


2016

A Multiple Case Study on Leader Support, Breastfeeding, and Work Commitment

Lisa Marie Rancourt
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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Walden University

2016

Abstract

A Multiple Case Study on Leader Support, Breastfeeding, and Work Commitment

by

Lisa Marie Rancourt

MSB, Husson University, 2004

BS, University of Southern Maine, 2001

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

Walden University

August 2016

Abstract

In the United States, over 50% of women return to paid work after becoming mothers. Mothers who breastfeed are more likely to stop working than peers who chose to use infant formula. The purpose of this research was to explore work commitment among new mothers during the first year of their infant's life. Many of these mothers had skills that were imperative to organizational success, making their retention a priority. The relationship between leadership support for dual roles as mothers and employees had not received attention previously in the literature. This multiple case study analyzed the perceptions of new mothers regarding leader support and its role in their commitment to work. The first research question focused on the role of leader support in a new mother's commitment to working. The second explored a new mother's perception of organizational support of her decision regarding infant feeding. The conceptual framework was based on social learning theory, social role expectation theory, and feminist theory. Twenty-three working mothers were recruited through social media, using purposeful sampling, to participate. The data collection consisted of open-ended interviews, as well as document reviews. The data was retrieved, coded, and analyzed using within case and cross-case analysis for themes, and patterns. Findings yielded 3 primary categories: leadership, priorities, and policies. The results showed that participants needed leader support to successfully manage their dual roles, and maintain their commitment to work. In conclusion, positive social change in workplace communication, paid leave policies, and education have the ability to change long held perceptions about mother's work commitment. The results may help organizations implement new policies that benefit working mothers. These changes will strengthen corporate culture from within, empower employees, and encourage growth, loyalty, and innovation to maintain a competitive edge.

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Dedication

This doctoral study is dedicated to my sons, Alexander Robert, and Andrew James, who provided me with study buddies, motivation, and humor at each stage of my doctoral journey. In addition, I dedicate this work to my husband Jeremiah, and my family. They understood and forgave my absences from family events when I needed to study and provided me with a constant stream of encouragement and energy-instilling hugs when I needed both.

Finally, I dedicate this study to my mother, Donna Carbonneau. She is my role model for how to live a life of learning, passion, and integrity. I can only hope that what I have accomplished personally, professionally, and academically is a testament to the gifts she gave me and the values she instilled in me.

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I thank the participants for their contributions and their candor. Finally, I wish to thank my brother, Larry Carbonneau, and my mom, Donna Carbonneau, for their example of scholarly achievement and for their years of love and support.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

In the United States over 60% of mothers of young children, and infants work outside the home (Miner, Smittick, Seigel, & Clark, 2014; U.S. Department of Labor, 2013). The growth rate of new mothers in the workforce has increased by over 80% in the last twenty years and is likely to continue to grow (United States Breastfeeding Committee [USBC], n.d.). Of these working mothers 60% intend to breastfeed after returning to work, but only 40% of these are successful (USBC, n.d.; Weber, Janson, Wen, & Rissel, 2011).

Mothers of young children leave the workforce or change organizations at a higher rate than other women (Wetlesen, 2010). Breastfeeding mothers work less than mothers who use infant formula to feed their children (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). The reasons mothers stop working or change work organizations are not clearly understood, but an employee's perception of leader support affects the employee's work life and may increase or decrease their commitment to work (Borgogni, Dello Russo, & Latham, 2011).

Organizations promote social change by valuing individuals and understanding how an employee's personal life can impact their organizational life. An organization that recognizes and supports the needs of all their employees is a desirable place to work (Berry & Bell, 2012). Organizations benefit when the best employees compete for their limited number of jobs. Organizations have a financial interest in retaining skilled employees after they become mothers. When a mother returns to work after childbirth the transition and her relationship with her direct supervisor is likely to impact her commitment to continue working. This case study expands on work commitment literature by focusing on a new mother's commitment to work. Chapter 1

consists of eleven sections: (a) background, (b) problem statement, (c) purpose statement, (d) research questions, (e) conceptual framework, (f) nature of the study, (g) definitions, (h) assumptions, (i) scope and delimitations, (j) limitations, and (k) the significance of the research. A summary concludes Chapter 1 and provides a transition into the literature review and a preview of the rest of the dissertation.

Background of the Study

The background for this study includes a review of the history of mothers in the workforce and workplace legislation. Workplace legislation consists of Federal and State laws that pertain to new mothers, breastfeeding, and work. This section provides a summary of the literature that will be further explored in Chapter 2. A rationale for the importance of the study concludes the section.

History of Mothers in the Workforce

Although women have always been a minority percentage of the workforce it was not until the middle of the twentieth century that mothers began to work outside the home in significant numbers. Mothers have the choice to breastfeed or use infant formula to supply nutrition to their children. This decision is personal, but it is unknown if this decision or an organizations reaction to this decision affects a mother's commitment to work. Management literature demonstrates that mothers, regardless of infant feeding techniques, face barriers in the work place that nonmothers do not (Heilman & Okimoto, 2008). Infant formula, which was introduced after World War II, was used by working mothers by the 1960s (Hagelskamp, Hughes, Yoshikawa, & Chaundry, 2011). Large numbers of mothers began working outside the

home in the middle of the 1970s, when the middle class needed additional income to maintain their standard of living (Reich, 2013). Breastfeeding rates declined as women began to work in environments and fields traditionally dominated by men. Formula was the feeding method working mothers used for their infants until the 1980s, when health care professionals began to promote the health benefits of breastfeeding (La Leche League International, 2010).

Today, authorities agree that breastfeeding is the best feeding option for infants. breastfeeding has many health benefits for infants and mothers (USBC, n.d.; World Health Organization [WHO], 2003). Research shows that employers benefit from assisting breastfeeding mothers because these personnel use less sick time (Miner et al.; 2014, Murtagh & Moulton, 2011). This return to the promotion of breastfeeding over formula usage presented working mothers with a difficult choice. Using formula was more compatible with working, but seen by health professionals as the less optimal choice (La Leche League International, 2010).

When breastfeeding mothers return from maternity leave they need accommodations to be successful. Without the time and a place to express breastmilk during a typical work day, a mother will not be able to successfully continue breastfeeding. Organizational leaders have the ability to assist new mothers during their transition back to work following maternity leave (Murtagh & Moulton, 2010). Unfortunately, the benefits of breastfeeding to organizations are not widely recognized by organization leaders (Miner et al., 2014). Few employers understand the value in promoting breastfeeding among their new mother employees (Mensah, 2011; Murtagh & Moulton, 2010). In addition, understanding the meanings new mothers assign to work and motherhood, has not been studied (Hagelskamp, Hughes, Yoshikawa, & Chaundry, 2011).

The experiences and perceptions of new mothers in regards to their supervisor's support of their decisions regarding work-life balance was the focus of this case study. The findings of this study offer a better understanding of the challenges faced by new mothers and the ways in which leadership can assist them.

The perception that employees have of support for their needs as mothers influences their work life and their commitment to the organization (Moen, 2011). Leadership that employees experience shapes their views and perceptions. Leadership is a direct link between employers and employees. Communication during the transition back to work is critical between supervisor and employee. The conversations women have with their supervisor about breastfeeding plans can set the tone for the leader's support. Decisions leaders make because of these critical conversations have the potential to change employee and supervisor, as well as employee and co-worker, relationships. Leader trust, personality, openness to change, work-life policies, and employee fatigue can all play a role in the mother's commitment to working. Supportive employers provide facilities and develop relevant work-life policies, enabling women to combine breastfeeding successfully with paid work (Weber et al., 2011).

Historically, women earn less than their male counterparts in most organizations (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011). When married women first entered the workforce their earnings provided secondary or discretionary family income (Miner et al., 2014). This perception leads to continuing inequality, despite the fact that since the Great Recession more women provide the primary income for their households (Miner et al., 2014). In the past, studies have not differentiated mothers into groups based on infant feeding when investigating the "wage penalty"

(Ely et al., 2011; Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). Breastfeeding mothers had no protections or allowances under federal law until 2010. This study examined the experiences of working mothers after the 2010 legislation. It contributed to existing research, which had not focused on the perceptions of leader support for new mothers in the workplace, and by examining how this support influences the work commitment of new mothers.

Legislation that Pertains to Breastfeeding and Work

The 2010 Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) set forth protections for new mothers wishing to combine breastfeeding and full-time work (National Partnership for Women and Families, 2014). This legislation is the result of the medical evidence of the health benefits of breastfeeding. This act supports women who are combining breastfeeding and paid work by mandating employer-provided non bathroom space and sufficient breaks to express breast milk (USBC, n.d.). The “reasonable break time” provision of the act provides the first federal protection for mothers wishing to combine breastfeeding and paid work (Murtagh and Moulton, 2011).

Despite the advancements made by the PPACA, the legislation does not provide complete protection and support for mothers who wish to work and breastfeed. There are no protections for women who wish to directly breastfeed their child during work. The PPACA only refers to women who express breast milk (most often with the use of a breast pump) to be fed to their infant later. The Act exempts salaried employees, administrative employees, and schoolteachers, as well as small employers that demonstrate a hardship, leaving many new mothers uncovered (Murtagh & Moulton, 2010). The 2010 legislation may be the first step, but

further improving the ability of mothers to breastfeed in the workplace without harming their career would likely contribute to higher rates of breastfeeding. State of Maine law, for example, gives female employees the right to nonpaid break time for up to three years postpartum, and forbids discrimination against breastfeeding workers (Title 26 MRSA Annotated, 2009). Many developed countries provide extended maternal leave and for this reason combining breastfeeding and work is less of an issue overseas than it is in the United States (Rosenbusch & Maria, 2012). The data collected in this study illuminated changes that have occurred in the United States since 2010 that previous studies did not cover.

Problem Statement

A mother returning to work after childbirth is negotiating and exploring the new gender role of the working mother. In order to successfully transition back to work mothers need to communicate with their employers. Motherhood changes the way in which a woman is perceived by society, by her employers and coworkers, and in some cases, by herself (Borgogni, Dello Russo, & Latham, 2011). There is a perception among organization leaders that mothers are less committed to their organizations and to work than other employees (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). There is an unknown connection between leader support and mothers' commitment to work. Research has shown that the employee-supervisor relationship is critical to employee job satisfaction and commitment, but these studies have not specifically examined mothers, including breastfeeding mothers, as a population (Ballout, 2009). The labor force participation rate of mothers with children under 3 years of age was 61.1 percent in 2013 (U.S. Department of

Labor, 2013). Since this rate is likely to continue increasing, leaders should strive to understand how women can successfully combine motherhood and paid work (USBC, n.d.).

Purpose of the Study

Working mothers' attitudes toward work, the workplace, infant feeding, and leadership support can affect her work. The purpose of this study was to increase understanding surrounding the impact of leader support or lack of support on women transitioning back to work after childbirth. Understanding why mothers stop or continue working is critical to developing work-life policies that meet the needs of new mothers in the workplace. The perceptions of new mothers regarding organizational and supervisor support of their needs as employees were explored. The study was conducted to understand better the unknown connection between work commitment and new mother's perceptions of leaders' support. The results of this study, explained in detail in Chapter 5, show that positive leader support for new mothers and for their infant feeding goals was associated with increased work commitment.

Research Questions

There were two research questions. The first concerned the relationship between leader support and work commitment: "In what ways does leader support affect new mothers' commitments to working?" Through the second question, the relationship between support and work commitment was examined: "How does an employee's perception of employer support of her infant feeding decision and her dual role as a mother and an employee affect her commitment to working?"

Conceptual Framework

The central issue is perceptions that new mothers hold of leader support influence their work commitment after childbirth. The conceptual framework consists of theories from behavioral and psychological traditions. The theories used included social learning theory, feminist theory, and social role expectation theory. Social issues that play a role in management have been a focus of inquiry since the middle of the twentieth century (Channar, Abbassi, & Ujan, 2011). Each of the chosen theories provided a unique contribution to this case study. When the theories were blended together they formed a stable framework that is explored in more depth in Chapter 2.

Social Learning Theory

Bandura (1977) found that individuals strongly model their behaviors based on society's reward and punishment systems. This finding developed into social learning theory. Social learning theory is a tool that helps managers understand worker behaviors. There are norms and rules for behaviors in every organization. Some of these norms include differences based on gender. This theory provides insights into workers' intentions to stay or leave organizations.

The culture of many organizations does not seem to coincide with the image of a modern working and breastfeeding woman (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). The emotional and practical support that breastfeeding women experience and perceive from their leaders can directly affect their commitment to working and to their organization. Feminist theory and social role expectation theory provide a lens to understand gender bias in organizations and perceptions of work related performance (Sheppard & Aquino, 2013).

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory presumes the importance of gender in relationships (Ely et al., 2011). It relates to how women behave and react to business as well as social environments. Feminist theory acknowledges the need for continuous attention to the significance of gender as one of the essential features of social and organizational life (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Since only women can breastfeed, they must make choices surrounding breastfeeding and paid work. Breastfeeding is a feminist issue that is complicated by a woman's role in society. Feminist theory explains the connections between representations of women by a culture, through art and media, and how females are treated. The portrayal of gendered characteristics illustrates the perceived social standing of women within a culture (Ely et al., 2011). Female breasts are depicted in traditional media as sexual organs, making breastfeeding a controversial topic in the United States (Ely et al., 2011).

Social Role Expectation Theory

Social role expectation theory explores the predictable behaviors of people of different genders, races, religions or other groups (Ely et al., 2011). It focuses on interactions between and among individuals, groups, and societies (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003). The theory provides an explanation for common prejudices, discriminations, and stereotyping within organizations (Bosak & Sczesny, 2011). Social role expectation theory explains how and why individuals form predictions concerning an individual's capacity to perform specific tasks or jobs based on their social roles (Channar et al., 2011). Role identities are self-conceptions that individuals develop through identification with occupied social roles (Hagelskamp et al., 2011).

Historically, women stay at home and men work outside the home (Ely et al., 2011). These cultural assumptions have led to expected gender and social behaviors. Gender roles are taught early in childhood and become inherited aspects of workplace culture (Zeffane, 2010). Women are forced to adapt to a male norm to be successful in organizations, and this model does not include motherhood (Billing, 2011).

Modern forms of gender inequality are more multifaceted than they were in the middle of the twentieth century (Billing, 2011). The traditional images of women as homemakers still exist, but the modern, professional, career-oriented woman is a legitimate social identity (Miner et al., 2014). The social role expectations of working mothers are evolving. Combining motherhood and a successful career is an anomaly rather than the norm in western societies (Miner et al., 2014). The meanings of social roles vary across social and cultural contexts and within individual families and communities.

Social learning theory, feminist theory, and social role expectation theory form the core of the conceptual framework for this study. The theories provide explanations to the behaviors and perceptions of individuals within workplace cultures. A thorough explanation of the ways key elements of the conceptual framework connect to the research questions appears in Chapter 2. In-depth interviews were used to understand factors that impact the work commitment of new mothers.

Nature of the Study

A qualitative methodological approach addressed effects leader support had on mothers' commitments to work without predetermined perceptions. The following section describes the

nature of the study. Qualitative researchers recognize the socially constructed nature of reality. Perceptions, opinions, and worldviews give meaning to the experiences of individuals (Stake, 2006). Qualitative research acknowledges the relationship between the researcher, and the research topic (Welch, Piekkari, Plakoyiannaki, & Paavilainen-Mantymaki, 2010).

Qualitative research allows the researcher to search for meaning and understanding surrounding the behavior. A multiple case study involves the use of two or more observations of the same life event or experience (Miles et al., 2014). In the cases examined for this study, different leader-follower relationships were examined through the lens of individual employees who have combined paid work with new motherhood. A multiple case study allowed for complementary aspects of the phenomenon (e.g. leader support, work commitment) to emerge. The individual cases confirm emerging constructs surrounding new mothers in the workplace.

When deciding on sampling strategies, the researcher must make several decisions regarding the setting, the participants, and the subject (Miles et al., 2014). Purposeful sampling gathered a wide range of working mother participants. The study's population included both breastfeeding and non breastfeeding mothers. The subjects were selected from medium and large employers (with at least 50 employees) and were stratified by position and industry. The geographic location was limited to Maine. All participants were women who worked full-time before and during pregnancy, gave birth since 2013, and returned to full-time work during their child's first year of life.

The data focused on the participants' perceptions and experiences. In qualitative research, a general rule of thumb is to access 10 people, or until saturation occurs, and themes

begin to repeat themselves abundantly in the data (Miles et al., 2014). With approximately 20 interviews conducted with working mothers, I was reasonably sure that their experiences would begin to show significant similarities.

The research included one open-ended interview with each participant. The interviews lasted approximately 45 to 60 minutes. In addition to interviews, documents and available resources were explored. A review of human resource policies and recommendations regarding pregnancy, maternity leave, and breastfeeding enhanced the data collected. A review of these policies was conducted to see how they matched up with the women's experiences. Resources were available to women to assist them in combining motherhood and full-time work. The research uncovered the availability of these resources, their type, as well as the accessibility of the resources to the study population.

Confidentiality was an important consideration. Distinguishing characteristics of individuals or their workplaces were not shared. Each person was given a code letter. The participants were all volunteers who gave informed consent before commencement of the data collection. Human resource professionals and organizational leaders were not informed of specific employee participation. New mothers were recruited from groups including: La Leche League, mothers in pre-schooler support groups, and Facebook groups.

Operational Definitions

The following operational definitions were used in this study:

Bias: The manner of relation to certain persons or issues. These are often unconscious reactions that are generally a result of individual experiences and can be based on social acceptance (Bosak & Sczesny, 2011).

Breastfeeding: Providing full or partial sustenance for an infant or young child either through direct breastfeeding or pumping breast milk to be supplied to the child by a bottle or cup (La Leche League International, 2010).

Full-time work: Engaging in more than 35 hours of paid work per week.

Gender Bias: Drawing attention to gender issues that have no bearing on official duties or relations (Nilsson, 2010).

Gender inequality: The practice of discriminating against one gender in social and economic settings (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003).

Job Satisfaction: Consisting of attitudes and emotions about an individual's specific work, it can be influenced by internal and external factors (Ghorbanian, Bahadori, & Nejati, 2012).

Leader Support: Practical problem solving help and emotional encouragement provided by a leader to a follower (Borgogni et al., 2011).

Long-term breastfeeding: Breastfeeding for a duration of more than six months.

Supervisor: A title or role that places the individual in charge of people or processes crucial to the functioning of the organization.

Work and workplace commitment: An employee's willingness to stay or their intention to leave the organization or paid work entirely (Wallace, 2008).

Assumptions

Four assumptions guided the data collection and analysis plans for the study. The first assumption formed the foundation for this research study: new motherhood is a time of critical transition for individuals. This transition affects their work life and their personal lives. Motherhood changes individuals and these changes affect their work. Exploring this assumption led to other areas that will need investigation in the future.

A second assumption concerned the participants. I believed that the selected participants were fully engaged in the interviews. I assumed that they understood the questions and answered them honestly and accurately.

The third assumption was that organizational leaders and the participants formed opinions based on perceptions that are related to stereotypes. The perceptions that were assumed to be present in this study were those concerning social roles and stereotypes of new mothers.

