ). Respondents were asked if, over the course of their careers, they had witnessed or heard about traumatic events. Example events included "Life-threatening illness or injury" and "Severe human suffering." Responses ranged on a 5-point scale from 5 (*Happened to Me*) to 1 (*Doesn't Apply*).

**Work-family conflict.** We assessed the extent to which work interferes with family life using an 11-item scale; five items assessed frequency ( $\alpha = .72$ ) and six items assessed related attitudes ( $\alpha = .74$ ). Respondents rated the frequency items (e.g., "How often have you been in a better mood at home because of your job?" (reversed item) on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*). Respondents rated the attitude items (e.g., "Is it hard for you to take time off during your workday to take care of personal or family matters?") on a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

**Scheduling.** Previous research shows that when and how long people work helps to determine not only the length and frequency of family interactions, but quality as well (Hochschild, 1997). Nonstandard work schedules are typically accompanied by decreased quality of family life (Staines & Pleck, 1984). Given the rather invasive scheduling that occurs in some organizations (e.g. 24/7 rotating shifts for firefighters), it seems appropriate to control for this predictor of WFC. Due to the specific nature of our sample, we measured attitudes related to scheduling using a modified version of the scale from Thomas & Ganster, (1995) ( $\alpha = .70$ ). Respondents rated nine items (e.g., "Often times, I come home at odd hours of the day," "I would prefer if my work hours are different," and "If I could change my work hours I would make them longer") on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

**Demographics.** We assessed several demographic variables including age, gender, and education level. Only age showed a significant relationship to any of the focal variables and was therefore included as a control variable. We controlled for age for a couple important theoretical reasons. First, according to

Becker (2005), only control variables that have a unique and significant relationship with the focal outcome variable should be controlled for. Second, trauma research suggests that opportunities for exposure are directly related to actual exposure to trauma (Breslau, Chilcoat, Kessler, & Davis, 1999). Thus, older firefighters have either had more opportunities to be exposed to trauma by virtue of their length of time with the company and/or because of their age.

### Results

Table 1 contains the means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and alpha reliability estimates for all the principle variables measured.

-----  
 Insert Table 1 about here  
 -----

Hypothesis 1 stated that negative relationships exist between OI and (a) attitudes of WFC and (b) frequency of WFC. Table 1 provides the intercorrelations that support this hypothesis. However, as a more rigorous test of Hypothesis 1a and 1b regression analyses were conducted (see Table 2). Hypothesis 1a stated that OI is negatively related to (a) attitudes of WFC and (b) frequency of WFC. First, we entered age and scheduling with the result accounting for a significant amount of variance ( $\Delta R^2 = .13, p < .05$ ). Next, the main predictor, OI, significantly related with WFC attitudes ( $\Delta R^2 = .12; \beta = -.35, p < .05$ ), supporting H1a.

-----  
 Insert Table 2 about here  
 -----

Hypothesis 1b stated that the negative relationship between OI and frequency of WFC persists after controlling for scheduling (see Table 2). As with H1a, age and scheduling accounted for a significant amount of variance ( $\Delta R^2 = .29, p < .05$ ). Next, the main predictor, OI, significantly related with WFC frequency ( $\Delta R^2 = .03; \beta = -.17, p < .05$ ), supporting H1b.

Hypothesis 2a stated that trauma moderates the relationship between OI and attitudes concerning WFC such that the negative relationship is stronger when trauma is low. We tested this hypothesis using moderated multiple regression (see Table 3). In the first step, we entered the mean-centered main predictors. In the second step, we entered the interaction term alongside organizational identification along with age and scheduling as outlined by Aiken and West (1993). The interaction term was significantly related with WFC attitudes ( $\Delta R^2 = .01$ ;  $\beta = .12$ ,  $p < .05$ ). A graph of these interaction results (see Figure 1) demonstrates that the shape of the interaction was in the hypothesized direction, supporting H2a.