A fourth study assumption was that the documents reviewed provided an accurate portrayal of policies for new parents. Policies rely on leaders for enactment. Organizational documents are a form of artifact: visible representations of the values and cultural elements that characterize organizations (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The interpretation of these policies may vary between departments and individual managers. Organizations differentiate the extent to which they enforce their written policies. For this reason, the written documents examined may or may not reflect the experiences of the participants.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the research included mothers who have given birth within the last 30 months and returned to working outside the home for more than 35 hours a week within one year of their child's life. This population was chosen for two reasons. First, because these mothers had their babies after the PPACA was in place. The second reason was that the experience of combining work and new motherhood will be an experience they are currently living.

Delimitations result from the particular choices of the researcher. This study explored how the relationship between the supervisor and a new mother employee affected the mother's feelings of commitment to the organization and work. This focus was chosen because previous research did not explore the relationship between supervisors and the work commitment of new mothers. Instead, it has focused specifically on the challenges and discrimination mothers face in the workplace without understanding what might be mitigating to the challenges or solutions to the discrimination. A greater understanding of the phenomenon from a mother's perspective, instead of the perspective of the supervisor or the organization was gained. The mother's perspective was chosen in anticipation that the results of the study may aid supervisors and organizations in maintaining employees after they become mothers through a better understanding of their experiences.

Limitations

There are some limitations associated with case study methodology. Causal relationships cannot be determined by case studies (Yin, 2009). The results of this study offer insight only into the participants' perceptions and feelings regarding their experiences as new mothers in the

workforce. The results are likely to suggest what may be found in other settings; however, lacking an investigation in those settings, it is not known if the data collected would be similar. Since qualitative research occurs in a natural environment, not an experimental lab, it is hard to replicate studies (Yin, 2009). The results of this study cannot be generalized to employees in other states, or other organizations. The experiences and perceptions of the population were the focus. A future study could expand upon this research by exploring the experiences of supervisors of new mothers.

The study relied on the flexibility of the participants to schedule time for the interview process, review of the transcripts, and for member checking. Researcher bias was controlled by separating purposely separating my feelings and thoughts about the topic during the analysis phase. This separation helped ensured that the results were objective and truthful interpretations of the data. Member checking contributed to the interpretations made from the data. The unique experience of each participant and the obstacles they faced through their career limited the study to only these cases. The data were limited to interviews, specific organizational policy documents and external resources available to new mothers.

Significance of the Study

The study explored the experiences and perceptions of new mothers in regards to leader support. Since mothers make up a significant portion of the workforce in the United States, understanding their perceptions and experiences is valuable. There are three subsections that defend the significance of this research: current need for the research, professional applications, and implications for positive social change.

Current Need for Research

The literature has a deficit in the representation of new mothers who work and their experiences (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). Women who wish to combine breastfeeding and work face challenges and barriers such as: limited space and time to express milk, fatigue, reduced leisure time, stress, and lack of support from colleagues and supervisors (Murtagh and Moulton, 2011).

Previous research found that breastfeeding mothers earned less salary than non breastfeeding mothers (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). In addition, breastfeeding mothers experienced a decrease in the number of hours they work (Mensah, 2011; Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). This research was quantitative and relied on data collected before the implementation of the 2010 Affordable Care Act. The Act changed the rights and privileges for breastfeeding employees. This new qualitative study explores the impact of the Act.

Professional Applications

The Family Medical Leave Act in the United States allows for twelve weeks of unpaid maternity leave for many workers. Public health authorities recommend exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding for one to two years (USBC, n.d.; WHO, 2003). Full-time working breastfeeding women have nine months or more of attempting to combine breastfeeding and paid work. The perceived or actual inequality of new mothers or mothers in the workplace can have an adverse effect on the daily operations of the organization.

Breastfeeding women are protected by federal legislation requiring most organizations to provide space and time expressing breastmilk. Despite this mandate, workplaces differ in their

acceptance and support levels of women who combine breastfeeding with work (Mensah, 2011). Unsupportive leaders or colleagues can create hostile work environments (Adams & Funk, 2012). Working in a hostile environment can lead to lower commitment and increase intention to leave among affected employees (Miner et al., 2014). Being absent to pump breast milk may make breastfeeding mothers less available for projects, praise, and promotions (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). Mothers have been shown to be less likely to be promoted or receive merit-based pay increases than non-mothers (Bosak & Sczesny, 2011). As women breastfeed for a longer period, difficulties combining breastfeeding and paid work are likely to intensify and more negatively affect a mother's career (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). The results of the study by Adams and Funk (2012) stated that leadership styles and specific communication strategies by managers can improve the work lives of new mothers.

In order to remain competitive, organizational and employee needs should be balanced (Miner et al., 2014). Organizations need to reduce employee turnover to manage training and hiring costs. The cost to replace an employee, including recruitment and training, is 1.5 times the position's annual salary (Miner et al., 2014). By supporting new mothers during the crucial readjustment period, organizations are likely to see increased commitment, productivity, and job satisfaction from these employees. When new mothers are successful at both their work and motherhood, organizations and society will benefit.

Implications for Positive Social Change

Since the implementation of the PPACA in 2010, breastfeeding is more likely to be tolerated in workplaces (Murtagh and Moulton, 2011). These strides include a growing

acceptance of breastfeeding as the best feeding option for infants, and education on how to successfully combine work and breastfeeding (National Partnership for Women and Families, 2014; Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). Although the 2010 legislation made some progress toward creating organizational change, positive social changes such as an acceptance of mothers as a protected class in the workplace are needed to allow women to combine breastfeeding and work.

Today, women are more likely to be single mothers or the sole financial support for their families than they were in past generations (Maloney, 2010). Families depend on women's earnings more now than they did before the Great Recession (Maloney, 2010). Gender inequality in the workforce negatively affects organizations, families and society. There is a documented "motherhood effect," wherein mothers receive less pay and promotion than non mothers in the workplace (Bosak & Sczesny, 2011). The effect stems from the perception that mothers are less committed to working than non-mothers (Wallace, 2008). The results from this study contributed to the literature by examining if leader support contributes to a "breastfeeding effect" on employee commitment that can be observed apart from the "motherhood effect" in organizations.

The idea of work-life balance is already changing the culture of corporations. Today, in some fields, such as the legal field, the idea of always being ready and available is giving way to the idea of quality family time and a break from the workplace (Wallace, 2008). Employees are beginning to expect organizations to incorporate work-life policies (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Part of the work-life balancing challenge is organizational compassion.

Organizational compassion is the idea that businesses recognize that personal life crises and problems impact an employee's work (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Organizational

compassion is in direct conflict to the cultural tradition of strict separation of work life and personal life (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Today, work-life policies are requested and expected by more employees (Botsford Morgan & King, 2012). A growing trend in the literature investigates discrimination against individuals that make use of work-life policies (Botsford Morgan & King, 2012; Wallace, 2008). The results of this study contribute to increasing knowledge of the relationship between leadership and work commitment among mothers. A better understanding of the leader-follower relationship will contribute to policies and procedures that promote positive social change.

Summary

Crucial to increasing the commitment of new mothers in the workplace is gaining a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges they face. This research offers a deeper insight into the factors that continue to limit the success of new mothers in the workplace. This exploratory study provided an understanding into the perceptions of women who have been able to overcome barriers to their success that will enable other women to achieve similar outcomes. This chapter described the purpose and the methodology of the study, as well as a significant argument for the value of this research.

Chapter 2 contains a literature review of current research studies pertaining to new mothers in the workforce. The literature search strategy and exploration of the conceptual framework for the study form the beginning of the chapter. Topics and issues related to leadership support and work commitment including leadership style, communication, and employees stress and fatigue are explored in terms of their impact on the study population. The

chapter concludes with a discussion of case study methodology. Chapter 3 provides an outline of the methods that were used in the study. The results obtained through the research are described in Chapter 4. Finally, Chapter 5 contains a discussion, conclusions, and the recommendations that are a result of this research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This review focuses on recent studies that discuss working mothers, leader support, work-life balance, combining breastfeeding with full-time work, and work commitment. The need for the study arose from identifying that there is a lack of information regarding the work commitment of new mothers. In 2013, the successful investor, Paul Tudor captured the mostly unspoken feelings surrounding working mother's job commitment when he said:

As soon as that baby's lips touched that girl's bosom, forget it. Every single investment idea, every desire to understand what's going on to make this go up or down is going to be overwhelmed by the most beautiful experience which a man will never share about a mode of connection between mother and that baby. (Grose, 2014)

Well documented in the literature is the perception that once a woman becomes a mother, her focus shifts from the workplace to the home (Kulich, Trojanowski, Ryan, Alexander Haslam, & Renneboog, 2011; Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). This perception leads to a devaluing of the contributions of mothers in the workplace (Kulich et al., 2011). There is a need to better understand how such cultural beliefs and perceptions impact mothers in the workplace. There is also very little known about if women do change their beliefs when they become mothers, and if so, how. There is a need to understand how motherhood changes a woman's perceptions and needs regarding leadership support in the workplace.

Despite the high percentage of working mothers, few studies have explored the work commitment of this population (Evertsson, 2013). Since women are a significant portion of the workforce, organizations are invested in maintaining these employees once they become

mothers. Previous studies have not focused on leader support and employee commitment of new mothers (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). Even fewer studies have evaluated the impact of infant feeding choice on workplace commitment (Evertsson, 2013; Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012).

This chapter consists of four main sections: a summary of the literature search strategy, the conceptual framework, the literature review, and conclusion. The literature review section covers theories on work commitment and office communication as well as several themes that are covered in the literature. The themes covered convey current research on the subject of working mothers. In the final section, case study methodology used in management research is described.

Literature Search Strategy

The strategy included locating peer-reviewed journal articles focusing on employee commitment and the progression of women, particularly mothers, in corporations. I used selected books that describe the methodology of this study. The literature search was conducted with various databases and search engines such as Google Scholar, Thoreau, and EBSCO. EBSCO includes the Academic Search Primer, Business Search Primer, as well as the Psychological and Behavioral Sciences Collection. The strategy used included searches of dissertations and thesis databases, multidisciplinary databases, management and business databases and human and social services databases. Keywords included: *employee commitment, working mothers, women and management, work- life policies, discrimination, and workplace barriers for women*. The literary sources included a focus on the qualitative approach in case studies to increase

knowledge of the methodology. The sources that provided most of the results were journal articles (in Table 1).

Table 1

Literature Review Sources

Source	Literature review sources 2011 and later	Literature review sources 2010 and earlier	Total
Non peer-reviewed books and articles	14	9	23
Dissertations and Legislation	7	1	8
Peer-reviewed articles	65	14	74
Total	86	24	110

Conceptual Framework

The central concept of the study consisted of how perceptions that new mothers hold of leader support influenced their work commitment after childbirth. The conceptual framework was composed of three theories: social learning theory, feminist theory, and social role. A broad qualitative framework provided the foundation for understanding behaviors in the workplace. The three theories have been used in the past by researchers to understand employee behavior,

biases, and stereotyping (e.g. Ahern & Dittmar, 2012; Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011). Each theory pertains to specific elements in the research questions, and will contribute to understanding the data.

Social Learning Theory in the Workplace

Social learning theory contends that individuals learn through observation. Individuals begin to understand socially acceptable behavior by observing those around them (Bandura, 1977). An individual's actions are judged by other members of the community to be socially acceptable if they conform to expectations. The environment and culture are crucial to determining and understanding the actions of individuals.

In the workplace, individuals interact hundreds of times a day. This interaction forms unique cultures that influence behaviors. Individuals are influenced by the personal culture they bring into the workplace as well. Personal and organizational cultures combine and form the expectations and perceptions of behaviors for the workplace (Bandura, 1977). There are norms and rules for behavior in all organizations. Some of these norms are gender specific, meaning that the rules and norms are different for men and women. The lack of investigative research into the entrenchment of stereotypical gender roles has led to a significant deficit in the knowledge and understanding of new mothers in the workplace (Billing, 2011).

New mother employees expect full support from their supervisors (Benligiray & Sonmez, 2012). Support can include assistance with scheduling and resolving conflicts with co-workers (Hagelskamp et al., 2011). Their expected reward for good work is positive recognition from their supervisors and society. The level of support and recognition from supervisors is

particularly essential to motivate employees to maintain an acceptable quality of service (Borgogni et al., 2011). Weak support from leaders can lead to unmotivated workers (Ballout, 2009, Borgogni et al., 2011). In addition, new mother employees' reactions and behaviors may be adversely affected by a lack of societal recognition.

Community members deem some work as low-level or not as important as others. When society affords only low-level status to an employees' contribution, employees may feel that they are not recognized, which may adversely affect their behavior at work (Ballout, 2009). In this study, the social learning theory allowed the data collected to be understood through a behavioral analysis. Using social learning theory provided insight into new mothers' intentions to stay or leave organizations and explained the actions of new mothers, their supervisors, and their co-workers in the workplace.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory advocates for equality between women and men while acknowledging biological differences (Meisenbach, 2010). It seeks to understand the nature of inequality and discrimination. Feminism was developing during the same period as the social theories of the twentieth century (Koenig et al., 2011). Despite this, mainstream social theory has largely ignored feminist theory until the last few decades (Taylor & Hood, 2011).

The suffragists in the early twentieth century were the first of three waves in feminist thought (Koenig et al., 2011). This first wave was motivated to eliminate legal inequities between men and women. The second wave occurred in the middle of the 1950s and 1960s and was concerned with women's roles in the workplace and at home. The third wave built upon the

earlier two by including, for the first time, races (African Americans, Hispanics) sexualities (homosexual populations) and nationalities of women (Koenig et al., 2011).

Feminist social theorists of the third wave, including Judith Butler and Gayatri Spivak, believe that social theories, social learning theory for example, have implicit male biases (Stoker, Van der Velde, & Lammers, 2012). Research in the twentieth century pertaining to leadership was done mostly by male researchers using male participants (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). For this reason, results of previous studies should be applied to female workers with caution (Koenig et al., 2011). Modern feminism seeks to draw on the experiences of women rather than exclude them from research (Favero & Heath, 2012).

Biological sex differences and gender make a difference in workplaces (Koenig et al., 2011). Feminist theory explains why the same behavior exhibited by male and female supervisors may be interpreted differently by subordinates (Barsh & Cranston, 2011). The contention is that the behavior of different sexed individuals is interpreted by subordinates in order to assign deeper meaning to their actions (Borgogni, Dello Russo, & Latham, 2011).

The research questions of this study sought to understand the perceptions of new mothers in the workplace. Feminist theory allowed the data to be explored from a gender aware base point. A gender aware view means that the researcher acknowledges the importance of gender in understanding relationships. The gender of both the individual and their supervisor affects how they will interact, because men and women interact differently when in same-sex or co-ed environments (Koenig et al., 2011). If there is a gender difference between the mother and her supervisor, then this may affect how they communicate and the perceived contracts and

expectations they form (Ely et al., 2011). Exploring leader and employee communications and interactions is crucial to understanding the research problem in this study.

Social Role Explanation Theory

Social role explanation theory, is focused on the interactions between individuals (Dulin, 2007). Behaviors associated with gender and social role stereotypes are learned in childhood and are culturally dependent (Adams & Funk, 2012). Predictions based on gender, ethnicity, and religion can lead to adverse workplace outcomes (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Structural pressures such as family, organizations, and communities have predisposed men and women to behave in different ways (Zeffane, 2010). The perception is that people have a social role based solely on their gender.

These stereotypical gender roles are formed by social norms that apply to people of a particular category or social position. Society has shared expectations about women, and how these form female gender roles and shared expectations about how men form male gender roles. Social role expectation theory can be used as a partial explanation for the "motherhood effect" where mothers earn less than female workers without children (Ayman & Korabik, 2010, Zeffane, 2010). The "motherhood effect" reflects societal views about where individuals place the importance of social roles. The reigning view in American culture is that for mothers, their role as nurturing caregivers comes before their roles as employees (Bosak & Sczesny, 2011).

Women are likely to offer different definitions of the characteristics of a good mother or worker than men would (Koenig et al., 2011). They can have different moral and social expectations as mothers and employees even though they occupy similar roles. Researchers have

identified that work-family decisions and responses made by individuals that lead to stress depend primarily on the meanings and structure of role identities (Hagelskamp et al., 2011). People tend to do what is expected of them or act the way that these roles demand. As a result, men and women learn different skills, thus perpetuating sex differences.

Social role explanation theory allowed the data to be explored for key themes and social expectations. Both social learning theory and feminist theory advanced ideas concerning behaviors and the underlying causes or reasons for the individual's actions and feelings. The literature review continues the theme exploration by providing the current literature regarding the key concepts of the study.

Literature Review

The purpose of this literature review was to provide context and substantiation for the research questions: "In what ways does leader support affect new mother's commitment to working?" and "How does an employee's perception of employer support of her infant feeding decision and her dual role as a mother and an employee affect her commitment to working?" The literature review section is divided into three major parts: literature concerning the research questions, themes to be explored, and a review of methodologies.

Literature Concerning the Research Questions

This section contains four sub-sections: work commitment of new mothers, explanations for gaps in woman's careers, leadership styles and work commitment, and communication. Statistics show that women are more likely to return to work faster after childbirth than they did in the past (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013). By three months post partum 59% of new mothers

are back to work (Laughlin, 2011). In the 1960s and 1970s women who returned to work quickest were the most economically dependent on their own earnings, including single mothers, minorities, and younger mothers (Laughlin, 2011). Today, women return to work quickly because of their own preferences, economic opportunities, and social norms (Laughlin, 2011). Women tend to view their jobs as long term investments and may work as expecting and new mothers for reasons beyond financial needs (Laughlin, 2011). The first subsection explores the work commitment of new mothers in light of changing cultural influences.

Work commitment of new mothers. Organizational commitment has been of interest to researchers in psychology, sociology, human resource management, and management for the last 50 years (Benligiray & Sonmez, 2012). Commitment is often defined as an employee's emotional attachment to, involvement in, and identification with their workplace (Andressen, Konradt, & Neck, 2012; Phil-Thingvad, 2014). An individual's level of commitment has been shown to predict dedication to organizations and openness to change within them (Mensah, 2011). For these reasons, it is in the best interest of firms to maintain a committed workforce.

Rippeyoung & Noonan (2012) found that breastfeeding mothers earned less than formula feeding mothers. Their study utilizing longitudinal data revealed that breastfeeding mothers dedicated less time to working after the birth of their first child than formula feeding mothers and, as a result, earned less in the five-year post-partum period. Attitude toward work and perception of workplace support were not variables measured. These variables can impact on a woman's desire to continue working (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). A working mother's attitude towards her work, her workplace, and her perception of leader support were explored in this

study.

A working mother's perception of leader support has not been explored in the literature (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). Leader support consists of emotional encouragement as well as practical help in solving problems regarding scheduling, assignments, and co-worker conflicts (Borgogni et al., 2011). An employee's perception of leader support affects the employee's work life and may increase or decrease their commitment to work (Borgogni et al., 2011). The causal relationship between infant feeding choice, leader support and a mother's commitment to work and their organization has not been studied (Murtagh & Moulton, 2010). Along with leader support, workplace policies and legislation influence experiences combining work and motherhood.