-----  
Insert Table 3 about here  
-----

-----  
Insert Figure 1 about here  
-----

Hypothesis 2b stated that trauma moderates the relationship between OI and frequency of WFC such that the negative relationship is stronger when trauma is low. We tested this hypothesis using moderated multiple regression (see Table 3). In the first step, we entered the mean-centered main predictors. In the second step, we entered the interaction term alongside organizational identification and trauma. The interaction term significantly related with WFC frequency ( $\Delta R^2 = .03$ ;  $\beta = .17$ ,  $p < .05$ ). A graph of these interaction results (see Figure 2) demonstrates that the shape of the interaction was in the hypothesized direction, supporting H2b.

-----  
Insert Figure 2 about here  
-----

## Discussion

This study took first steps in investigating an observable relationship between OI and WFC. Our findings reinforced and extend past research findings by identifying more explicitly the degree to which trauma, OI, and WFC are intertwined. Our data suggest that OI is negatively related to both attitudes and frequency of WFC. Also, our data suggests that trauma moderates the relationship between OI and both attitudes and frequency concerning WFC such that the negative relationship is stronger when trauma is low. This suggests that when employees have relatively minimal exposure to trauma, they particularly benefit from their identification with their organization as it pertains to WFC. Unfortunately, their exposure to trauma is largely outside their control or the control of their organization overall, highlighting the need for intervention in instances of highly traumatic events.

### **Implications for Theory**

Our findings add to those reviewed earlier indicating the mitigating effects of OI on some negative outcomes and under certain conditions (i.e. low trauma). By definition, unwanted outcomes are not ideal. For most, the typical workday carries limited life-threatening risk factors. Employees in dynamic, uncertain, and potentially dangerous occupations, however, such as the firefighters studied here, may face threats to their own (and others') safety on a regular basis (Regehr, Dimitropoulos, Bright, George, & Henderson, 2005). Extreme incidents that many consider life changing may be typical workplace experiences in dangerous organizations (Roberts, 1990) but still require interaction and investment of social resources to manage. The findings highlight the potential role of OI to temper negative outcomes, but to a lesser extent for those exposed to high-traumatic situations. Specifically, at low levels of trauma, OI is negatively related to WFC thereby potentially benefitting the individual and their family. However, in high trauma cases, that beneficial relationship does not exist. Future research should investigate where this turning point occurs and how one manages trauma exposure so OI can benefit employees generally.

Second, this study adds to our theoretical understanding of the impacts that trauma have on employees of dynamic, uncertain, and potentially dangerous organizations. As employees undergo training, the common belief is that they will gain the proper tools needed to deal with the situations they will face out in the field. Yet despite the training, the reality of their work affects high-reliability employees both emotionally and psychologically (Regehr, Dimitropoulos, Bright, George, & Henderson, 2005). Therefore, OI may be a resource beyond training that mitigates these bad outcomes through the buffering of WFC. Furthermore, the probability that an employee is likely to identify with his or her organization may be an important factor organizations should consider during personnel decision-making processes and in choosing how to best design and implement targeted interventions (e.g., critical incident stress debriefings).

Third, this study is the first study to investigate OI as a resource to reduce WFC, thereby introducing identification and social identity theory into the literature and theory surrounding WFC and stress. Specifically, research suggests that WFC is a multi-dimensional construct (Carlson et al., 2000), and this study shows that OI relates to two dimensions of WFC. Further, much of WFC research focuses on its outcomes such as work stress, family stress, and so on (Chen & Powell, 2012). This study is situated on the antecedent side of the model and asserts that work and family stress from WFC may be mitigated by OI. Future research is needed to expand this model and verify these initial assertions.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

As with any investigation, this study has several limitations that deserve mention. First, our data reflect members of the fire service—a predominantly male, Caucasian occupation. As such, we cannot necessarily generalize to all other occupations; however, consistent with the NFPA Firefighting report (Karter & Molis, 2013) the sample used in this study is representative of the nationwide average for firefighters. Additionally, although we believe the findings are generalizable to other fire departments, it

is unclear whether the current findings apply to other jobs and organizations generally. It may be that the proposed and found relationships are consistent in many other occupations. This generalizability issue is one that can easily be addressed through future research.

Second, this was a self-reported and cross-sectional study, inhibiting our ability to make causal claims. It may be that respondents are either consistently misreporting their behavior or that, having once engaged in any of the discussed activities, they cognitively re-evaluate or justify these behaviors by reporting increased identification and internalization. Future research is needed to investigate the extent to which the direction of causality is as theorized and suggested here.

Third, the cross-sectional nature of the data does suggest the possibility of common-method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). As mentioned in the above, however, we took steps as recommended by the literature to mitigate this concern. Also, it should be noted that the focal variables assessed here are likely best viewed from the perspective of the participant, given the intent of the study. That is, the purpose of the study was to investigate the extent to which participants experienced reduced work-family conflict when they identify with their job. Who better to ask than the participant themselves? However, had we wanted to know the extent to which the participants' identification with their job impacted the experience of work-family conflict among their family members, then the family's experience of work family conflict would need to be assessed. Although that is a great idea for future research and for eliminating common-method bias concerns, it highlights the need for the method and measurement process to match the research question of interest (Conway & Lance, 2010).

Fourth, although the findings are consistent with OI literature concerning the resource nature of OI (Abrams, Ando, & Hinkle, 1998; Haslam, 2004), alternative explanations exist that should be considered and investigated. For example, is it not also logical to assume that people who show higher OI are also more likely to put more resources into their work and away from family? Thus, instead of an actual



reduction of WFC, OI creates an attributional context in which the employee devalues the conflict with family as a result from work because work is valued higher by them. Since the current data does not ask questions about attributional norms and dispositions to view work or family with greater or lesser urgency, future research should consider the effects of OI on attributions of employees related to WFC.

Fourth, the findings concerning trauma present a somewhat perplexing pattern of results that somewhat limit the conclusions drawn thus far, but offer an opportunity for future research. Specifically, trauma is not correlated with WFC attitudes or frequency as shown in Table 1. However, in testing the moderation hypotheses using conventional processes, we found that trauma appeared to relate to both WFC attitudes and frequency. One explanation for this discrepancy may stem from the global approach we took to assessing trauma. We assessed overall trauma as opposed to non-threatening versus severe trauma exposure. The moderation analysis suggests that only under conditions of high trauma exposure (likely including severe), does trauma actually moderate and negate the beneficial OI to WFC relationship. What is needed is a future study that disentangles trauma in a meaningful way that includes measures that capture the various types of trauma exposure and thereby identifying the nature of the relationship more clearly than provided here.

Finally, it is also important to note that future research should look at the difference between *organizational* identification and *occupational* identification as it relates to a high-hazard context in an attempt to mitigate rates in unwanted outcomes. While we focused primarily on how the firefighters identified with being firefighters, the relationship between the firefighters and their specific municipalities as opposed to their overall identification with their vocation should be further explored as per Roe and Schulman's (2008) work on reliability professionals and their identification within their roles. We argued and found that OI works especially well in low-trauma conditions. Considering there is, at a minimum, a moderate level of intrinsic trauma associated within this sample it would serve dynamic, uncertain, and

potentially dangerous organizations well to discover their particular threshold of trauma and strain in an attempt to mitigate those higher levels of unwanted effects.