Meyer and Allen (1991) created a three-component model of organizational commitment. They introduced the definitions still used in work commitment literature today. The components of organizational commitment Meyer and Allen recognized are affective, normative and continuance commitment. An employee's emotional attachment and identification with an organization are the effective component of commitment. Normative commitment relies on social expectations and feelings of obligation to remain with an organization (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Continuance commitment refers to employee's reluctance to leave an organization because they perceive the costs of leaving prohibitive. These employees stay with organizations because they feel they need to and do not have other opportunities or choice (Meyer & Allen, 1991). Much of employee commitment is an interaction between the three components.

More recently, the study of work commitment has evolved to encompass other factors including alignment of goals, values and meanings. The compatibility between individuals and organizational values, termed corporate culture employee fit, is vital to employee commitment (Toh & Leonardelli, 2012). Steger and Dik (2009) found that experiencing career meaning is consistent with general feelings of well-being and an overall sense of global purpose in life.

Two studies used longitudinal data to reveal a slight to moderate drop in work commitment of new mothers between 1999 and 2003 (Evertsson, 2013; Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). In 1999, childless women demonstrated no significant difference in work commitment among the members of the study (Evertsson, 2013). By 2003, the women who had given birth during this four-year period showed less commitment to work than the other participants who had not given birth during this interval (Evertsson, 2013). Rippeyoung and Noonan (2012) found that women who chose to breastfeed their children were more likely to discontinue working.

The negative relationship between becoming a mother and work commitment was only found to occur for the first four years of a child's life (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). Women with children older than four years of age did not show a drop in work commitment. Both of these studies looked at data from the longitudinal young adult panel survey. The changes in women's work commitment were small in both studies (Evertsson, 2013; Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). The results indicated that new motherhood may lead to a redistribution of priorities. Their analysis did not delve into the perceptions of the mothers concerning their own work commitment or leader support in the workplace (Evertsson, 2013; Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012).

Perceptions that mothers carry of their own work commitment and of the support they receive from their leaders can vary based on the individual. These perceptions contribute to why women may make decisions to stop working or change their work circumstances. The reasons behind these decisions are not clearly understood. The next sub-section offers partial explanations for why women's careers may contain gaps that may contribute to the understanding of a woman's non-linear career path.

Explanations for gaps in women's careers. A discontinuous work history has a negative influence on career success regardless of employee gender (Evers & Sieverding, 2014). A comprehensive understanding of work commitment, as well as leader and organizational support for a mother's infant feeding choices and other workplace needs, is necessary. Between 2006 and 2008, one in five mothers changed organizations or exited the labor force within a year after returning to work from maternity leave (Laughlin, 2011). Very little is known about the decisions women make concerning their careers after childbirth. It is unclear why women choose to leave their jobs, or continue working, what role supervisors played, or what organizations can do to retain these valuable women.

The data concerning women who stop working are contradictory and do not create a full picture when considering education, income and marital status. Highly educated women have increased turnover intentions due to family work balance issues (Borgogni et al., 2011). In contrast, these women are more likely to have access to paid maternity leave. Women who have paid maternity leave are less likely to stop working (Laughlin, 2011). Low-income women are more likely to earn less after becoming mothers, but more likely to continue to work outside the

home even though they have less access to maternity leave. Unmarried women who have a child are more likely than their peers to be younger, of a minority race and achieved a lower level of education (Laughlin, 2011). These women often have fewer options than their peers. Conversely, women who are married before having their first child are more likely to be older and have more options for combining work and family.

This subsection explores three theories for why women may choose to discontinue working when they become mothers: social roles, shifting priorities and lack of leader support for their needs as new mothers. The predominant explanation is that these women are exiting the workforce to avoid role overload (Miner et al., 2014). Role overload refers to incompatibility between the roles of employee and mother (Cheung & Halpern, 2012). The second theory is that women leave the workforce because they choose to place more value on motherhood instead of paid work; this assumption is called opting out. The third theory is that women leave the workforce because of their supervisors. It suggests that different perceptions between the mother worker and their supervisor lead to failed communications and misunderstandings alienating women. Researchers focusing on mothers in the workforce tend to focus on these first two theories while only hinting at the third.

Conflicting social roles. The first theory contents that the dual roles of mother and employee are not compatible. New mothers who work outside the home are beginning a new chapter in their lives where for the first time they are combining a new social role mother to their existing social roles. Social roles encompass expectations and responsibilities based on an individual's place in society (Benligiray & Sonmez, 2012). It is possible for one individual to fit

many social roles at one time including employee, manager, wife and mother. Roles can be a source of satisfaction or a source of stress for individuals (Benligiray & Sonmez, 2012). Many full-time employed mothers reported a constant state of disequilibrium between working and mothering (Leberman & LaVoi, 2011).

Gender roles have been studied with female physicians, and the role of the 'ideal' mother contrasts sharply with that of the 'ideal' physician (Pas, Peters, Doorewaard, Eisinga, & Largo-Janssen, 2014). When women internalize these conflicting social roles it influences workers' motivation (Pas et al., 2014). Those who want to live up to both the ideal mother and the ideal worker have been shown to have similar career-motivation as women with one dominant gender role (Pas et al., 2014). However, gender-equality arrangements mainly seem to support women who prioritize one role over the other (Pas et al., 2014).

Role overload is defined as a condition in which an individual does not have sufficient time to fulfill all the duties associated with social roles (Barsh & Cranston, 2011; Cheung & Halpern, 2012). Overload has been theorized as the predominant reason new mothers stop working. Researchers need to consider women's understanding of themselves as mothers and workers, and their perceptions of the interplay between these roles (Hagelskamp et al., 2011). Many families do not fit the traditional stereotype in which the father is the breadwinner, and the mother is a homemaker. Dual parent employment is now the customary pattern (Meisenbach, 2010). Homes where women earn the majority or are the sole earners make up a significant portion of families (Cheung & Halpern, 2012, Maloney, 2010). These demographic trends have begun to change social values (Cheung & Halpern, 2012).

This imbalance between demographic trends and societal values leads to inter-role conflict. Inter-role conflict is the collision of role demands which can increase stress. This is associated with poorer family, marital and work adjustments. Like other negative consequences of stressors, the correlation between inter-role conflict and work commitment is not perfect. Individuals whose level of inter-role conflict is not associated with their work satisfaction may possess resources that protect them from the adverse effects of inter-role conflict such as social support and personal hardiness. Job dissatisfaction has been shown to be a leading cause of employee turnover (Olasupo, 2011).

There is a significant lack of female doctors, especially those with young children in senior medical positions (Pas, Peters, Eisinga, Dooreward, & Largo-Janssen, 2011). This gender imbalance is often attributed to a perception of lower motivation among this population, but an unsupportive work-home culture has been shown to play a greater role (Pas et al., 2011). Female doctors' career motivation is not affected significantly by having children. However, views on motherhood and a supportive work-home culture do affect female doctors' career motivation (Pas et al., 2011).

Although most studies report beneficial effects of social support, there is disagreement concerning the process by which social support affects the impact of stress (Hong, Tan, & Bujang, 2012). The buffering hypothesis states that social support exerts an effect on the outcome only when stress levels are high (Beauregard, 2011). In addition, there is evidence that social support can increase the adverse impacts of a stressor (Benligiray & Sonmez, 2012). There are several ways to measure social support. There are two measurable dimensions of social

support. The first dimension includes the type of support: emotional, or instrumental. The second is the source of the support: either family or co-workers and supervisors. The level of support received can be measured ranked from a high level of support to low levels. This diversity in conceptualizing may account for the results showing that social support can be both positive and negative (Beauregard, 2011). The help received must be compatible with that of the stressor. Since new motherhood affects work, the appropriate assistance would be work-based from the supervisor. Therefore, the present study measured supervisor support as a moderator of inter-role conflict.

Personal hardiness consists of three components. The first component is a commitment to a sense of purpose over events and direction in life. The second is control over the direction and events in their life. The third component is a perception of change as a challenge rather than a threat. Personal hardiness has been shown to moderate inter-role conflict for fathers (Wallace, 2008). Personal hardiness did not lessen stress or inter-role conflict in mothers, in this study. The personality characteristic that may buffer the inter-role conflict relationship for mothers is largely unknown. Studying both social support and personal hardiness in this research will estimate the effects of each on job commitment among new mothers. Women must juggle the competing demands of work and family, and this can result in work-family conflict. Women who have few resources to meet the demands of their professional and family lives are especially vulnerable (Carlson et al., 2011).

Shifting Priorities. The second theory in the literature for why mothers discontinue working has to do with changing priorities after becoming a mother. Opting out is a strategy of

temporarily interrupting work that professional women have used to reconcile competing demands between work and family. Opting out can be viewed as a challenge to the linear male career model and male standard of adult development from a feminist perspective (Lovejoy & Stone, 2012).

The decisions that mother's make concerning their work and family experiences may be based on attitudes and perceptions. Attitudes are not stable over a lifetime and can change because of life events (Baxter, Buchler, Perales, & Western, 2014). Views concerning gender roles are often formed in childhood and reflect the culture of the individual. Studies highlight the effect of maternal employment on children and the children's gender role belief systems (Cheung & Halpern, 2012). Maternal employment is believed to exert an adverse effect on children (Poduval & Poduval, 2009).

In low-income families in the United States, work and family lives are characterized by instability and low-quality experiences in work, childcare, housing, and social relationships (Hagelskamp, Hughes, Yoshikawa, & Chaundry, 2011). Work/family conflict and maternal role strain are associated with several negative career outcomes (Hagelskamp et al., 2011). These outcomes include job insecurity, low job flexibility, low job complexity, longer work hours, low supervisor support resulting in high pressure, and discrimination (Hagelskamp et al., 2011).

Women face three obstacles when they desire to return to the workforce after opting out. These obstacles include a need for updated skills, the amount of time away from an office environment and being older. Many women who opt out are finding that they are shifting their career goals away from their former direction into more traditional female roles like teaching or

into entrepreneurship (Lovejoy & Stone, 2012). These well-educated and talented women have found that their lives as mothers are incompatible with their former lives as workers.

Leader support. The third theory presented in mainstream commitment literature as a major contributor to why individuals change jobs is leader support. Direct supervisors have the ability to influence workers motivations and commitment on a daily basis. Leadership sets the tone and directs culture in organizations. Workplace tone and culture can impact employees job satisfaction in a positive or negative manner (Chen, Hwang, & Liu, 2012; Pless, Maak, & Waldman, 2012). When employees are not satisfied with their jobs, they will seek employment elsewhere, which creates turnover for the organization (Olasupo, 2011). Leadership behaviors can reduce turnover when leaders and employees share a purpose, and their efforts are aligned with organizational goals. Leadership behavior influences employee's reactions to changes potentially increasing or decreasing employee commitment (Kasemsap, 2013; Ballout, 2009; Pless, Maak, & Waldman, 2012).

This sub-section has explored why women may choose to discontinue working after becoming mothers. More research is needed to understand more fully, the complex decisions made by new mothers and their effect of their careers. The role that leaders play in the decisions new mothers make is not clearly or fully explained by researchers in the field. Researchers have examined the impact of leadership style and work commitment with diverse populations and have found that transformational leadership in particular can be associated to some extent with a higher level of work commitment among employees. The next sub-section explores the impact that leadership style plays in the work commitment of employees.

Leadership styles and work commitment. There are specific leadership traits and behaviors that enable individuals to be more influential at influencing employee commitment (Kasemsap, 2013). This sub-section contains a summary of the influence of transformational leadership as well as self-leadership on employee work commitment. Leadership styles are combinations of traits and behaviors that managers utilize to achieve desired ends. There are benefits as well as weaknesses of specific leadership styles. Employees benefit from the variety of available leadership skills and styles. For the purposes of this review transformational leadership will be focused on as the leadership style most associated with positive work commitment results. This section concludes with a discussion of the concept of self-leadership.

Transformational leadership style. Transformational leaders motivate employees to exceed expectations, and feel respect and pride, because of their association with the leader (Chen, Hwang, & Liu, 2012). This style of leadership has gathered attention recently by researchers and practitioners seeking to understand employee commitment and motivation. Leaders who utilize this style are associated with positive work commitment (Farahani, Taghadosi, & Behboudi, 2011, Raja, 2012).

Transformational leadership receives a great deal of attention and research. It leads to productive employee performance. According to Dardin (2011), this approach is now the preferred leadership style for the twenty-first century. Transformational leaders result in committed and productive employees (Darden, 2011, Farahani, Taghadosi, & Behboudi, 2011) There is a positive connection between transformational leadership and employee performance

(Raja, 2012). Leaders who utilize a Transformational leadership style have the ability to build trust and commitment in employees (Abeysekera & Jayakody, 2011).

Several researchers conducted studies on transformational leadership and revealed behaviors that have a negative effect on employees including increasing their likeliness to leave an organization (Chen, Hwang, & Liu, 2012). Transformational leadership behaviors utilize in some cases emotions or feelings over thinking (Rukmani, Ramesh, & Jayakrishnan, 2010). This may lead to a less stable environment for the organization (Chen, Hwang, & Liu, 2012). This instability can be minimized by an employee base that is motivated and believes in the ideals of self-leadership. The next section explores why self-leadership may increase employee commitment.

Self-leadership. Proponents of self-leadership contend that workers are guided by internal work ideals. Self-leadership is articulated in the research as the ideal management for tomorrow's organizations because it strengthens employees' commitment (Phil-Thingvad, 2014). From 1970 to 2007 the mean age of mothers at the time of their first child's birth increased 3.6 years (Laughlin, 2011). The rate of first time mothers over the age of 35 increased 8 times in this period (Laughlin, 2011). Women who have delayed childbearing until their late 20s or 30s are more likely to have completed their schooling and to have accumulated more years of work experience than their younger counterparts (Laughlin, 2011). Workers who have more experience in their field are increasingly more likely to engage in self-leadership activities (Phil-Thingvad, 2014). A necessary component of self-leadership is the ability to communicate effectively with co-workers, superiors and subordinates.

This section has examined work commitment specifically in regards to new mother employees. Three reasons were suggested for why women may discontinue working: conflicting social roles, shifting priorities and ineffective leader support. Leadership styles were examined to explore skills and traits that may allow some leaders to more effectively increase work commitment among their subordinates. One of the most important skills a leader can utilize to enhance employee commitment is effective communication. The next section will explore the role that positive communication can have in raising the work commitment of new mother employees.

Communication. Positive communication between managers and employees can increase job satisfaction and potentially job commitment (Michie & Zumitzavan, 2012). There is a direct link between management leadership and employee job satisfaction (Kim & Jogaratnam, 2010). This sub-section will outline the major aspects of workplace communication that are of interest to the work commitment of new mothers including critical conversations, psychological contracts and interactional justice.

Critical conversations. The only communication requirement of the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is 30 days notice of intent to take maternity leave. It is unclear as what type of conversations, if any, occurs between supervisors and new mothers regarding strategies for managing the transition back to working full-time. These discussions could include expectations for the length of maternity leave, work hours and arrangements for return and workload issues. A mother's expectations may evolve over the course of a pregnancy and may require multiple conversations. When these critical conversations occur during a woman's pre-natal or post-natal

period, they may alter their outcomes. The conversations are not required and may not occur. In the absence of effective communications both the employee and the supervisor will make assumptions that may not reflect one another. When this occurs it can lead to misunderstandings, failed expectations and breached psychological contracts.

Psychological contracts. When employees and supervisors communicate about expectations and changes, psychological contracts are formed. Psychological contracts are the primary vehicle supervisors utilize to create successful firms (McDermott, Conway, Rousseau, & Flood, 2013). Mothers form such contracts from pregnancy through their return to work mainly related to performance expectations (Botsford Morgan & King, 2012). Whether these contracts and expectations are fulfilled or not will affect the mother's commitment to the organization and possibly commitment to working. Psychological contracts are subjective in nature and consist of individual beliefs regarding conditions and terms of a reciprocal exchange agreement between two parties. They consist of perceived promises (Botsford Morgan & King, 2012).

Perceived differences in obligations between mothers and supervisors set the stage for breaches in mother's psychological contracts. A supervisor can fulfill all or most of the traditional content of psychological contracts (pay and career development), but if the content concerning work-life balance is not addressed the mother may still experience a breach. By neglecting more family oriented content (support for family life, and flexible work arrangements), they may still breach mothers psychological contract and risk lowering commitment of new mothers (Botsford Morgan & King, 2012). Breached psychological contracts have been shown as a factor in decisions to terminate employment relationships

(Botsford Morgan & King, 2012). When employers make changes to real or perceived contracts with employees, feelings that the employee has been treated unfairly can result. It is the duty of the leader to ensure that employees receive the intended treatments. The next sub-section explores the concept of interactional justice.

Interactional justice. Interactional justice refers to managing perceptions of fair treatment (Botsford Morgan & King, 2012). Psychological contract breach occurs when the mother's and her supervisor's expectations do not align. Expectations can lead to perceptions of unfair treatment, or abuse of a situation (Channar, Abbassi, & Ujan, 2011). These expectations usually include work-family balance issues including flexible work arrangements, type of work, workload and support for family issues by the organization and the supervisor.

Supervisors have the power and control over the relationship when mothers return to work after childbirth. The employment relationship between mother and supervisor is critical. The supervisor can be either an advocate or an adversary for the mother. The goal of the supervisor during the transition back to work should be to reduce and prevent feelings of violation and mother's intention to leave the organization. Achieving alignment between the corporate culture and employees is the responsibility of the leader (Ahern & Dittmar, 2012). Research has demonstrated that the adverse effects of unfulfilled promises include decreased trust, job satisfaction, performance, increased job strain and greater intention to leave organizations (Botsford Morgan & King, 2012). When new mothers have not received support and recognition from their supervisors and society, their expectancy, and reinforcement value are then small, thereby reducing their behavior potential at work (Bandura, 1977).

This section has delved into employee and leader communications in the workplace. For communication to be effective both parties, the leader and their subordinates, must be actively engaged. Psychological contracts are formed through interactions and must be acknowledged and fully discussed to ensure that the correct information is being exchanged. Work commitment and workplace communication directly influenced the answering of the research questions. There are several themes that may influence new mother work commitment. These themes are explained in the next section.

Themes from Literature

Six broad themes may influence the work commitment of new mothers: gender in the workplace, employee fatigue, the role of legislation and politics, work-life policies and obstacles to combining parenthood and full-time work. In addition, this section includes select examples from European countries with different work-life philosophies and laws. These examples are provided as alternatives that could provide a framework for social change.

Gender in the Workplace. This sub-section explores literature regarding gender differences in workplaces. Gender differences are based on physical differences as well as learned cultural attitudes. Advancement opportunities are limited by societal perceptions of women's roles in business (Channar et al., 2011). Women do not always take advantage of the opportunities that are available to them (Billing, 2011). Reasons include balancing work and family and internal perceptions of gender roles that allow women to self-limit their success in business (Billing, 2011).

Work–life balance, organizational climate, and mentoring affect women's career development in a range of ways. Feminist theory acknowledges that it would be a fallacy to expect all women to be the same. Gender variation occurs in all groups, where some individuals express more of the gender norms than other individuals (Toh & Leonardelli, 2012). Gender variation is expected and it provides an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of gender relations. A woman's demographic and professional characteristics affect her career choices.