### **Practical Implications**

The current findings suggest several practical implications from both an employee and managerial perspective as it pertains to the high-reliability context. By acknowledging that low exposure to trauma will create stronger, negative relationships among OI, WFC attitudes, and WFC frequency, managers in high-hazard contexts should attempt to limit the amount of exposure any singular employee experiences during a set time period. In terms of firefighting, certain stations have higher volumes of calls than others, thus making it more likely at some stations than others to be exposed to trauma of others. Managers can track employee involvement in traumatic events, know which employees might be at most risk for strain, and in the case of firefighters, move them to less busy locations where trauma exposure is less likely. Such tracking could be done at the most simple level through systematic, periodic assessments. It is probable that with the limitation of exposure to trauma, families will feel more comfortable and accepting of strong OI by the employee. It should also be noted that the effects that scheduling has on individuals' identification and, subsequently, WFC, it is not surprising the findings would suggest practitioners look closely at the how their employees work.

Additionally, for the dynamic, uncertain, and potentially dangerous occupations that require an unspecified amount of exposure to trauma, one should consider creating a safe place for families and employees to talk through the conflict they might face. Therapy is suggested for those employees that experience large amounts of trauma (Foy, Ruzek, Glynn, Riney, & Gusman, 1997). By offering therapy sessions or other safe venues for discussion, employees who witness a considerable amount of trauma may be better equipped to maintain a positive family life. Furthermore, fostering OI among both employees and their families should be a priority. Practically speaking, such organizations could organize

and include families in social gatherings, appreciation events, family retreats, and similar positive activities in a welcoming environment.

### References

- Abrams, D., Ando, K., & Hinkle, S. (1998). Psychological attachment to the group: cross-cultural differences in organizational identification and subjective norms as predictors of workers' turnover intentions. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *24*(10), 1027-39.
- Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (1993). *Multiple regression: Testing and interpreting interactions*. Newbury Park: Sage.
- Ashforth, B. (2001). *Role transitions in organizational life: An identity-based perspective*. Psychology Press.
- Ashforth, B., & Anand, V. (2003). The normalization of corruption in organizations. *Research in organizational behavior*, *25*, 1-52.
- Baker, D., Day, R., & Salas, E. (2006). Teamwork as an essential component of high-reliability organizations. *Health Services Research*, *41*(4p2), 1576-1598.
- Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Dollard, M. F. (2008). How job demands affect partners' experience of exhaustion: Integrating work-family conflict and crossover theory. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *93*(4), 901-911. DOI: 10.1037/0021-9010.93.4.901
- Barling, J. (1990). *Employment, stress and family functioning*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Bartel, C. (2001). Social comparisons in boundary-spanning work: Effects of community outreach on members' organizational identity and identification. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *46*(3), 379-413.
- Baumann, M. R., Gohm, C. L., & Bonner, B. L. (2011). Phased training for high-reliability occupations: Live-fire exercises for civilian firefighters. *Human Factors: The Journal of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society*, *53*(5), 548-557.

- Beaton, R., & Murphy, S. (1993). Sources of occupational stress among firefighter/EMTs and firefighter/paramedics and correlations with job-related outcomes. *Pre-hospital and Disaster Medicine, 8*(02), 140-150.
- Becker, T. E. (2005). Potential problems in the statistical control of variables in organizational research: A qualitative analysis with recommendations. *Organizational Research Methods, 8*(3), 274-289.
- Berg, P., Kalleberg, A., & Appelbaum, E. (2003). Balancing work and family: The role of high-commitment environments. *Industrial Relations: A Journal of Economy and Society, 42*(2), 168-188.
- Bhattacharya, C., Rao, H., & Glynn, M. (1995). Understanding the bond of identification: An investigation of its correlates among art museum members. *The Journal of Marketing, 46*-57.
- Bigley, G. A., & Roberts, K. H. (2001). The incident command system: High-reliability organizing for complex and volatile task environments. *Academy of Management Journal, 44*(6), 1281-1299.
- Bierly, P. E., & Spender, J. C. (1995). Culture and high reliability organizations: The case of the nuclear submarine. *Journal of Management, 21*(4), 639-656.
- Bochantin, J., & Cowan, R. (2010). "I'm not an invalid because I have a baby...": A cluster of analysis of female police officers experiences as mothers on the job. *Human Communication, 13*(4), 319-335.
- Breslau, N., Chilcoat, H. D., Kessler, R. C., & Davis, G. C. (1999). Previous exposure to trauma and PTSD effects of subsequent trauma: results from the Detroit Area Survey of Trauma. *American Journal of Psychiatry, 156*(6), 902-907.
- Brief, A., Schuler, R., & Van Sell, M. (1981). *Managing job stress*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- Byron, K. (2005). A meta-analytic review of work-family conflict and its antecedents. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 67*(2), 169-198.

- Cardador, M., & Pratt, M. (2006). Identification management and its bases: Bridging management and marketing perspectives through a focus on affiliation dimensions. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 34(2), 174-184.
- Carlisle, C. (1999). *The Role of Occupational Stress in The Contemporary Fire Service: Psychological Stress, Its Causation, Identification, Treatment, Reduction, and Resolution*. National Fire Academy.
- Carlson, D. S., Kacmar, K. M., & Williams, L. J. (2000). Construction and initial validation of a multidimensional measure of work–family conflict. *Journal of Vocational behavior*, 56(2), 249-276.
- Chen, Z. & Powell, G. N. (2012). No pain, no gain? A resource-based model of work-to-family enrichment and conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 81(1), 89-98.
- Cheney, G. (1983). The rhetoric of identification and the study of organizational communication. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 69(2), 143-158.
- Cheney, G., & Tompkins, P. (1985). Communication and unobtrusive control in organizations. In R. D. McPhee and P. K. Tompkins (Eds.), *Organizational Communication: Traditional Themes and New Directions* (pp. 179-210). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Christianson, M. K., Sutcliffe, K. M., Miller, M. A., & Iwashyna, T. J. (2011). Becoming a high reliability organization. *Health Care*, 11, 18.
- Conway, J. & Lance, C. (2010). What reviewers should expect from authors regarding common method bias in organizational research. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 25(3), 325-334.
- Coutu, D. L. (2003). Sense and reliability. *Harvard Business Review*, 81(4), 84-90.

- Craighead, C. W., Ketchen, D. J., Dunn, K. S., & Hult, G. G. (2011). Addressing common method variance: guidelines for survey research on information technology, operations, and supply chain management. *Engineering Management, IEEE Transactions on*, 58(3), 578-588.
- Delaney, J., & Huselid, M. (1996). The impact of human resource management practices on perceptions of organizational performance. *Academy of Management journal*, 39(4), 949-969.
- Dollard, M. F., Winefield, H. R., & Winefield, A. H. (2001). *Occupational strain and efficacy in human service workers*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer.
- Eby, L. T., Casper, W. J., Lockwood, A., Bordeaux, C. & Brinley, A. (2005). Work and family research in IO/OB: Content analysis and review of the literature (1980-2002). *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 66(1), 124-197.
- Foy, D., Ruzek, J., Glynn, S., Riney, S., & Gusman, F. (1997). Trauma focus group therapy for combat-related PTSD. *In Session: Psychotherapy in Practice*, 3(4), 59-73.
- Goffman, E. (1961). On the characteristics of total institutions. In *Symposium on preventive and social psychiatry* (pp. 43-84).
- Greenhaus, J., & Beutell, N. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of Management Review*, 10(1), 76-88.
- Gutek, B. A., Searle, S., & Klepa, L. (1991). Rational versus gender role expectations for work/family conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76, 560-568.
- Hammer, L. B., Kossek, E. E., Anger, W. K., Bodner, T., & Zimmerman, K. L. (2011). Clarifying work-family intervention processes: The roles of work-family conflict and family-supportive supervisor behaviors. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(1), 134-150. DOI: 10.1037/a0020927
- Haslam, S. (2004). *Psychology in organizations*. New York: Sage.
- Herman, J. (1992a). *Trauma and recovery*. New York: Basic Books.