Differences in personality, abilities, and the impact of influential people shape careers. There is not one pathway to success. Women experience workplace penalties when they become mothers, whereas men who become fathers do not (Aranda & Glick, 2014). Evers and Sieverding (2014) found that male employees were rewarded for work dedication to a greater extent than women. Aranda and Glick (2014) questioned whether a working mother's self-professed devotion to work over family would undermine the "motherhood penalty." Mothers who prioritize their role in the family over work experienced strong hiring discrimination (Aranda & Glick, 2014). In one research study, mothers who expressed their devotion to work escaped the motherhood penalty and were rated as highly as work-devoted fathers (Aranda & Glick, 2014). Research and interventions directed at increasing the retention of women must be flexible enough to respond to the variation that exists among women and workplaces (Trauth, Quesenberry, & Haiyan, 2009). Female managers help other women achieve within their organizations especially during the beginning of the female managers' tenure (Kurtulus & Tomaskovic-Devey, 2012).

In the research, female leaders exceeded male leaders on the dimensions of motivating their workers to feel respect and pride (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003). The leaders excelled at showing optimism and excitement about future goals. The women in the study leaned toward mentoring and attending to individual employee needs. Females also exceeded males in the transactional dimension of contingent rewards. Male leaders exceeded women on both active and passive management by exception, and laissez-faire styles. Men tend to pay attention to workers' problems and mistakes, wait until problems become severe before attempting to solve them, and become absent and uninvolved at critical times. The greater effectiveness of women reflected the negative relationships of the passive management-by-exception and a laissez-faire style to the positive relationships of transformational and contingent reward forms (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003).

Traditional beliefs about the characteristics of the ideal worker are often masculine in nature and include dedication to work and freedom from family responsibility (Botsford Morgan & King, 2012). Gender stereotyping although believed to be on the decline was recently found to be a large factor in descriptions of male and female leaders (Koenig, et al., 2011). The goals of organizations developed by male leaders have created a culture of masculinity within organizations (Adams & Funk, 2012). This culture incorporates a code of conduct unfamiliar to women. The code of conduct and male culture results in a corporate culture that is less hospitable to women's careers. The code includes professional behaviors thought to be more masculine including not showing some emotions, not crying, and not taking work personally. Traits like candor, flexibility, and vulnerability are beginning to be valued in businesses (Gerzema &

D'Antonio, 2013). The second theme deals with employee fatigue. Fatigue can affect all employees. Employees who are also new mothers may be especially at risk of fatigue, due to their dual social roles.

Employee fatigue. Regarding the second theme, The United States has the most annual work hours and the highest percentage of employees who work at least 50 hours per week in the world (Ayman & Korabik, 2010; Cooklin, Rowe, & Fisher, 2012). Working more than 40 hours per week reduces the amount of leisure time available to women. Mothers who work have less leisure time available than non-mothers or men (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013). Long work hours and stressful work conditions contribute to professionals leaving their jobs (Wallace, 2008).

Parental fatigue in the workplace has been shown to decrease productivity and be a variable in determining work commitment (Wallace, 2008). Fatigue also contributes to the perception that mothers, and specifically breastfeeding mothers, are less committed to their work than non-mothers (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). When employees are fatigued additional pressures are placed on families and work/ family conflict can increase. This is especially true for mothers in management and professional positions (Hong et al., 2012). This pressure can lead mothers to leave the workforce temporarily, permanently, or partially to devote more of their time to childcare (Heilman & Okimoto, 2008). Traditionally the government has played a role in aiding families by providing benefits to parents. The third theme, legislation and politics, explains the role government plays in the United States regarding working mothers.

Legislation and politics. Concerning the third theme, In 1976 the federal tax code changed to allow working families with dependent children to take a tax credit for childcare

costs (Laughlin, 2011). Flexible work schedules along with employment based child care benefits and maternity leave first started in the 1980s (Laughlin, 2011). The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) of 1993 was the first legislation that protected working parents who needed to take time away from work to care for their children. Since the implementation of FMLA, studies have reported that the amount of leave women take following childbirth has not changed. Types of leave utilized by first time mothers include paid leave, unpaid leave, and disability (Laughlin, 2011). Many mothers use a combination of types of leave to make up their maternity leave. Other options that lead to time away from work include quitting a job, being let go from a job, changing to a part-time role, or having an employer go out of business (Laughlin, 2011).

The Pregnancy Workers Fairness Act was introduced in the Senate in May of 2013. The Act would have made it against the law for employers to fail to make reasonable accommodations for known limitations related to pregnancy and childbirth. Although the bill did gather the support of 33 Democratic senators and 143 Democratic house members it did not pass. As of the winter of 2016, the bill was still in committee and will likely not be introduced again. This is because there is not much financial or political reward for supporting working mothers (Murtagh & Moulton, 2010; Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). This lack of support is despite the efforts of the National Women's Law Center and the U.S. Women's Chamber of Commerce. In 2012, insurance was required to begin covering the cost of a breast pump for all new mothers. This benefit applies to working mothers and reduces their financial burdens.

Outside of the political arena, organizational leaders are beginning to realize what working parents require. Employees are starting to expect that their dual roles as parents and

employees be recognized. The next section explores the impact organizational leaders can have through organizational work-life policies.

Work-life policies. This fourth section explores how organizations are reacting to employee requests and demands for work-life policies. The shifting characteristics of today's workforce suggest that a greater focus is being placed on the integration of elements of family into work (Botsford Morgan & King, 2012). Family-friendly policies aim at helping employees manage the demands of both work and family. Family-supportive supervisor behaviors are distinguishable from traditional measures of supervisor support (Moen, 2011). Today's working mothers increasingly expect consideration and customized arrangements for more family times, along with an updated definition of family.

An updated definition of family includes the realization that some families do not contain a non-working parent (Maloney, 2010). Supervisors are expected to engage in conversations with employees over their changing family status. Supervisors are the intermediaries to organizational level rules, policies, and resources. Individual human resource practices are deployed within organizations and even between departments differently with benefits varying based on the position of the receiver (Channar, Abbassi, & Ujan, 2011). There is a growing trend of discrimination against workers who choose to utilize work life policies. Women more so than their male counterparts tend to be perceived as not fully invested in the organization if they utilize an abundance of benefits (Evertsson, 2013). Some organizations are leading the changes. The fifth section below outlines specific policies and their impact on workers.

Work-life policies specific to organizations. In this fifth section, forward thinking organizations that have developed policies that extend the benefits required by the federal government will be examined. For example, Vodafone Group, a global telecommunication company, offers 16 paid weeks of maternity leave. Vodafone group also requires that new mothers work only 30 hours, but be paid their full salary for six months. This policy may be one way to retain employees during the critical first year following maternity leave. Before this policy change, 65% of new mothers opted to leave Vodafone following maternity leave, and they did so within the first year. After the policy change, over 50% of new mothers opted to continue to work. According to research conducted at Google, postpartum women were leaving the company at twice the rate of other employees. Google expanded their maternity leave from three months at partial pay to five months of leave at full salary. The cost for the additional paid leave is less than the cost of recruiting another highly skilled employee, but did not apply to low skilled workers who are more easily replaced.

Paid leave is of particular importance to low income mothers, who more than doubled their maternity leave after paid leave was mandated in the State of California (Pressman & Scott, 2014). California, New Jersey and Rhode Island are the only states that have developed basic paid maternity leave that are funded through the payroll tax (Pressman & Scott, 2014). Only 12% of US workers have access to paid family leave (Laughlin, 2011). When paid leave is offered, the average length is 7 weeks (Pressman & Scott, 2014). A longer break from full-time working would allow for mothers and infants to establish breastfeeding (La Leche League International,

2010). The sixth section will explore the role that combining breastfeeding and paid work may play in a woman's commitment to working.

Combining breastfeeding and paid work. In this sixth section the challenge of combining breastfeeding and paid work will be examined. Breastfeeding is a natural process, but a learned skill and many women struggle to be successful under the best of circumstances (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). As infants age their need for breast milk diminishes especially after the introduction of solid foods at age four to six months. At this age the infant's mother would need to produce less breast milk to meet the needs of her infant. This lessened demand would allow for the mother to combine breastfeeding with paid work more successfully.

There can be medical, psychological, social, or educational barriers that inhibit a woman's ability to breastfeed. Medical restrictions include an inability to produce breastmilk; this occurs in less than 3% of the women and is usually the result of cancer or breast surgery (La Leche League International, 2010). Psychological barriers may arise from the way a woman raised and may make it difficult to impossible for a woman to breastfeed or discuss her needs. Social barriers are similar in the sense that a woman would not desire to make her needs known or feels shame in breastfeeding. Educational barriers result from a lack of information on how to breastfeed or how to breastfeed and work away from their child.

Working mothers need to express milk every few hours in sufficient quantity to feed to their child. Expressed milk spoils if not refrigerated, and bottle feeding breast milk produces wasted milk that direct breastfeeding does not. Thus, pumping mothers are forced to produce more milk than their child consumes, and this can lead to supply issues (La Leche League

International, 2010). Many breastfed babies refuse, at least to some extent, bottles preferring to make up breastfeeding sessions when they are reunited with their mothers (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). These mothers are then at a greater risk for fatigue due to missed sleep and perhaps a lowered commitment to working. In countries outside of the United States steps have been made to reduce the burden on working mothers, these steps are outlines in the final section below.

Examples from other countries. This section explores the roles that other countries governments have taken to reduce burdens on working mothers. It is well known that countries outside of the United States mandate different policies regarding childbirth and mothers in the workplace. In 53% of European businesses, there are fewer female employees than male employees. Men outnumber women in 68% of countries under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)(McCann & Wheeler, 2011). Only 2% of Fortune 500 companies and 5 leaders in FTSE 100 stock index are women. In Great Britain, there has been a surge to place more women in senior positions and appoint more women to corporate boards (McCann & Wheeler, 2011).

Legislation exists in over 70 countries that mandates paid paternity or shared parental leave. Employers offer about 20% of U.S. workers paid paternity leave (Laughlin, 2011). This leave is available mostly to professional married men. If a man qualifies for this leave, he will likely take advantage of all of the time offered (Laughlin, 2011). For the most part, men on paternity leave will continue to be available for work emergencies and they will maintain communication with their office. In contrast most women on maternity leave do not

communicate with their office (Laughlin, 2011). The reasons why there is a difference are unknown, but may relate to the medical recovery from birth that women must make (Laughlin, 2011). Paternity leave may help increase a woman's labor force participation by involving men at home and making it easier for women to work. In a Swedish study, each month of paternal leave taken by a father correlated with a 6.7% increase in the mother's salary (Evertsson, 2013). Younger workers have higher expectations for paternity leave than their older counterparts (Haveman & Beresford, 2012).

Countries vary in the policies they have to support maternal employment (Hallden, Levanon, & Kricheli-Katz, 2015). In Italy, Portugal and Romania, government mandates assist women's transitions back to the workplace after maternity leave. Due to variations in legislation and social norms, there is considerable variation in the strength of the motherhood wage penalty between countries. Hallden, Levanon, and Kricheli utilized longitudinal data from the European Community Household Panel (ECHP) to describe the associations of different maternal employment policies with the motherhood wage penalty by skill. The ECHIP records data from ten European countries.

In the United States, lower skilled workers are less likely to be offered paid maternity leave, and are more likely than higher skilled workers to return after childbirth faster (Wetlesen, 2010). The biggest factor associated with a decrease in the motherhood wage penalty was long paid maternity leaves (Hallden et al., 2015). To a lesser extent, a low percentage of young children in publicly funded child care facilities is also associated with a increase in the motherhood wage penalty regardless of skill level (Hallden et al., 2015). Multinational studies

have noted that the retention rate for new mothers in those countries is higher than in countries without formal procedures (Berry & Bell, 2012). Due to differences in legislation paid family leave is not mandated by the federal government of the United States.

This section explored literature that influences the research questions as well as several potential themes that may emerge from the data. The factors that influence work commitment among new mothers were discussed. A greater understanding of these factors and the role they play in women's work commitment is necessary and will contribute to the creation of policies and legislation that will enable women combine motherhood with full-time careers more successfully. The next section will explore research methodologies that were utilized in the reviewed literature.

Review of Research Methodologies

In conducting this review of literature, 74 studies were examined following the criteria noted earlier. Peer-reviewed literature regarding new mothers is often quantitative in nature due to the difficulty in gaining direct access to the population (Evertsson, 2013). This may be due because many organizations have only having a small population of new mothers at any one time, a problem overcome in this qualitative research. Primary data sources consisted of large samples, secondary data reviews and newly conducted surveys. This study will delve deeper into individual motivations.

The purpose is to understand how new mothers experience leader support in their work lives. Exploring the research questions, in depth, with each participant, was a different method of collecting data than that found in much of past research in the subject area. Data collection

included open-ended interviews, data from documents, and a review of available public and private resources for new mothers. A multiple case study approach was useful in examining, through many individual stories, the complex problems identified (Stake, 2006).

The quantitative data, in recent years, has shown a consistent pattern of decreasing participation in the workforce of women with children at home (Benligiray & Sonmez, 2012). The reasons why women with children stop working are largely unknown. Rippeyoung & Noonan (2012) found that women who breastfed worked less than mothers who chose to formula feed their children. Because the literature review revealed a significant lack of information concerning individual perceptions about work commitment among new mothers, the qualitative method was chosen. This is not because a quantitative approach could not have worked, but rather because there has been little information developed regarding work commitments in new mothers. A quantitative approach carried a significant risk of missing key findings by limiting options for respondents due to the use of multiple-choice questions. The qualitative approach is best suited for this study because the goal is to explore internal states. Internal states include: paradigms, opinions, values, attitudes, and symbolic constructs of the participants (Stake, 2006). A multiple case was appropriate because the focus is on one issue (i.e., work commitment).

Of the twenty-one qualitative studies that appeared in this literature review, only five were case studies. These studies presented multiple sources of data, including interviews and observations. These methods separated them in terms of the data captured and the possible results from the other qualitative research designs found in this review.

Rippeyoung and Noonan (2012) along with Evertsson, (2013) utilized longitudinal secondary data for their studies. Although their findings are consistent, they both showed that new mothers worked fewer hours than other female workers; the reasons and the perceptions for this lower commitment cannot be gleaned from secondary data. In another study, Ranson (2012) found that by exploring in detail the data from a much larger study that men who took advantage of family-friendly work policies represent a cultural change that is slowing occurring. The language and definitions chosen by the fathers in the study created different individual meanings of their social roles. Special attention was needed to analyze the actual descriptions of activities, perceptions and experiences (Ranson, 2012).

In contrast, Leberman & LaVoi (2011) used a phenomenological approach to explore working mothers who also coached youth sports. Their study used interviews to understand reasons for negotiating multiple roles. They found that the motivations and definitions these participants used were similar to ideas about being a good mother: spending time together, developing life skills, and role modeling (Leberman & LaVoi, 2011). Lovejoy and Stone (2010), used case study research to describe the phenomenon wherein women change career focus after spending time at home with children. Lovejoy and Stone interviewed 54 mothers who did not work outside the home. These case studies were rich in description of attitudes and perceptions of the participants studied. Explanations and motivations for not working were explained, to some extent, but new mothers who worked were not part of the research (Lovejoy & Stone, 2012). Chapter three will expand on the ideas introduced here, allowing for further understanding of the multiple case study approach.

Summary and Conclusion

This literature review provided information on several themes central to the research questions: work commitment of new mothers, and explanations for gaps in women's careers which included conflicting social roles, shifting priorities and leader support. In addition, leadership styles and work commitment including transformational and self-leadership, as well as communication in the workplace, critical conversations, psychological contracts and interactional justice were explored. Historically leadership has been shown to play a role in the work commitment of employees. Many of these studies used all male or significantly male populations. This relationship has not been explored using a population of new mothers in workplaces. Other themes from the literature include: gender in the workplace; legislation and politics; work-life policies; combining breastfeeding and paid work; and examples from other countries. The next chapter provides details on the research method that was used in this qualitative multiple case study. The results obtained from the data are explained in Chapter four, the last chapter contains the discussion, conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The methodology of this study was a multiple case study, to explore the commitment of new mother employees in Maine. The research goal drove the sampling, data collection strategies, and data analysis. The problem of new mother work commitment is complex and has not yet been adequately explained. More information needs to be gathered related to the experience and the interpretation of those experiences that lead new mothers to continue or stop working.

This chapter explains in detail the methods that were used for collecting data, and includes four sections: (a) the research design, and rationale; (b) the role of the researcher; (c) the methodology; and (d) issues of trustworthiness. The research design and rationale section explain the choice of multiple case methodology, provides reasons for the rejection of other design traditions, and explains the research approach and paradigm. The second section describes the role the researcher played in data collection and analysis. The methodology section includes an explanation of the participant selection process, instrumentation, and data collection and analysis methods. The fourth section contains a discussion of credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and ethical procedures. A summary concludes the chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

The research questions were designed to explore the central phenomenon of this study, which was the commitment to full-time work among new working mothers. There were two research questions: “In what ways does leader support affect new mother’s commitment to

working?” and “How does an employee’s perception of leader support of her infant feeding decision, and her dual role as a mother and an employee, affect her commitment to working?”

A qualitative approach was best suited because the goal was to explore the opinions, values, and attitudes of the participants within the context of their work lives (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). The approach relied on multiple data sources for evidence because the boundaries between a phenomenon and its context are not always clear (Yin, 2009). The primary advantage of case research is a deeper understanding of specific instances of a phenomenon (Miles et al., 2014).

A case study allowed for an in-depth understanding of the inner workings and interactions of a phenomenon. Case studies explore an issue in a specific location over a period of time (Yin, 2009). The specific location of this study was the greater Bangor area of Maine and the time period under study was the first year after the employee becomes a mother.

A multiple case study is a variant of case study research that includes two or more observations of the same phenomenon (Yin, 2009). Several cases were selected to develop a more in-depth understanding than a single case can usually provide. The cases often confirm independently emerging constructs and propositions.

There are five main qualitative designs: phenomenological, narrative, ethnographic, grounded theory, and case study. This section describes these designs and explains the rationale for choosing case study and specifically, a multiple case study design. Phenomenology would have been appropriate for exploring the research questions, but was ultimately rejected. The focus of this research was less on the lived experiences of new working mothers, as this is well

documented. This research concentrated on participant perceptions of leader support for dual roles and infant feeding needs. A narrative analysis could have been chosen, but the stories and experiences of working mothers are largely known. What was needed is a better understanding of the decisions and experiences of mothers in organizations. Very little is known about the reasons why many new mothers discontinue working (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012).

The ethnographic research design was rejected because the focus of the study was not on a shared participant culture. The majority of the cases will be from different organizations and employment fields with different leaders and organizational structures. Grounded theory design was rejected because it was not the intent to develop a theory.

The multiple case study approach allowed for rich descriptions from individual participants from which a composite picture was developed (Stake, 2006). Case study research best fit the first research goal to explore the relationship between leader support and feelings of commitment to full-time work among new mothers. The next section will explain the qualitative approach and paradigm used to make decisions on the methodology.