- Herman, J. (1992b). Complex PTSD: A syndrome in survivors of prolonged and repeated trauma. *Journal of traumatic stress, 5*(3), 377-391.
- Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. *American Psychologist, 44*, 513–524.
- Hochschild, A. (1997). The time bind. *WorkingUSA, 1*(2), 21-29.
- Hogg, M., & Terry, D. (2000). Social identity and self-categorization processes in organizational contexts. *Academy of Management Review, 25*(1), 121-140.
- Hogg, M., Terry, D., & White, K. (1995). A tale of two theories: A critical comparison of identity theory with social identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 255*-269.
- Ironson, G. H., Smith, P. C., Brannick, M. T., Gibson, W. M., & Paul, K. B. (1989). Construction of a job in general scale: A comparison of global, composite, and specific measures. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 74*, 193–200.
- Ivancevich J., & Matteson M. (1980). *Stress and Work*. Glenview, Il.: Scott, Foresman,
- Karter, M. J., Jr., & Molis, J. (2013). U.S. firefighter injuries - 2012. *NFPA Fire Analysis and Research Division*. Retrieved September 26, 2014, from <http://www.nfpa.org/~//media/Files/Research/NFPA%20reports/Fire%20service%20statistics/osffinjuries.pdf>
- Kirschman, E. (2006). *I Love a Cop, Revised Edition: What Police Families Need to Know*. Guilford Press.
- Kreiner, G. E. & Ashforth, B. E. (2004). Evidence toward an expanded model of organizational identification. *Journal of Organizational Behavior, 25*, 1-27. DOI: 10.1002/job.234
- La Porte, T. (1996). High reliability organizations: unlikely, demanding and at risk. *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management, 4*(2), 60-71.



- Lee, S. (1971). An empirical analysis of organizational identification. *Academy of Management Journal*, *14*(2), 213-226.
- Mael, F., & Ashforth, B. (1995). Loyal from day one: Biodata, organizational identification, and turnover among newcomers. *Personnel Psychology*, *48*(2), 309-333.
- Mael, F., & Tetrick, L. (1992). Identifying organizational identification. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *52*(4), 813-824.
- Perrewe, P., & Hochwarter, W. (2001). Can we really have it all? The attainment of work and family values. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *10*, 29-33.
- Podsakoff, P., MacKenzie, S., Lee, J., & Podsakoff, N. (2003). Common method biases in behavioral research: a critical review of the literature and recommended remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *88*(5), 879.
- Pratt, M. (1998). *To be or not to be: Central questions in organizational identification*. Sage Publications, Inc.
- Regehr, C., Dimitropoulos, G., Bright, E., George, S., & Henderson, J. (2005). Behind the brotherhood: Rewards and challenges for wives of firefighters. *Family Relations*, *54*(3), 423-435.
- Rego, A., Ribeiro, N., & Cunha, M. (2010). Perceptions of organizational virtuousness and happiness as predictors of organizational citizenship behaviors. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *93*(2), 215-235.
- Riketta, M. (2005). Organizational identification: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, *66*(2), 358-384.
- Roberts, K. (1989). New challenges in organizational research: high reliability organizations. *Organization & Environment*, *3*(2), 111-125.
- Roberts, K. (1990). Some characteristics of one type of high reliability organization. *Organization Science*, *2*, 160-176.