Approach and Paradigm

The study used a postpositivist approach. This approach states that there is an ultimate reality, but it cannot be completely understood (Yin, 2009). This worldview framed the study and helped to uncover meanings within the data. This differs from a strictly positivist view, where reality can be ultimately verified, and even predicted. The positivist knows, or claims to be able to verify, exactly why things happen the way they do (Yin, 2009). A postpositivist believes that they can get a good idea of reality, but that they cannot verify it completely

because individuals assign their own meanings to events and situations creating their own perspective on reality.

This research was constructivist, meaning those who engaged in it (and those who read it and learn from it) tend to create or construct their own sense of reality and learn from the research process. Constructivism is a postpositivist approach; any learning that occurs is not necessarily a discovery of already extant realities, but is a production of the researcher, participants, and readers. This is in direct opposition to positivist (often quantitative) designs and approaches. The purpose of this study is best supported by the inclusion of feminism and gender role postmodern concepts because these concepts rely on the creation of individual meanings and realities.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the researcher is the primary data collection instrument (Yin, 2010). I collected data through in-depth interviews, documents, and a review of available community resources. I was very careful to avoid bias such as assumptions regarding gender, or meanings assigned to social roles. Bias was mitigated by using techniques shared by all qualitative research such as triangulation of data, and member checking (Yin, 2010). Issues can arise when the interviewee does not feel that they have self-determination. As an outsider, I was unknown to the participants. This helped to eliminate or lower power imbalances when collecting data. Incentives were not offered in exchange for participation. This ensured that participation was volunteered freely and without pressure of any kind. At the beginning of the interview, I reminded individuals that they were free to discontinue participation at any time. The

participants were notified that all names and identifying information would be kept confidential and protected by code. The methodology that was used in an effort to promote good research quality is described in the next section.

Methodology

When designing a case study, the researcher must think through and make several decisions concerning the design of the methodology. Each decision carries with it positives and possible negatives that may impact the usefulness and value of the data collected. This section will explain choices made concerning participant selection, instrumentation, recruitment, and data collection.

Participant Selection Logic

The location was the first consideration when planning this study. Maine was chosen as the setting for convenience (the researcher's home state) and because state and federal laws are in place to support a woman's ability to breastfeed while working outside the home. As discussed in Chapter 1, Maine received a grade of B- for their laws and regulations pertaining to new parents in the workforce (National Partnership for Women and Families, 2014). This means that the laws passed and enforced in Maine are above the nation's average, and provide slightly more protections and benefits for new parents in the workforce.

The population of this study consisted of new mothers who have given birth to a child since 2013, and who work outside their home for more than 35 hours per week. Stratified purposeful sampling was used. Purposeful sampling included individuals with varied backgrounds including socio-economic class, and support structures such as marital status,

employment field, and childcare arrangements (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014). Purposeful sampling allowed for exploration of information-rich cases from which data was gathered (Yin, 2009). After I identified potential participants, the next step was establishing contact.

I held initial telephone conversations with potential subjects to determine if they met the criteria and potentially filled a gap in the recruitment selection. The participation criteria included: having given birth to an infant and returned to full-time work within one year, living and working in Maine, and a willingness to actively participate in the interview, a review of transcripts, and member checking. The participants were above 18 years old and below age 65, not incarcerated or mentally ill. Women who are pregnant were not excluded nor specifically sought for inclusion in the study. All individuals were reminded that their participation was voluntary and should not cause them duress.

The study allowed for the collection of reliable and robust data at the cost of time and expense (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Sample size and sampling strategy was a balancing act between adequate sizes to gather enough data and the depth of the data collected from each participant. In general, sample sizes are smaller than quantitative sizes (Miles et al., 2014). In all, 23 participants were included and 18 interviews conducted. With 18 participants it was assumed that saturation of the data occurred once the researcher recognized significant repetition. Individuals were interviewed using the instrumentation described in the next section.

Instrumentation

Instrumentation included a researcher-developed, 14-question, open-ended interview guide. The interviews followed an in-depth, semi-structured format to gather data. This format

was effective at exploring the thoughts and perceptions of a small number of participants (Seidman, 2013). The interview guide was based on literature sources including the gaps described by Rippeyoung and Noonan (2012) and Evertsson (2013). These included: understanding of reasons mothers continue to work, and the role of leader support, parental leave and infant feeding technique in work commitment (Evertsson, 2013; Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). The goal was to encourage individuals to speak freely about the topic without pressure to respond in a certain way (Seidman, 2013). The interview guide is found in Appendix A.

Content validity of the instrument was established by creating an interview guide that was used in each interview. Following the six guidelines established by Seidman (2013) for the interviews established further validity. These guidelines are described in detail under the data collection methods section. The first nine items addressed research question one. They explored participant perceptions of leader support and connections to work commitment. The last five items addressed the second research question concerning leader support for infant feeding and a new mother's dual societal roles. Along with an interview guide the researcher had a protocol for recruitment, participation and data collection. The following sections explain the plan for: (a) recruitment; (b) participation, and; (c) collecting data through interviews, document and resource review.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

It is essential that researchers follow a plan when recruiting participants and collecting data for their studies (Seidman, 2013). Prior to recruitment, participation and data collection, approval was sought from Walden University and the IRB committee. The IRB ensured that all

components are acceptable and all issues or considerations have been addressed. This section outlines the procedures that were followed. The researcher was responsible for collecting and analyzing all of the data for this study. First, a log of all interactions and data collected was maintained. Lyons and Doueck (2009) recommend keeping a log to track all interactions and data collected. The log is a word document that began before research was conducted. The data collection ran in accordance with the plan for three weeks, with no more than two interviews scheduled per day. This schedule was dependent on the availability of participants for interviews, and took additional time.

Recruitment. Participants were recruited through online groups for working mothers. The online groups included: Central Street Farmhouse and Natural Parenting, Working Moms of Bangor, and Bangor Area Moms. A recruitment posting asked for volunteer participants to e-mail or telephone the researcher. Recruitment resulted in sufficient numbers of participants and therefore referral sampling was not used to engage more volunteers for the study. The researcher responded through e-mail or telephonically to establish contact and set up a time for the interview. It was possible that there were certain characteristics about this sample that are unique to mothers seeking these support networks. For example, participants may be more extroverted than non-group members or they may have a higher than average willingness to ask for assistance. Individuals selected to be interviewed represented a variety of work fields: government, non-profit and for-profit corporations, and job titles including top management, middle management, administrative and front line employees. The next section describes the participation and informed consent procedure.

Participation. Participation requires informed consent. A statement of informed consent was e-mailed in advance to each person and then signed before the commencement of the interviews. In all, 23 consent forms were collected. Eighteen of these participants were able to schedule a time for an interview to occur. Interviewees were reminded that they were free to stop the interview. At the conclusion of the interview, the researcher repeated the requirements of the member-checking process and advised participants to expect an email with the interview transcription and case summary within a week.

Data Collection Methods. This section describes three methods of collecting data. Along with interviews, two procedures for gathering data completed the collection methods.

Interviews. Using this technique provided flexibility to explore and uncover issues at the heart of the experience of new mothers. Before the commencement of each session, I developed rapport through casual conversation about motherhood and work that displayed honesty and openness. This allowed the opportunity for the participant to ask questions. As noted, the interview questions were open-ended, limiting the ability of the participants to respond with one-word answers. A guide assisted in maintaining focus throughout the interview (see appendix A). The participants were interviewed in a private room of the local library.

While in-depth interviews provide more exhaustive information than can be obtained through other data collection methods, they have some limitations. These include that they are time intensive, and the training and skill of the interviewer plays into the data collected. In order to reduce these limitations the guidelines recommended by Seidman (2013) were followed:

1. Questions identified by the researcher in advance. An interview guide was created for this purpose.
2. Suitable location without distractions or interruptions. I assured that the setting for the interviews was a quiet location free from unnecessary distractions.
3. Establish and maintain a rapport with the participants. Each interviewee had a telephone or email conversation with the researcher establishing rapport, and confirming the time and location of the interview. Upon arrival at the interview site, I welcomed each interviewee, and addressed the purpose of the study, length of time for the interview and method of transcription. The subject was informed that the data, once transcribed, would be sent through e-mail to check for accuracy. In addition, a case summary of initial findings was sent to the participant for member checking.
4. Obtain written consent. The participant signed a copy of the informed consent if it had already not been received by the researcher. I reminded the interviewee about confidentiality and the use of codes as pseudonyms.
5. Record responses electronically and transcribe word for word. Two audio recording devices recorded the audio data. Prior to the interview, I checked the equipment to ensure it was functioning properly.
6. The interviewer does not express a reaction to the information provided. It is important to remain focused on the goal of obtaining good quality data. I let the interviewee know while building rapport that my intention was to not express reactions to the words they used and instead to gather a holistic view of their experience. Follow-up questions were

asked, where appropriate, to help the individual remain focused and provide robust data.

The interviews were scheduled to take no longer than an hour. The length of the interviews was from 45 to 70 minutes.

After these steps were completed the interviews commenced. During the sessions the interview guide was used to collect information on the participant's visual clues and the observations of the researcher. These data provided a full and robust view of the interview that can only be gathered from a face to face interview. This helped to create a complete picture of the experiences and answered both research questions. Discrepant cases were analyzed independently and then included in the study with information that may help understand why they are divergent. The following paragraphs explain the two other collection methods.

Document review. The policies that an organization creates, adopts and enforces can have a deep impact on corporate culture (Ahern & Dittmar, 2012). Searches were conducted for publicly available individual organization policies on benefits for new parents. These included the State of Maine employee policy. The Maine Society for Human Resource Management and the Human Resource Association of Maine were asked to provide sample organization policies, recommendations, statements and any documents that would help other organizations develop and implement policies for new parents. The data collected created a picture of the supports that should be available to new mothers through their organizations and helped, along with the interview questions, to answer the first research question.

Review of Resources for Working Mothers. A search was undertaken for publicly available resources for new mothers in Maine. This included support groups, documents, and

educational materials. How this information is made available to new mothers was analyzed to determine if these services were known and used by participants. The data was included as part of the case study and will provided support for the second research question concerning the dual roles of new mothers. The analysis phase began concurrently with data collection.

Data Analysis Plan

A strategy that defines what priorities to place on parts of the data is necessary (Yin, 2009). Because this study used multiple cases, a within-case analysis was possible. Each interview was examined as an individual study. A data summary was completed for each case and shared with the participant. I provided descriptive details on each individual case by coding and exploring themes that emerged multiple times in the data. The process of analyzing the information began with the organization and creation of files. I listened to the recordings and read the transcript and then began coding. I identified individual themes and then collective themes shared between more than one cases. A constant comparative method allowed for saturation of the data. This method involves consistently comparing new data to already-coded data (Posel, Shore, & Fleischer, 2012). Data from the participants was continually added to the analysis and consistently compared to the previously coded data until the data indicated replication at which time the data set was complete (Ronald, 2011).

The data from the document and resource review was coded and analyzed. In an effort to suitably analyze and identify these themes, I utilized Nvivo Qualitative Research Software. This software assisted in the organization and coding data collected from the interviews, document and resource reviews. Conclusions were drawn based on themes, trends, and statements found in

the data. In this research, it was important to plan for the quality of the data to be collected; this planning ensured a high standard of research and valuable data. The next section will describe the procedures undertaken to increase the trustworthiness of the research.

Issues of Trustworthiness

It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that the participants and the data are protected, and to conduct the research in an ethical manner. This section discusses the methods to maximize credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability and the ethical procedures of this study.

Credibility

Internal validity or credibility ensures that the results derived from the data are legitimate and based on actual data. Member checking involves the interviewee by having them check their own transcripts and case summaries for content, accuracy, and themes, thereby improving the credibility of the research (Seidman, 2013). After I transcribe the interviews I emailed the participants a copy to check for accuracy. All participants had the opportunity to read their own case summaries prior to the final stage of reporting the information. The subjects ensured that the data summaries were accurate and based on their own viewpoints. In contrast to internal validity, transferability needs to be addressed by a wider and more holistic view.

Transferability

Transferability or external validity is the applicability of the results to other environments (Miles et al., 2014). In order to maximize transferability, the participants were selected to include as diverse a population of new mothers as possible. In particular, the mothers were of a range of

ages, and worked in a variety of fields. Even when the findings are clearly stated, the multiple case study report will say different things to different audiences (Stake, 2006). There are two expectations. The first is that the report is useful as a guide for breastfeeding policy (Graebner, Martin, & Roundy, 2012). Second, it provides potential lessons germane for other organizations (Stake, 2006). Dependability will be discussed in the next section.

Dependability

Dependability is the qualitative counterpart to reliability in quantitative studies. Two methods increased the dependability of the research: triangulation and a researcher's journal. Triangulation assists with understanding the larger picture and diversities of perceptions that exist within individuals (Stake, 2006). The researcher used three different sources of data to support the evidence (Yin, 2010). This will lead to a more valid, reliable, and varied representation of the reality of participant experience (Lyons & Doucek, 2010). The three data sources included interviews, publicly available documents, and resources including support groups and education available to new mothers in the geographical area. Triangulation in a multiple case study serves to ensure that the picture created is as clear and meaningful as possible, free of researcher bias, and not misleading to the reader (Stake, 2006).

In addition, a researcher's journal was maintained throughout the participant recruitment, data collection and analysis stages. It is a word file that lists all the steps and measures undertaken to collect data. This journal is a place where notes on observations from the interviews, and thoughts of the researcher were kept. Because this journal listed the steps taken during the research process, it will also serve as a tool for confirmability.

Confirmability

Confirmability in qualitative research is the degree to which other researchers could confirm or corroborate the results. The process of checking and rechecking the data was documented during the entire data collection and analysis process. Using a journal to outline the steps I have taken, will be a valuable tool for another researcher replicating the design. In addition, it will provide evidence that the ethical procedures described in the next section were followed.

Ethical Procedures

Researchers have an ethical responsibility to identify affiliations and ideological commitments that might influence their findings (Stake, 2006). Like the participants: I am a mother of a small child, although unlike them I chose not to commit to working full-time. I faced some struggles that may be similar to participants in making that decision and in combining part-time work, school, and mothering. This similarity allowed me, as the interviewer, to establish rapport as I may be seen as having similarities to the participants. It also displays a bias I may have or had when I made my decisions choosing motherhood over a full-time career. Such biases include a belief that combining motherhood and work is difficult; this, on balance may be positive in nature because they may allow me a greater understanding of issues and difficulties experienced by the interviewees. It is impossible to list completely all influences on a researcher, but understanding how some may have influenced the collected data is valuable (Stake, 2006). The only reality that will be captured here is the one created by participants and interpreted by

the researcher. This reality is relevant and necessary to understanding the perceptions of individuals experiencing the phenomenon under investigation (Stake, 2006).

There are several precautionary procedures that can increase the standard of the research and decrease the likelihood of an ethical breach. These measures include informed consent, use of codes as pseudonyms, and ethical record keeping. The informed consent letter was signed by all participants. It delineates clearly the precautionary measures taken to ensure the application of ethical procedures. In addition, coded identification was assigned to each participant and their organization. I alone had access to the raw data.

Keeping original records is part of the process of good data management (Lyons & Doueck, 2009). Privacy and confidentiality of the information is of extreme importance. For this reason, all paper-based, audio-recording data, and file backup were stored in a locked file cabinet. All electronic data has been on a password-protected computer. All data was maintained for five years after the publication of the findings. These measures improve the study and decrease any potential harm to participants.

Summary

This chapter outlined the research design, role of the researcher, methodology, and issues of trustworthiness. Clear steps undertaken by the researcher were described. A qualitative research design focused the data on the perceptions of leader support for the dual roles of new mothers, and their infant feeding choice. The data was collected through in-depth interviews as well as from the review of documents and resources available to new mothers. The methods described are appropriate for answering the research questions. The data analysis plan included

participant involvement through member checking and analysis using themes created from the data. The cases were analyzed independently for emerging themes and then searched for shared ideas and experiences.

This dissertation describes a multiple case study involving 23 participants in the state of Maine. The volunteers for this study gave consent to participate. Eighteen participants actively engaged in the interview and the review of transcripts. The next chapter describes the findings from the data collection. The results of this study will be useful to organizational leaders and human resource managers looking to increase work commitment and reduce turnover among new mother employees. In Chapter five, I discuss how the data collected may be helpful in developing new policies for mothers at organizational and legislative levels.

Chapter 4: Results

Leaders of organizations need to understand how support impacts the work commitment of working mothers. Leadership plays an important role in the well-being of employees. In this chapter, I present the results of research on perceptions of leader support that new mothers experience in Maine. Returning to work after a maternity leave is a time of transition that impacts a woman's career commitment. The purpose of the study was to increase understanding surrounding the impact of leader support or lack of support on women transitioning back to work after childbirth.

I conducted a qualitative descriptive multiple case study on how new mothers perceive their leaders. I obtained IRB approval in September of 2015. The IRB approval number is 09-17-15-0344100. There were 23 participants who were currently working full-time while mothering children under the age of 30 months. Five women stopped returning messages and did not schedule interviews. I conducted eighteen interviews. There were two research questions: "In what ways does leader support affect new mother's commitment to working?" and "How does an employee's perception of leader support of her infant feeding decision, and her dual role as a mother and an employee, affect her commitment to working?"

Data were collected through initial telephone conversations, e-mails, semi-structured telephone and in-person interviews. Eight interviews took place by telephone. This method was employed for two reasons: telephone interviews: a) provided a convenient approach for participants who live in different cities and towns and, (b) provided control of when and where interviews took place. Participants were asked to refrain from being interviewed during work or

at their workplaces and not to use their work e-mail or telephones. The remaining ten interviews took place in a private room at the town library. Interviews were recorded with participant permission using a digital recorder. This chapter includes: (a) the research setting, (b) demographics, (c) data collection, (d) data analysis, (e) evidence of trustworthiness, (f) the study results, (g) and a summary.

Research Setting

The research setting was the geographical area of central and northern Maine. The participants worked outside of their homes, in offices, schools, or medical facilities. Their work did not include travel on a regular basis. Communication was conducted on the telephone, through personal e-mails, and in person. I did not enter any workplaces and did not speak to owners or managers except when the manager was the employee participant. Data collection occurred during September and October of 2015. Twenty-three participants submitted informed consent in person or through e-mail. Initial conversations were held with all twenty-three. Ten interviews were conducted in person. The remaining eight interviews took place over the telephone from the participant's home and the researcher's home-office.

Demographics

The initial recruitment process identified thirty-one individuals who were interested in participating. The 23 cases that returned informed consent are described below. Five of the 23 mothers did not complete the interview process. It was expected that the interviews would be composed of working mothers with young children. Seventeen women continued working during

the data collection period. One participant gave notice and stopped working during the data collection period to care for her child.

The participants were women who ranged in age from 24 to 41 years old. Demographic information was gathered through initial conversations and during in-depth interviews. A wide range of work fields was represented by the interviewees. Table 2 highlights demographic information collected before the extensive interviews. Code letters have been used to differentiate each participant and to protect their identities. The five participants who did not complete in-depth interviews are indicated with a “no” in the completed interview column.

Table 2:

Demographic Information

COD E	Mother's Age	Marital Status	Age of youngest child in months	Work Field	# of years worked for most recent organization	Length of Maternity Leave (weeks)	Completed interview
A	37	married	19	Social work	1	12	yes
B	33	married	11	Non profit	7	12	yes
C	26	single living together	24	Healthcare	3.5	7	yes
D	30	married	6	Non profit	11	12	no
E	35	married	18	Media	12	5	yes
F	30	married	14	Media	2	12	yes
G	35	married	26	Education	4.5	15	yes
H	33	married	11	Non profit	7	12	yes
I	29	married	17	Engineering	7	12	yes
J	37	married	15	Healthcare	1	12	yes
K	37	married	19	Social work	1	12	yes
L	24	single	7	Retail	3	12	yes
M	29	married	1.5	Engineering	9	12	yes
N	35	married	2	Healthcare	1.5	6	no
O	37	married	1.5	Social work	1	12	no
P	26	single	2	Healthcare	3.5	7	yes
Q	37	married	1.5	Education	0.5	12	yes
R	32	married	0.5	Healthcare	5	12	yes
S	26	single living together	2	Healthcare	3.5	7	yes
T	37	married	4	Healthcare	10	2	yes
U	27	single living together	9	Retail	1	4	no
V	41	married	27	Finance	12	12	no
W	37	married	12	Healthcare	2	12	yes

The participants were: (a) married or living with their partner (19) or single (4), (b) took between 2 and 15 weeks of maternity leave, and (c) worked for their current organization for six months to 12 years. The number of single women (17.4%) represented is lower than the national average of single mothers, which is close to 26% (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013). Over 53% of single mothers work full-time (U.S. Department of Labor, 2013). Nationally, women with children are primary or co-breadwinners in two-thirds of households (National Partnership for Women and Families, 2014). The average length of maternity leave taken by participants for their most recent birth was 10.1 weeks. There was one discrepant case, code T, who took only 2 weeks maternity leave, because it was her intention to place her child for adoption after birth. Ultimately, she made the decision to keep the child. The data collected from this discrepant case did not reveal any comparative differences to the other participants related to main themes or categories identified through coding or analysis. The average maternity leave was 10.5 weeks when the discrepant case is omitted. Fifteen of the 23 subjects used 12 weeks of maternity leave.

Data Collection

This section describes the data collection process undertaken for the study. Thirty-one prospective participants indicated interest in participating, but eight did not return informed consent or respond to e-mails from the researcher. Twenty-three returned consent forms and participated in initial telephone or e-mail conversations. Five of these did not respond to interview date options, or were unable to schedule interviews during the data collection period. Eighteen completed semi-structured interviews with the researcher in person or over the telephone, and participated in transcript review and member checking through e-mail. A tracking

system (see Appendix B) was developed to monitor communications, receipt of consent forms, and to schedule interviews.

To protect confidentiality, all data were stored securely. Paper documents are in the researcher's home-office in a locked filing cabinet. All computer documents are kept on a password-protected computer in the researcher's home office and backed up on a flash drive stored in the locked file cabinet. Each instrument used for data collection will be described.

I collected data from a review of documents, services, and interviews with new mothers in Maine. The use of multiple sources of data supported credibility through data triangulation. Triangulation promotes overall quality (Stake, 2006). As described by Yin (2009), researchers use data triangulation via the collection of information from multiple sources in order to corroborate the same phenomenon.

Using a protocol increased dependability by outlining the procedures and rules to be followed during research. The protocol consisted of: (a) an overview of the intended project; (b) a description of the protocol purpose and intended use; (c) a description of data collection procedures; (d) an outline of the case report content; (e) a list of interview questions; (f) a summary of the data analysis techniques and tools to be used; and (g) a description of the dependability, credibility, and transferability methods. Appendix C includes the protocol.

Qualitative researchers enhance the dependability of studies by creating and using databases (Yin, 2009). I organized and maintained a database of perceptions of leader support among new mothers in Maine. It included (a) notes taken during interviews and the review of documents, (b) copies of documents, and transcripts, (c) tables of codes and thematic elements

resulting from the analysis of collected data, and (d) initial (draft) narratives written during the analysis of collected data and summarization of findings. Rich descriptions of the context supported transferability. Qualitative researchers enhance the transferability of their social science research by selecting representative samples and by providing rich descriptions of contexts (Bernard, 2013).

Collection of data resulted in an amount of data, including documents and interview transcripts, too voluminous for inclusion. Raw data will be available upon request for five years from the published date of this dissertation. Appendix D includes the list of documents.

Semi-structured Interviews

I used an interview guide (see Appendix A) to conduct in-person and telephone interviews. These sessions were conducted in person or via telephone at convenient times. The semi-structured interviews consisted of 14 open-ended questions. The purpose was to solicit information-rich descriptions and comments. It was expected that the responses to the interview questions would help gain insight and understanding into the participants' beliefs and perceptions about themselves, their work, and their supervisors. Spontaneous probing or expanding questions were asked to clarify responses or to explore emergent topics. The interviews lasted approximately 40-70 minutes. All interviews were recorded on a digital recorder with the interviewee's permission. I transcribed each interview the same day or the following day into word documents. The transcripts are verbatim except for the following exclusions: (a) unnecessary utterances (e.g., "umm," pauses, and coughs), (b) thinking aloud mutterings, and (c) sequential repetitions of words or phrases.

Document Review

Sample policies on benefits for new parents were collected from The State of Maine, The Maine Society for Human Resource Management (MSHRM) and the Human Resource Association of Maine (HRAME). Document 4, the State of Maine employee policy, used as a guide for many other employers in Maine, was one of several sample policies analyzed (State of Maine, 2009). Appendix D includes a list of the documents utilized. MSHRM and HRAME provided sample policies that help other organizations develop and implement policies for new parents. Document 1 is a sample policy, developed by a private organization in 2014 for paid parental leave (MSHRM, ca. 2014).

The documents were analyzed to explore relationship to themes found during the interviews. Document 1 enables employees to use paid leave in addition to short term disability (MSHRM, ca. 2014, Sample Paid Leave Policy). The second document sample is very similar, but takes precautions to protect business interests if both parents work for the organization by limiting the leave one leave at a time (HRAME, ca. 2014). The third sample policy, provides for unpaid leave that is more flexible than the requirements of the family medical leave act but does not require a financial contribution from the organization (MSHRM, ca. 2014, Sample Family Medical Leave Policy). The findings created a picture of the supports that should be available to new mothers through their organizations. This information contributed ideas and insights that answer the first research question.

Review of Resources for Working Mothers

A search was undertaken for publicly available resources for new mothers in Maine. This included support groups, and educational materials. Appendix F is a list the available resources found in the areas where the participants live and work. This data were included and provides support for the second research question concerning the dual roles of new mothers. The analysis phase began concurrently with data collection.

Data Analysis

The data analysis consisted of eight steps including coding the data at the individual case level and cross case analysis. Table 3 shows a rough schedule of the data analysis process. The time allotted to complete the process varied and needed to be adjusted based on the complexity and time involved in each step of the analysis.

Table 3:

Data Analysis Timeline

Step	Actions	Days Allocated
1	Data Collection & Transcription of Interviews	22
2	Collection of documents and resources	4
3	Within case data coding	4
4	Cross case data coding	4
5	Study themes	2
6	Reflective analysis	2
7	Determine reliability and validity of study	4
8	Compose final written report	14

After transcription, each interview was read to gain a comprehensive sense of the participant's experience and perceptions of their work environments. They were loaded into NVIVO qualitative data analysis software. Each interview was coded individually, without preconceived ideas or themes. In this way, 13 subthemes emerged. Appendix E includes the list of codes used during the analysis of documents and interview transcripts, and includes the total number of references for each code. Upon reflection, it became clear that these themes could be grouped into three categories: Leadership, Policies, and Priorities. Themes that were found in at least four of the cases were coded as subthemes under each of the three categories. This section describes the three categories and their relevant themes, and concludes with a discussion of how discrepant cases were factored into the data analysis. Figure 1 illustrates the themes and subthemes for each category.

Figure 1:

Three Categories, themes and subthemes

Priorities	Policies	Leadership
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infant Feeding • Fatigue • Financial Concerns • Reasons for working • Work Demands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair Treatment • Implementation • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication • Work Culture • Expectations • Gender

Category 1: Priorities

Instrumental in the development of priorities is the influence of family, friends and work environment. Individuals develop their own priorities based on the responsibilities, challenges and concerns they face as well as their personality and preferences.

Family Needs. There were 24 references made to the demands new mothers face regarding balancing family needs and full-time work. A major concern surrounded the idea of sick children not being able to attend daycare. Participant U Stated, “When a child is sick it is the responsibility of the mother to care for the child, but the daycare still gets paid even if you have to miss work.” Three interviewees, (A, K, and U) expressed concerns that their family life was detrimentally impacting their co-workers. “It impacted everyone when I had to be out with my sick child” shared K. Participant E described that “The clocks runs faster now than ever, sickness, fevers, etc are out of my control and this may mess up meetings, deadlines.”

Infant Feeding. Twenty-two references were made to infant feeding during the interviews. All but four of the employees articulated that their workplaces were willing to work with them to some extent to make breastfeeding a success. Of the four employees whose workplaces could not accommodate breastfeeding, two stopped earlier than they would have liked and two chose to formula feed exclusively to avoid conflict at work. Participant G explained that the “schedule does not allow for the same time off each day to pump so it made it extremely hard and I had to give up breastfeeding.”

Fatigue. Eight references were made regarding fatigue by participants. These included the following statements: Participant B commented “I rarely have downtime outside of the rides

to and from work.” Participant K added “I worry about my performance at work due to fatigue, though my performance evaluations and feedback have not indicated concern from my employer, I feel I’m not on top of my game.” Interviewee C said that “Being on overnights throws your entire schedule off.”

Financial Concerns. Several interviewees explained that a main reason for their continued employment was for the financial return. In addition, the cost of daycare for their child was mentioned by four of the participants. Participant B shared that she took a reduction in salary and work hours to spend more time with her child.

Reasons for Working. Three mothers (coded E, M and T) shared their desire to continue working because they would not enjoy being stay at home mothers. Participant B shared that she continued working because leaving the workforce to raise children would be detrimental to her long-term career goals.

Work Demands. Mothers B and E acknowledged that work demands increased after having children but that they were prepared and welcomed the new challenges. Other interviewees shared their dismay that they were not extended expected privileges once they became mothers, participant M stated that “She [her supervisor] said was that I would be hurting my own personal development if I wanted to work a reduced schedule.”

Category 2: Policies

The Policies that an organization creates and enforce reflect the goals, priorities and values of the organization’s leaders. The review of organization policies concerning work –life balance illuminated the struggle organizations are facing between being viewed as family

friendly and having the staff on hand to maintain business operations. Four sample policies along with the Maine State Employee's Family and Medical Leave policy were reviewed. The samples were collected from the Maine Society for Human Resource Management and the Human Resource Association of Maine. These samples are also provided to members of these associations for use in their organizations. The samples stressed the importance for organizations of recognizing the transitions employees make when they expand their families to include children. All sample policies and the Maine State policy incorporated the current federal and state legislation concerning family leave. In addition, sample paid leave policy A and B, incorporate the use of organization paid leave in addition to unpaid family medical leave.

Fair treatment. There were 20 references to fair treatment. Fair treatment between the genders and all employees was also a theme found in the sample policies obtained for the document review. In particular, the Maine State employee's policy differentiates between mothers and fathers (when both are employees of the State), allowing both leave (State of Maine, 2009). Fathers are given leave to care for their spouse or after the birth or adoption of a child. Mothers are allowed leave for their health needs or for those of their child. During the interviews, participant B stated that "I don't believe parents and non-parents are treated differently." Subject M shared the following insight:

As long as your work gets done, you do a good job, you are passionate about what you do and you show your employer that you like your job, it shouldn't matter how much time you take off, or if you're late to work, or if you leave early. If the job gets done, whether you have kids or not, then that's all that matters.

Implementation. Five participants mentioned that organization policies vary in their implementation based on department or supervisor; S stated that “when other people have taken leave to have a baby they get thrown showers, and everyone is happy, but that does not happen in my department.” Participant L shared that “when other women had children their supervisors gave them more time off and better schedules than mine did, perhaps it is because the baby’s dad was not involved.” In addition, A gave the following advice “Be aware of the laws and know your rights.” Participant E expressed gratitude for the paid time off she received “it [12 weeks at full pay] made all the difference to me and my family.”

Education. The employees stated that they learned what leave they were entitled to through a combination of three sources, these included: written policies, contact with human resources and the experience of co-workers. Participant B stated “Your HR representative is your best advocate for flexible scheduling, condensed work schedule and informing you of your rights as a pregnant worker and FMLA.”

Category 3: Leadership

The leadership theme reflects how the participants feel about their direct supervisors and the leadership in their organizations. Almost all of the participants (exceptions being M and W) spoke about how clear communication and set expectations were beneficial to their work experience. Interviewee G mentioned that her supervisor supported the idea that “family comes first” giving her the support she needed to be successful in work and as a mother. In contrast another interviewee, M, mentioned, that “another supervisor expressed ‘extreme worry’ that I

would not return from work, [he asked me] “numerous times if I planned to return from leave or not.”

Communication. The level of communication varied in quality from case to case. Several mothers spoke about the difficulty in reaching an agreement about changes to schedules to meet family demands. For instance, subject A exclaimed: “I had to keep asking for reduced hours [or a] different schedule, which they finally allowed.” A similar concern was held by participant P, “A month after returning to work, I received negative feedback that my being away from work with a sick child was impacting my coworkers, clients and providers.”

Work Culture. Three Interviewees I, M and V work in environments where work is prioritized over familial responsibilities. These three interviewees share the similarity of working in male-dominated industries. In these traditionally male dominated fields, engineering and finance, when the work is completed the employees feel they are free to leave to attend to family matters, but it is expected that they have good supports outside of work. Interviewee V’s supervisor advised her that “before returning from leave make sure you have a backup plan for when your little one is sick or day care closes because that is not a reason to excuse you from work.” In contrast, individual H (employed in the non-profit sector described her work culture by commenting, “No one ever had any issue with my leave for doctor’s appointments or if I felt sick. If I had to do something related to the baby or pregnancy, I did it. No one ever put up a fuss.”

Expectations. Many of the mothers mentioned that they had witnessed a co-worker, relative or friend struggle with the demands of combining parenthood and full-time work.

Participant O shared the discrepancy between the words and actions at her workplace “They said they were family friendly, but they were making changes to show otherwise.” Subject A commented that “co-workers who had taken leave before me were helpful in educating me with the process [of taking FMLA leave].”

Gender. Although gender was mentioned as a factor in only six of the cases, when it was an issue it seems to have played a significant role. During her interview, G commented that “The administration is primarily male, so they did not understand my needs.” Interviewee J shared mixed beliefs about the role gender plays in organizations regarding parenthood, feeling that both mothers and fathers are treated equally, but also that mothers carry more of the burden for putting the children above work demands. In contrast, to the other interviewees that brought up the theme of gender, M mentioned that she does not feel that gender “makes any difference at all.”

Discrepant Cases

There were two discrepant cases, A and T. Subject A gave notice to her employer during the data collection process, between the initial conversation over the telephone and the in person interview. Subject A’s decision to stop working was not related to this research, but was a result of discussions with her family and her work. She had trouble balancing work with family life. Her child has several health conditions that were making it difficult to stay in a child care facility. Despite having just left her employer, A shared her gratitude that her workplace and her supervisor had been willing to work through her needs, but it was her decision to stay home for

now. I made note of her decision and reasons for leaving employment, but feel like her experiences were similar to those of other interviewees.

Participant T did not plan for more than a few days off after giving birth, as she had planned on utilizing adoption. Shortly after giving birth, she changed her mind to raise her child and took two weeks of vacation time before returning to her previous work schedule. Although her colleagues and supervisor were surprised at her decision, participant T says her decision has not changed her work life. Participant T relied on her domestic partner, the father of the child, to stop working and stay home to care for the child. The responses that participant T shared during the interview showed significant similarities with the experiences of the other mothers. Differences were related to experiences involving pre-planning and communication with her supervisor before the birth of her child.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the data was a primary concern during data collection and analysis. This section describes the implementation and the adjustments made to: (a) the credibility; (b) transferability; and (c) the dependability and confirmability strategies that were outlined in Chapter 3.

Credibility

Quantitative researchers focus on internal and external validity as key measures of research quality. In contrast, qualitative researchers ensure the integrity of their research by implementing measures to ensure credibility (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). I established

credibility using (a) researcher bias identification, and (b) member checking (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

As discussed by Yin (2012), researchers' theories, personal values, or preconceptions influence the structuring and conduct of their intended studies. Those who do not recognize and manage their biases might influence the responses of participants in studies and might corrupt data collection and analysis processes (Seidman, 2013). Stige, Malterud, and Midtgarden (2009) argued that researchers must engage in self-reflection prior to the conduct of qualitative studies in order to identify and articulate influencing attitudes about the research topics.

I conducted a personal assessment of biases before initiating research. Through this personal assessment I identified three potential biases that without precautions could influence the data. The first bias is a preference for placing priority on family and children over work. The second belief involved adhering to a strict separation of work and family life. Employees should strive to not bring family problems into the office. The third bias I identified is a preference for breastfeeding over other infant feeding methods. Throughout the data collection and analysis process and during the preparation of findings and conclusions, I repeatedly consulted this self-reflection. The aim of this practice was to review the data and findings with the goal of eliminating the influence of these personal biases. This practice enabled the effective management of these recognized biases.

In addition, I used member checking as a technique for establishing credibility. As described by Marshall and Rossman (2011), such checking is a process in which researchers provide participants with selected data products and draft findings and conclusions and ask the

participants to comment on the accuracy of the materials provided. Participants received a copy of their individual transcripts, a summary of their case, as well as initial findings and conclusions. Participants had the opportunity to review and offer comments. Feedback from participants enhanced the accuracy and credibility of data collection and analysis efforts. After final approval of this dissertation, I will provide all participants with a summary of the findings, recommendations, and conclusions. The summary will include findings, recommendations, and conclusions and will be approximately two pages in length in order to ensure that participants receive a document they can read and reference efficiently.

Transferability

Qualitative researchers focus on the transferability, rather than the external validity, of findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Transferability can be enhanced by providing rich descriptions and the rationale for populations. Thomas and Magilvy (2011) add that illustrating the demographics and geographic boundaries also increase transferability.

In the demographics section of this chapter, I have provided detailed descriptions of the sample population and geographic boundaries. The inclusion of rich descriptions of the population and the context for the data and findings enable readers to judge the transferability. Specifically, readers have received the necessary information to assess the transferability of findings and conclusions to aspects of the commitment of working mothers in Maine.

Dependability and Confirmability

Trustworthiness of qualitative research is demonstrated through a focus on dependability rather than reliability (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). During the design phase dependability is a

major consideration. Qualitative researchers include mechanisms for ensuring dependability in their design in order to ensure the integrity of data and findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Piekkari, Welch, and Paavilainen (2009) use multiple sources of information to enhance dependability.