- Roberts, K. H., Bea, R., & Bartles, D. L. (2001). Must accidents happen? Lessons from high-reliability organizations. *The Academy of Management Executive*, 15(3), 70-78.
- Rochlin, G., La Porte, T., & Roberts, K. (1987). The self-designing high-reliability organization: Aircraft carrier flight operations at sea. *Naval War College Review*, 40(4), 76-90.
- Roe, E., & Schulman, P. R. (2008). *High reliability management: Operating on the edge*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Business Books, an imprint of Stanford University Press.
- Scott, C., Corman, S., & Cheney, G. (1998). Development of a structural model of identification in the organization. *Communication Theory*, 8(3), 298-336.
- Scott, C., & Myers, K. (2005). The socialization of emotion: Learning emotion management at the fire station. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 33(1), 67-92.
- Scott, C., & Trethewey, A. (2008). Organizational discourse and the appraisal of occupational hazards. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 36, 297-317.
- Simon, T. (1997). Reconceptualizing the origins of number knowledge: A “non-numerical” account. *Cognitive Development*, 12(3), 349-372.
- Staines, G., & Pleck, J. (1984). Nonstandard work schedules and family life. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 69(3), 515.
- Stryker, S., & Burke, P. (2000). The past, present, and future of an identity theory. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 284-297.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. (1986). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. *Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, 7-24.
- Thoits, P. (1995). Stress, coping, and social support processes: Where are we? What next?. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 53-79.

- Thomas, L. T., & Ganster, D. C. (1995). Impact of family-supportive work variables on work-family conflict and strain: a control perspective. *Journal of applied psychology, 80*(1), 6.
- Tompkins, J. (2005). *Organization theory and public management*. Thomson Wadsworth.
- Tracy, S., Myers, K., & Scott, C. (2006). Cracking jokes and crafting selves: A multi-site analysis of humor, sensemaking, and identity management among human service workers. *Communication Monographs, 73*, 283-308.
- Tracy, S. J., & Scott, C. W. (2006). Sexuality, masculinity and taint management among firefighters and correctional officers: “America’s heroes” and the “scum of law enforcement.” *Management Communication Quarterly, 20*, 6-38.
- Vandenberg, R. J., Self, R. M., & Seo, J. H. (1994). A critical examination of the internalization, identification, and compliance commitment measures. *Journal of Management, 20*, 123-140.
- Van der Kolk, B. A. (2003). *Psychological trauma*. American Psychiatric Pub.
- Van Knippenberg, D., & Hogg, M. A. (2003). A social identity model of leadership effectiveness in organizations. *Research in organizational behavior, 25*, 243-295.
- Weick, K. (1987). *Organizational culture as a source of high reliability*. National Emergency Training Center.
- Weick, K., & Sutcliffe, K. (2001). *Managing the unexpected* (pp. 10-11). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Weiss, D., & Marmar, C. (1997). The impact of event scale – revised. In *Assessing Psychological Trauma and PTSD* (eds J. P. Wilson & T. M. Keane), pp. 399-411. New York: Guilford Press.

Table 1

*Means, Standard Deviations, Intercorrelations, and Alpha Reliability Estimates for the Focal Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Organizational Identification	2.11	.89	(.90)					
2. Work/Family Conflict Frequency	3.02	.61	-.23**	(.74)				
3. Work/Family Conflict Attitude	2.67	.35	-.23**	.04	(.72)			
4. Scheduling Scale	2.77	.49	-.12*	.54**	.08	(.70)		
5. Trauma Questionnaire	3.69	.39	.03	.06	.05	.07	(.87)	
6. Age	40.64	6.45	-.17**	.03	.03	.03	.10**	-

Note.  $N = 341$ . Diagonal contains alpha reliability estimates. \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$

Table 2

*Regression of Organizational Identification onto Work/Family Conflict Attitudes and Frequency*

Model	WFC Attitudes				WFC Frequency					
	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$B$	$SE B$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$B$	$SE B$	$\beta$
<u>Step 1: Control</u>	.13*	.13*				.28*	.29*			
Intercept			.77	.28				1.06	.25	
Age			.02	.00	.21*			.00	.00	.02
Scheduling			.37	.07	.28*			.69	.06	.54*
<u>Step 2: Main Effect</u>	.24*	.12*				.31*	.03*			
Intercept			1.70	.30				1.50	.27	
Age			.01	.00	.14*			.00	.00	-.02
Scheduling			.32	.07	.25*			.67	.06	.52*
Organizational Identification			-.24	.04	-.35*			-.12	.03	-.17*

Note:  $N = 341$ . \* $p < .05$ .