Triangulation was a method undertaken to increase dependability. Data from three sources interviews, a review of documents concerning parental leave policies, and a review of resources was collected. I used the data to triangulate findings and enhance overall quality. The gathering of data across multiple sites within Maine ensured appropriate spatial variability in observational units and supported the comprehensive examination of perspectives regarding leader support for new working mothers.

Researchers can use protocols and databases to demonstrate dependability (Yin, 2009). Beverland and Lindgreen (2010) further asserted the importance of the use of protocols in the business and management fields in order to ensure dependability. Trkman (2010) developed and used a database to ensure dependability during a study of bank employee perceptions of critical success factors for business process management programs. In order to ensure the dependability of findings I developed and adhered to a protocol (see appendix C).

Confirmability is the degree to which other researchers could confirm or corroborate the results. The use of a database that outlines all the steps undertaken in data collection and analysis will be a valuable tool for another researcher replicating the design. I created and maintained a database during data collection and analysis. The database contains (a) communication logs with participants; (b) copies of documents, and transcripts; (c) tables of

codes and thematic elements resulting from the analysis of collected data; and (d) initial (draft) memos written during the analysis of collected data and summarization of findings. Use of the database enhances dependability and provides future investigators with insight into the collection and analytical methods used to derive results, findings, and conclusions. The next section will address the results.

Study Results

The interview responses provided extensive data about experiences related to leadership support and behaviors. This section explains the findings that address both research questions. Through interview responses one through nine, and the document review the first research question is addressed: “In what ways does leader support affect new mother’s commitment to working?” The second question is better understood utilizing data obtained from interview questions ten through fourteen and through the review of resources (i.e., new mother’s support groups and breastfeeding education): “How does an employee’s perception of leader support of her infant feeding decision, and her dual role as a mother and an employee, affect her commitment to working?” The findings indicated three main categories and numerous themes.

The first research question explores the impact of leader support on the mother’s commitment to working. Using the comments from the first nine interview questions and from the review of documents, 29 themes were revealed. Table 4 reveals these themes, and includes the number of sources or responders who mentioned the theme and how many references were found. For example, question 3 had the most sources (13) referring to leadership in their organization as good to excellent. These 13 sources referred to good to excellent leadership 16

times. Codes related to the first research query had a minimum one source (Q7 job has changed, organization decision) to a maximum of 13 sources (Q3 good to excellent leadership) and a minimum of one reference (Q7 job has changed, organization decision) to 16 references (Q2 feel valued, nurturing, listener, and Q3 good to excellent leadership).

Table 4:

Themed Responses to Research Question 1

Codes	Sources	References
Q1 Thought about family while in school/ training	6	7
Q1 Family/ Children did not impact career choice	12	12
Q1 Family/ Children changed career choice	4	6
Q2 Consistent	6	9
Q2 Feel valued, nurturing, listener	8	16
Q2 honest, direct, integrity	4	6
Q2 hands off, ambitious, risk taking	6	9
Q3 good to excellent leadership	13	16
Q3 poor to fair leadership	5	7
Q4 Annual/ limited feedback only	14	15
Q4 Began negative feedback only after having child	3	5
Q4 No change in feedback after having child	6	6
Q5 Communicate with HR and/ or supervisor	8	9
Q5 No plan for Maternity leave	2	2
Q5 Learned from colleagues leave options	8	10
Q6 Conversations before leave	10	11
Q6 conversations during leave	8	8
Q6 Conversations after returning from leave	2	4
Q7 Job has changed, participant request	6	8
Q7 Job has changed, organization decision	1	1
Q7 Job has not changed	11	12
Q8 Financial reasons	9	9
Q8 Personal ambitions/ career oriented	9	10
Q8 Not wanting to be left behind in field	6	6
Q9 Specific actions	8	12
Q9 Communicated support	12	13

The first three interview questions established the tone for the interviews and encouraged thoughtful descriptive responses. Responses to the first one revealed that career decisions were not made based on anticipated family demands. Four responses showed that the decision to have children changed the way they viewed their work life and led to some degree of career change. For example, interviewee G was not offered any leave as a temporary worker, so she made the decision to obtain a permanent position before becoming pregnant. Participant J asked for a transfer between departments during her pregnancy because although precautions were taken she felt unsafe working near x-ray radiation while pregnant.

The second question provided insight into descriptors of good leadership. These included traditional traits for leaders: honesty, directness, and integrity, as well as being nurturing and a good listener. The third question showed that most of the interviewees rated the leadership of their organizations as good to excellent. Although they both rated their companies highly, respondent C commented that “I have noticed the leaders will make promises or talk about a lot of things they want to do and they never get done,” Participant G shared that “My principal is great, he is very family first. The rest of the administration does not always follow this lead and we have only a limited number of sick days to use on ourselves or a children’s illness.”

These conversations naturally evolved into the next three questions dealing directly with communication. The fourth question dealt with feedback and communication with direct supervisors. Although almost half of the respondents mentioned being a good listener as a desirable leader trait, fourteen commented that they only received minimal or yearly feedback from their leaders. Responses to the fifth and sixth items included: “I planned my pregnancy

around the holidays, knowing it was a slow time at my office and I could maximize my leave with paid holidays.” Interviewee C discussed one meeting with human resources: “I had a talk with HR about what would be covered as in time off and how I would be paid with disability.” Several individuals mentioned being educated by human resource departments about what they were entitled to as well as learning from co-workers, participant R mentioned “I had a friend that had had a baby a year earlier than I did. I went to her with questions.”

Despite a requirement of FMLA leave (that the person’s position be held for them), seven of the 18 interviewees described significant changes to their duties shortly after returning from maternity leave. One person was promoted, while six asked for reduced, flexible or changed work schedules and duties. Question eight revealed an even split between working mostly for financial reasons only and for personal ambitions or careers. A smaller group of participants mentioned that taking even a small break might have left them in a vulnerable position their field. As participant V explained:

My field is fierce and the information changes rapidly. It’s not always easy to stay in-the-know even while working, so I couldn’t imagine not working and remaining valuable to an organization. To take off a few years would have meant that when I returned to work I would have to take approximately 20K [\$20,000] as a pay reduction and work myself up to a senior position again. And let’s face it, mothers that have been out of the workplace for a while find it difficult to get their foot in the door again.

Question nine asked for a description of leader support before, during and after maternity leave. Of note was a lack of action taken to directly support mothers once they returned. Most

conversations before taking leave and the few that took place during leave discussed business matters. In contrast, conversations after the mother's returned often surrounded progress made by their children and their adjustment to having mom at work. Subject W confided that once she became a mother, her "supervisor only wanted to chat about babies, my boss announced she was expecting one week after I got back."

Table 5 displays the codes related to the second research question, the number of sources for each response and the number of references. That question: "How does an employee's perception of leader support of her infant feeding decision, and her dual role as a mother and an employee, affect her commitment to working?" is best explored using interview questions ten through fourteen. Challenges brought up in response to question ten surrounded finding quality daycare, breastfeeding, fatigue and to some extent maintaining a professional image at work. Subject R said "Right now I'm depleted. I worry about my performance at work due to fatigue it feels like my colleagues found other places to go for answers while I was away, sometimes I feel useless." Question 11 asked interviewees to comment on how their organization supported their choices regarding infant feeding. Although several mentioned having been told specifically where they could take breast milk pumping breaks, often this place, if it was not their private office, was unavailable. There was no recourse, as participant U describes, "the unused bathroom was dirty, it smelled bad in there, and since it was used for storage someone was always trying to get [in] it." Interviewee G explained that "They said they would be supportive, but in the end there was not a lot of follow through."

Table 5:

Codes Related to Research Question 2

Codes	Sources	References
Q10 Finding daycare	12	25
Q10 Breastfeeding challenges	15	31
Q 10 Fatigue	12	14
Q10 Maintaining a professional image	6	7
Q11 Provided pump space	16	16
Q11 Made promises they did not uphold	7	10
Q12 Fathers get more benefits than mothers	8	9
Q12 All parents get the same benefits	5	5
Q12 Gender is irrelevant to treatment	5	5
Q13 Know for your rights/ benefits	11	12
Q13 Ask for your needs to be met	10	10
Q14 No social Implications	9	9
Q14 Non Parents should get the same benefits	4	6
Q14 It should be about what is best for children	2	6

The final three interview questions asked the interviewees to give advice and/or imagine what they would say to another individual about to experience what they have been through. Eight respondents felt that fathers were less likely to be given a hard time and may even be “congratulated”, participant K surmised when they asked for time away for children’s needs. The same number of interviewees thought that both genders of parents were treated equally or that gender was irrelevant to treatment. As participant M commented, “What matters is if you can get your job done; after that it does not matter if you work all night or go home at five.”

Responses to question thirteen suggested that prospective mothers know their rights and ask their employers to meet their needs. Participant B, who works in human resources suggested, “Advocate for yourself and don’t be afraid to ask make suggestions for how your employer can

support you.” The final question asked about the fairness of workplace policies specific to parents. Several subjects admitted that their views had changed since they became parents, but that fairness was not the issue; the issue was about doing the best for children and families. Participant T summed up the discussion with “The children are what is really important and companies need to realize this and help their workers be better parents; [if not] kids are going to grow up and not know how to act in society, they won’t be good workers in the next generation.”

Discrepant and non-conforming cases

Participant T was a discrepant case. Unlike the other individuals under study, she had not planned to keep her child after giving birth. The decision to raise her child was not made until after delivery of the child. This change led to her not having prepared to take extended leave from work and also left her supervisor and co-workers without the ability to plan for her absence and her return to work as a new mother. It appears that communication is still ongoing.

Participant T’s partner has resolved some issues by taking on the primary child care role. From her perspective, her colleagues and supervisor are still adjusting to the change in plans.

Summary

The purpose was to increase understanding surrounding the impact of leader support or lack of support on women transitioning back to work after childbirth. Responses to the research questions were found in the data through categories, themes and subthemes. The data once organized by theme helped to clarify and isolate the various ideas. Analysis of the data provided answers to the two research questions.

First, “In what ways does leader support affect new mother’s commitment to working?”

It is clear that leader support impacted the participant’s commitment to working, in all cases. The inference is that positive support that occurred through direct actions and communication increased commitment, whereas negative or neutral support related to an absence of communication with the supervisor decreased commitment.

Second, “How does an employee’s perception of leader support of her infant feeding decision, and her dual role as a mother and an employee, affect her commitment to working?” Participant comments indicated two main barriers to support for infant feeding, irregular or unpredictable work schedules or tasks and lack of coverage for job duties by other personnel.

In chapter 5, the findings are interpreted. This includes conclusions that address the research the research questions and cover all of the data. The findings are related to the literature review conducted for chapter 2. Implications for social change are revealed and recommendations made for action and further study.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

It is widely believed that once working women become mothers their careers take on a secondary role to motherhood. Modern family structures, economic realities, as well as the aspirations of working women have started to change this perception. As this shift occurred, questions about these role changes were studied, but the pressures faced by working mothers, especially in regards to breastfeeding their infants, was largely unknown. Until the early 1990s most women who worked substituted infant formula for breastfeeding (Adams & Funk, 2012). At the end of the twentieth century, physicians, politicians, and advocates agreed that there were numerous benefits to breastfeeding and began to encourage new mothers to breastfeed regardless of their work status (La Leche League International, 2010). This placed working women in a situation where work was often incompatible with breastfeeding and was interfering with the better nutritional choice for infants.

Women are facing conflicting roles and feel that they must choose to prioritize work or family. Often the more socially acceptable choice, if it were financially viable, was for the mother to discontinue full-time work. This is not the best outcome for organizations. When skilled workers choose to remove themselves from the workforce, there is a negative impact on workplaces and organizations (Herr & Wolfram, 2012). It is imperative for leaders, supervisors, and human resource professionals to increase their understanding of why new mothers may choose to reduce their work hours or to leave the workforce. With increased understanding, retention strategies can be created, implemented, and tested.

I explored the role and importance of leadership support on work commitment in the experience of working mothers in Maine. A qualitative, multiple case study was conducted with 23 participants. Data collection included 18 in-depth interviews, a review of archival sample policies, and an analysis of available resources for new mothers. There were two research questions: “In what ways does leader support affect new mother’s commitment to working?” and “How does an employee’s perception of leader support of her infant feeding decision, and her dual role as a mother and an employee, affect her commitment to working?”

By analyzing the data, three subject matter categories became apparent: leadership, policies, and priorities. The data revealed similarities and differences between the cases. It is clear that the assistance from leaders affects the experience of new working mothers. Leader support includes specific actions that demonstrate endorsement of the mothers’ decisions, such as providing time and space for breast pumping, as well as emotional support for the employee.

Relevant policies enable and facilitate leaders by providing guidelines for their actions and communications with staff. Policies also aid communication between leaders and workers by clarifying expectations. Priorities are created by the individual experiences and personalities involved as well as the culture of the organization. The culture of the organization plays at least two roles in influencing employee commitment. The first is how supportive the facility is of work and family balance. The second way is how the culture matches the employee’s expectations. This chapter includes (a) interpretation of findings, (b) limitations of the study, (c) recommendations for action and further study, (d) implications of the conclusions to professional practice and social change, (e) reflections on the research process, and (f) conclusions.

Interpretation of Findings

This section describes the ways that the findings confirm, extend, or contradict the literature about combining full-time work and motherhood described in Chapter 2. Using the conceptual framework, the themes found in this study are compared to other research in the field of employee commitment. The conceptual framework, drawing from social learning theory, feminist theory, and social role explanation theory, allows the findings to be analyzed and interpreted without exceeding the scope of the study.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory contends that people learn by observing others (Bandura, 1977). Subjects of this study largely based their expectations for themselves on their perceptions of the experiences of other mothers in their workplace. These perceptions were largely formed through informal conversations with peers. Through this interaction, expectant mothers learned what to expect, what they were entitled to, and how they would be treated once they became mothers. As a sole source of communicating expectations and behavior, this is problematic for several reasons. Corporate policies can change and the experience of a mother even a year or two ago may not represent the organization's current policies. In addition, policies vary depending on the job title, role, duties or department of the employee. By listening to the experiences of other women, only one side of the story is learned, the listener may not understand the situation, the interpretation, and the mother's role in her experience. The perceptions may not accurately represent the experience the previous mother had at the organization.

Interviewees revealed that their perceptions, beliefs, and views changed once they became mothers and started to combine parenthood and full-time work. The redistribution of personal priorities is hard to predict before child birth, but it enables workers to become working parents (Meyer & Allen, 1991). It is important that communication continue after the mother returns to work. Since changes are difficult to predict, continuous open communications enable supervisors to be aware of challenges and be able to offer the assistance. This continuation of communication on needs and expectations does not appear to be happening once the women return from maternity leave. Along with increased communication, some workplaces offer flexible accommodations to new mothers and other employees that may make balancing work and family easier.

Flexible work environments and creative solutions to conflicts were found to be highly valuable in this population. This coincides with research that suggests that inflexible job environments that do not support the new needs of mothers are more likely to decrease work commitment (Herr & Wolfram, 2012). Mothers who work fewer hours, are side-lined to lower-status roles that are underpaid and undervalued in relation to their experience and seniority (Cahusac & Kanji, 2013). I found that the women choosing to change their work roles or hours had not experienced formal or overt sidelining as yet (this is difficult to determine given the short timeline of the research). All the mothers in the study still had very young children and were new working mothers.

The findings suggest that societal recognition for the work contributions of many mothers is limited. In most cases, subjects mentioned that after returning from leave, casual conversations

with managers and co-workers began to revolve around children and motherhood more than business and work-related issues. These casual interactions reflect a general downgrading of interactions and experiences within work, which confirms research by Herr and Wolfram (2012). Change is not only reflected in a wage penalty for mothers, but is also likely to cause some mothers to question if they should continue working (Cahusac & Kanji, 2013). Only one subject discontinued working during the data collection period.

The timeline included interviewing mothers who were working during the year and half after childbirth. Perhaps the longer employment continues the more likely women are to question their work commitment. The culture that an organization promotes is fluid and is impacted by the behaviors of leaders and staff each day. In addition to the influence of leadership styles and organizational culture, the gender of supervisors and staff also impacts work behaviors.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory stresses that gender influences behavior in work environments. Indeed, Koenig et al.,(2011) found that the results of management research conducted mostly with male subjects and male researchers should be applied with caution to today's female workers. Feminist theory contends that all individuals consciously or unconsciously apply meanings to behaviors based on gender (Baxter et al., 2014).

It is significant that all interviewees with female supervisors mentioned the parental status of the supervisor. In contrast, subjects working for men did not indicate whether their supervisor had children. Although this was not a question directly asked during the interviews, this difference highlights cultural expectations for mothers and fathers at work. Interviewees

were asked if they felt mothers and fathers were treated differently. While the majority felt that parents were treated equally, a few mentioned that fathers experienced different reactions when they took advantage of policies for a child's needs. In support of the theory, perceptions of inequality can lead to feelings of injustice and a lessening of work commitment. Employees who feel that they are not valued in an organization experience decreases in commitment to the organization (Ballout, 2009). It has been assumed that mothers are working because they financially do not have the means to stay home with their child. Although this may have been more accurate in the past, more women without a financial necessity are choosing to continue working today (Beauregard, 2011).

Laughlin (2011) found that many mothers work for reasons beyond financial needs. Along with easing financial burdens that are commonplace among single income families, women work for a variety of reasons. Subjects included personal fulfillment, remaining engaged in their chosen field, and maintaining personal relationships, along with financial need, as the top reasons why they continue to work. This shows that modern family structures and the aspirations of working mothers are changing. Women want to be seen as valuable contributors to their organizations just as other employees do.

The research showed that the flexibility of work environments varied from field to field and organization to organization. In contradiction to previous researchers, the subjects in this study from traditionally feminine fields (such as teaching and healthcare) had less flexible workplaces than those in traditionally male fields (e.g., engineering and financial services). This difference could be one of definition to some extent. Healthcare workers, who had comparatively

limited flexibility during the workday and limited privacy, were more able than those in other professions to negotiate shorter workdays or longer breaks. Interviewees who work in schools did not seem to have this kind of flexibility. Subject G, a teacher, stated “The job interfered too much with pumping [breastmilk], so I had to give up pumping.” Herr and Wolfram (2012) found that the inflexibility of a woman’s work environment played a causal role in her leaving the labor force after motherhood.

Cahusac and Kanji (2013) found that traditional masculine work cultures were more likely to lead to mothers leaving work. In addition, women who negotiated reduced work hours, but had permeable time boundaries and continued to work long hours were not committed to working (Cahusac, Kanji, 2013). Perhaps the subjects in traditionally male fields have yet to experience this conflict, since they have begun navigating their new roles so recently. One subject, M, was informed by her supervisor that she would be hurting her career by requesting flexibility. Cahusac and Kanji (2014) found that women in traditionally male roles try to conceal or downplay their motherhood and interest in the lives of their children. Interviewees working in engineering and financial services mentioned enforcing a stricter separation between their roles as worker and mother. Over time this stricter separation may lead to downplaying their motherhood roles. A longer investigation would be necessary to determine if this will occur. In support of the theory, the impact of social expectations on mothers is clear: women must choose to accept the social norms or rebel against them.