Table 3

*Regression of Trauma onto Organizational Identification to Work/Family Conflict Relationship*

Model	WFC Attitudes					WFC Frequency				
	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$B$	$\frac{SE}{B}$	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$	$B$	$SE B$	$\beta$
<u>Step 1: Control</u>	.17*	.17*				.06*	.06*			
Intercept			2.61	.03				3.02	.03	
Organizational Identification			-.28	.04	-.40*			-.17	.04	-.24*
Trauma			.21	.08	.12*			.11	.09	.07
<u>Step 2: Main Effect</u>	.19*	.01*				.09*	.03*			
Intercept			2.61	.01				3.01	.03	
Organizational Identification			-.29	.04	-.41*			-.17	.04	-.25*
Trauma			.28	.09	.17*			.21	.09	.13*
Organizational Identification X Trauma			.21	.09	.12*			.29	.10	.17*

Note:  $N = 341$ . \* $p < .05$ .

Figure 1. Trauma Moderating Organizational Identification to Work/Family Conflict Attitudes Relationship

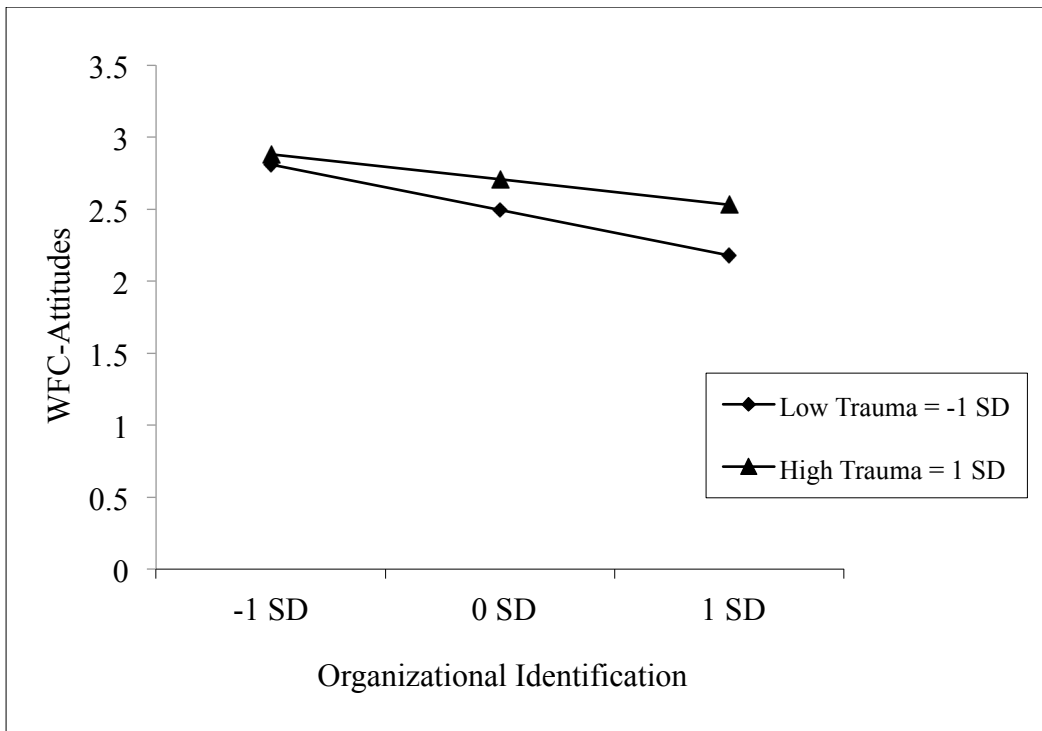


Figure 2. Trauma Moderating Organizational Identification to Work/Family Conflict Frequency Relationship