Social Role Explanation Theory

Finally, social role explanation theory offers an explanation for the motherhood wage penalty (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). Most interviewees stated during our conversation that motherhood comes first for them, before their careers or job duties. Placing this priority on motherhood is the socially acceptable answer in our society (Baxter et al., 2014). Role overload has been cited as a reason many mothers stop working (Miner et al., 2014). Although several subjects had challenges negotiating their new dual roles, only one mother stopped working during the research period. Participant A stopped working to care for the health needs of her infant. The daycare refused to administer ear infection medication, and the interviewee could not find an alternative caregiver. She began missing more work days than was acceptable, and she was unable to find a workplace modification that was satisfactory to her and her organization's needs.

Finding a compromise is the key to managing the corporate culture and the employee fit. When individuals cannot find a solution that meets their needs as workers and mothers, they are more likely to succumb to role overload (Cahusac & Kanji, 2014). Cahusac and Kanji found a "take it or leave it" situation that faced working employees wherein the organizational culture was not receptive to creative or flexible solutions. Participant A mentioned that her decision to stop working was endorsed by her supervisor and her workplace. This supports research that suggested that women, especially mothers, are not as welcomed in some organizational cultures (Cahusac & Kanji, 2014).

Limitations of the Study

There are at least four limitations to this study. The first is due to the qualitative nature and design. The findings cannot be generalized outside of the context and specific population . In addition, causal relationships between the findings cannot be determined. A second limitation is bias because I, like the participants, am a mother. To address this concern, participants were asked to review and comment on the themes that emerged from the data through a member-checking process. This process encouraged the participants to think critically about their experience and the preliminary conclusions. The third issue is that only 18 of the 23 participants scheduled time for the open-ended interview. It may be assumed that the five other mothers who were not available could not find the time to dedicate to an interview because of demanding work and family schedules. The fourth limitation is that the data are based solely on the participants' and the researcher's interpretations of events. These interpretations, and the perspectives that they are based upon, are individual and may or may not be accurate. The participants' workplaces, supervisors and co-workers were not visited or interviewed to validate the responses.

Recommendations

Supervisors and leaders of organizations need to be more proactive about new mother work commitment and attrition (Rippeyoung & Noonan, 2012). Based on the results, I recommend three potential areas of policy adjustments that could benefit from further study: specific communication plans and strategies; paid leave; and increased education and assistance through employee policies to enable mothers to combine breastfeeding and full-time work.

Future scholarly inquiry is needed to judge the effectiveness of policy changes on increasing mother's commitment to work.

Communication Plans and Strategies

Participants that communicated more with their supervisor about their expectations and plans during and after maternity leave had fewer instances of missed communication and failed expectations than those that had less communication. The risk of failed communications between new mothers and their supervisors is compounded by the perceptions of these employees. These perceptions are based on the experiences of other mothers. The casual sharing of experiences from one co-worker to another, although described as helpful by several participants, increases the risk for breached psychological contracts when the second employee either does not have the same experience or perceives their experience as divergent from their co-workers' experience. With specific practical help regarding communication, expectations, and guidelines for supervisors through policies, mothers will feel more valued in their organizations.

Organizations should develop a policy that is enforced universally across supervisors. It should outline the specific actions that the organization will take such as providing breaks and a private place to pump. These policy steps will help minimize communication issues. Specific and clear policies that are adopted across the board help set expectations and reduce the occurrence of breached psychological contracts. While it is important for universal policies to be developed, how they are supported by managers should vary with the individual. People vary in their levels of the need for social support and their ability to handle stress which impact the way they respond to support in the workplace. Assistance that reduces role stress and increases feelings of

support must be compatible with the needs of a person. For this reason, supervisor support is critical as a moderator of role conflict in working mothers. Organizations have many avenues that will assist with the development of policies for new mothers. The Medela Corporation, as an example, offers a corporate training program, as well as online resources for employers who want to meet better the needs of new breastfeeding employees (<http://www.medelabreastfeedingus.com/medela-at-work>).

Paid Leave

The availability of paid leave is an important contributor to successful transitions to working motherhood. Two cases (E and H) were eligible under new organization policies for paid maternity leave. They worked for different organizations in the greater Bangor area that implemented leave policies in 2014. Participant H was instrumental in her organization's creation and adoption of the paid leave policy. These employees were both among the first to benefit from these policies. Both participants shared their happiness and gratitude for their organizations new policies, as E mentioned, "I felt very fortunate to have the 12 weeks. It meant a lot to my family and me."

Although previous researchers have found that workplaces discriminate against individuals that use work-life policies (Botsford Morgan & King, 2012; Wallace, 2008), this was not shown in the findings. Interviewee M stated, "The only thing they [supervisors] ever said was that I would be hurting my own personal development if I wanted to work a reduced schedule. Which [sic], in turn, has yet [after 4 months] to impact my development in any such way." It would be interesting to observe if given additional time, the schedule and reduced work

time did affect her career. The statement itself, made by M's supervisor, could be read as a form of discrimination in addition to a precautionary warning.

Although all the employees agreed that they placed more value on their role as a mother than on their paid work, the time that they took for maternity leave varied from two to 15 weeks. Women who took more leave included the two participants eligible for paid leave and two participants that combined summer vacations with leave. For several subjects, the fact that their leave would be unpaid made no difference in the amount of leave they chose to take. "Although my leave would be unpaid, I knew how important it was for my baby and I to have time to connect [bond with the child]" interviewee K explained. At least two women planned their pregnancies to coordinate with slow times at work (holidays) or summer vacations (school employees) to maximize their out-of-work time. Those with fewer leave options returned to work for financial reasons, as well as a desire to not miss out on work opportunities and the social aspects of work.

Education and Assistance Combining Breastfeeding and Full-time Work

There are several avenues available to new mothers seeking education and other assistance combining breastfeeding and work. In the greater Bangor area, there are support groups held up to five times per month during the day and in the evenings. Lactation consultants are available for free appointments at the hospital and through La Leche League. In some larger companies, employers are beginning to employ in-house lactation consultants and trainers or have them available by phone (Mensah, 2011). None of the participants had access to such consultants specifically through their employer, but several described utilizing the new mother

supports available in hospitals and the community. The combination of community supports and workplace adaptability is especially important for positive results. For example, Mensah (2011) found that women who had access to education through in-house lactation consultants were better able to manage combining breastfeeding and paid work.

In this study the organizations varied in the resources and services they provided to the participants to pump breastmilk at work varied a great deal. Often, what was promised was not fulfilled. Subject G describes her experience:

We [supervisor and the employee] talked about what I would need for breast feeding and he told me to talk to Human Resources. I talked with them, we made a plan, and then they didn't completely follow through. They put a new sink in an old dirty bathroom that was never cleaned out, had open toilets that hadn't been used in years and it [sic] smelled. I was promised a nice pumping environment and was not given it. I pumped in my classroom for a few months, but had to give it up as it was not working with my job.

Others had positive responses because of fulfilled expectations. Compare the above comments to this response by B:

My employer created a nursing mothers room with drinks, snacks, a fridge and a hospital grade pump for myself and other breastfeeding mothers. No limits are given on the number of times or duration of pumping breaks I am allowed to take. I can choose to work or not while I pump.

These differences affected the women's commitment to the job and to their organizations. In reviewing these specific cases B was much happier with her workplace situation than G. Mothers who worked for organizations that made and followed through with more accommodations seemed more committed to continuing to work. They were also more likely than their peers to praise their organizations as "great places to work." These recommendations will enhance new mothers' experiences and lead to a more committed workforce. The next section describes implications to positive social change.

Implications for Positive Social Change

The implications of this study have the potential to affect positive social change. There is potential for positive social change to impact at the individual, family, organizational and societal levels. The findings from the research demonstrate how new mothers are capable of succeeding in organizations that provide accommodations and opportunities. The results can potentially help leaders implement new policies that benefit working mothers. These changes will strengthen corporate culture from within; empower employees; encourage growth, loyalty, and innovation to maintain a competitive edge and market share.

Many mothers discussed the pressure they feel to breastfeed. Medical research has demonstrated numerous health benefits that breastfeeding provides (La Leche League International, 2010). This pressure appears to be working as the numbers of infants who are breastfed continues to rise. Approximately 79 percent of newborn infants begin breastfeeding (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2014). Unfortunately this pressure to breastfeed does not correlate with help or support in making breastfeeding successful especially

for working mothers. By six months only 49 percent of babies receive breastmilk and this number drops to 27 percent by 12 months of age (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2014). The largest hurdle seems to be in social support from workplaces, colleagues and leaders as well as medical care and knowledge (Conte, 2015). It is important to remember that breastfeeding saw a recurrence in popularity during the 1990s and early 2000s and is currently moving towards more cultural acceptance (Jung, 2015). This acceptance is evident in the creation, advertising, and usage of contemporary breastfeeding products. The Medela Pump in Style is one of the most popular electric breast pumps in the United States (Jung, 2015). The pump name caters to women who want to be fashionable (the pump comes in two bag styles). Before the ACA, the United States accounted for forty percent of the global market in breast pumps, and demand has continued to increase in the years since (Jung, 2015). Breastfeeding information was traditionally passed down from mother to daughter, but many mothers who breastfeed today were fed formula, as a result knowledge of breastfeeding was in danger of being lost.

Most doctors are not trained to help women breastfeed (Conte, 2015). Insurance coverage for support from board certified lactation consultants varies by plan and they can be busy and hard for many mothers to access (Conte, 2015). New mothers are left feeling alone in making decisions about how to feed their babies. With positive social change new mothers could feel supported by a society that cares deeply about the health of future generations and the wellbeing of all mothers.

The topic of new parent work commitment is often covered by the media. In December 2015, Netflix changed their parental leave policy to cover all employees at full pay for at least 12 weeks following the birth or adoption of a baby (Associated Press, December 9, 2015). Salaried workers are able to take up to a year leave with pay. This disparity highlights an economic division that may be occurring as workers with highly sought technical skills earn new and large benefits while people in jobs that require less education and training struggle to make ends meet and receive smaller benefits.

Although it may be seen as disappointing that companies are starting to have two-tier benefit structures, expansion of paid parental leave in the United States is still a novel idea with limited support in the business field (Cahusac & Kanji, 2013). Changes to parental leave policies reflect growing social pressures for equality between mothers, fathers and different employment levels. As more companies embrace paid parental leave employee expectations will begin to reflect these new benefits.

It is important to note that social changes often occur slowly and that change is hard to measure. With this understanding it is clear that the results have the potential to increase understanding of why individual mothers may choose to stop working. The most direct impact that occurs when mothers stop working is that family income falls. Today more women are the primary or sole breadwinners for their families; therefore a decision to reduce work hours or stop working can have more of a financial burden than it did in the past (Murtagh & Moulton, 2010). Women who feel they were forced to stop working may have unresolved feelings that impact the individual and their future work contributions.

Implications for Further Study

Methodological implications of the research include the need to consider race and socio-economic status. The fact that the population was racially homogenous allowed the focus to remain on the research questions :“In what ways does leader support affect new mother’s commitment to working?” and “How does an employee’s perception of leader support of her infant feeding decision, and her dual role as a mother and an employee, affect her commitment to working?” By having a homogenous participant base, I was able to isolate the factors of leader support and work commitment.

Further work needs to be conducted whereby race can be considered. The study showed that there were differences in perceptions of leadership roles based on the gender of the supervisor. Nevertheless, what about racial differences in supervisors and mothers? Would mother’s perceptions of their female leaders be different because of racial differences? For instance, would new African-American mothers expect more support from other African-American supervisors than Caucasian female leaders? This is potentially an interesting topic since the rates of breastfeeding vary greatly between different races (Baxter et al., 2014).

Other homogenous studies of different racial groups employing similar methodology and heterogeneous investigations could buttress the results reported here. Women with older children may have different results. Do the perceptions of motherhood and leader support change once the new roles have matured?

Implications for Theory

The theoretical implications of the study as they relate to social learning theory are interesting. In support of the theory, many of the participants expressed that they learned of their companies' policies by observing others going through the process. Implicitly, this suggests that organizations need to train supervisors to address this informal learning. The decisions and processes leaders adopt at a specific time with one employee will affect the outcomes of similar situations with other employees later on. Employers could use the opportunity in exit interviews to evaluate how policies and procedures are implemented and followed in the workplace.

The implications germane to feminist theory are modest. All the participants and the researcher were of the same race and gender. The approximate socio-economic status varied only slightly among participants. The subjects expressed different expectations from their supervisors based on the gender of the supervisors. Female supervisors who were mothers were expected to be more understanding of the personal dilemma of the interviewees and were judged more harshly when those expectations were not met.

The implication for social role expectation theory is that organizational leaders need to be cognizant that employees benefit from consistent leadership and clear communication during work and life transitions. Women make up a significant percentage of the workforce including expanding roles in the non-traditional workforces. It is important to understand that developing workplace policies is not only strategic but necessary for organizations to meet the needs of its workforce. In this way organizations reap the benefits through the growth of individuals as they become more valuable employees.

Implications to Organizations

Changes to organization policies and procedures as well as legislative regulations can require significant social change. More research is needed to know if empirical results can be obtained to create federal or state legislations that would benefit new parents. The focus of needed change is on new mother work satisfaction and retention. Innovative work policies and procedures would result in positive social change at the individual, family, organizational and societal levels. These changes would include assistance and encouragement for employees combining their dual roles as workers and mothers. After this change, mothers may have increased feelings of self-worth and decreased stress (Murtagh & Moulton, 2010). Families would benefit from the continued income provided by employed mothers and their improved well-being when they receive adequate assistance. Leaders of organizations benefit through the retention of a happier and more committed workforce.

As more workplaces begin to offer benefits, for example paid parental leave, employees begin to expect these benefits. These expectations exert society pressures so that more organizations will offer paid leave to attract the top talent in the field. Organizations compete to recruit and retain talented personnel. Employers known for having fair and generous policies attract more applicants (Pressman & Scott, 2014). The Maine Society of Human Resource Management (2012) publishes an annual list of the best places to work in Maine. The board reviews workplace policies submitted by human resource personnel to determine the list. Workplaces included in the list increase the awareness of their organization and its corporate culture. Applicants to the company then know that there are employee policies and a corporate

culture that intends to meet the needs of individuals and their families. If mothers were accepted as a protected class in the workplace, more women would be able to successfully combine breastfeeding and work without compromising either.

Further, it is important to note that organizations must adopt these policies and implement them in a satisfactory, realistic, and practical manner. It has been described previously how some participants in the study were affected negatively by promises that were not kept or that did not meet expectations. Organizations that heed only the need for the policies, yet do little to implement them in a meaningful way, may only worsen the relationship between the organization and working mothers.

Conclusions

This study addressed two research questions. The first surrounded the role of leader support in a mother's commitment to working. The cases demonstrated how leadership affects the ability of respondents to survive the challenges and barriers to combining full-time work with new motherhood in the first year post partum. The second research question explored a new mother's perceptions of organization support of her decision regarding infant feeding choice. Participants that chose to breastfeed universally found it a challenge to combine with work. Their success varied based on their personalities, their leaders' skills and strengths, as well as their organizational cultures. Organizations must take responsibility for the attrition rates among new mothers and the impact this has on both the organization and society. Although some respondents identified innovative ways to combine work and parenthood, including reduced

work hours or flexible scheduling, the organizational cultures varied in how receptive they were to these new ideas.

Organizational leaders must provide meaningful support through policies, communication, and action to support new mothers in their commitment to work. The results suggest that with improved work-family policies, and changes to social norms, more mothers will remain committed to work and attrition will be reduced. The challenges facing mothers can be greatly reduced through improved communication with leaders and a greater understanding of the transitions new mothers undertake. If organizational leaders embrace them as a special protected class, the commitment of this population to working will increase.

It is clear that steps have been taken to improve the work conditions for new mothers. The days of pumping breastmilk in bathroom stalls are, for the most part, becoming more infrequent. Mothers have realized that their contributions to work are valuable, and employers now need to take the next step to further accommodate mothers and facilitate breastfeeding. When this occurs, the difficult choices facing employees to work or stay home with children may be eased by knowing that their leaders understand the demands placed on them when they combine motherhood and full-time work.

Employers who wish to develop a committed workforce need to accept the reality that a significant portion of their workforce will be balancing work and motherhood roles. The successful organization will have fair and sustainable policies and procedures. Leaders will develop clear methods for fostering expectations among employees. Supervisors will have the ability to provide adequate and reasonable work modifications, when requested. These behaviors

will work towards building acceptance among staff for women in these dual roles. Organizations that foster acceptance of these roles will benefit from a more committed workforce. These organizations can expect less disruption from employees disengaging from work and leaving employment.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

Name: _____ Job Title: _____

Participant No.: _____ Organization: _____

Interview Guide

1. Please describe your career path – from the beginning. How did your decision to start a family affect or not affect your career choices?
2. What makes a good leader?
3. How would you rate the leadership of your organization? Why?
4. What kind of feedback do you receive from your supervisor?
5. How did you plan for your maternity leave? How did you know or learn what you would be entitled to and what decision did you make?
6. Please describe your conversations held with supervisors or Human resources in regards to your becoming a mother before, during, and after your maternity leave?
7. How has your job changed in duties or responsibilities or in other ways since you became a mother?
8. Please describe your reasons for working?
9. Please describe how your organization and your direct supervisor supported you during your pregnancy, leave, and your return to work afterwards.
10. What challenges have you faced combining motherhood and work since returning after having your baby?

11. In what ways has your organization and your leader supported your decisions regarding your infant feeding choice? (to breastfeed or to formula feed your child)
12. Are employees who are parents treated differently than employees who do not have children? And does the gender of the parent make a difference in this treatment?
13. What advice should be given to new mothers who aspire to continue working after having a child?
14. What are the social implications of creating or eliminating policies that allow privileges to parent's in the workplace?

Appendix B: Participant Tracking

Participants	Date of contact	Response	Consent received	Initial conversation	Interview date
A	18-Sep	19-Sep	Y	Y	22-Sep
B	18-Sep	19-Sep	Y	Y	30-Sep
C	18-Sep	19-Sep	Y	Y	4-Oct
D	18-Sep	19-Sep	Y	Y	
E	18-Sep	19-Sep	Y	Y	30-Sep
F	18-Sep	19-Sep	Y	Y	1-Oct
G	18-Sep	19-Sep	Y	Y	30-Sep
H	18-Sep	19-Sep	Y	Y	13-Oct
I	18-Sep	19-Sep	Y	Y	13-Oct
J	23-Sep	28-Sep	Y	Y	29-Sep
K	20-Sep	21-Sep	Y	Y	25-Sep
L	22-Sep	22-Sep	Y	Y	14-Oct
M	24-Sep	24-Sep	Y	Y	8-Oct
N	24-Sep	25-Sep	Y	Y	
O	25-Sep	26-Sep	Y	Y	
P	29-Sep	30-Sep	Y	Y	2-Oct
Q	29-Sep	2-Oct	Y	Y	7-Oct
R	30-Sep	30-Sep	Y	Y	3-Oct
S	1-Oct	2-Oct	Y	Y	3-Oct
T	1-Oct	3-Oct	Y	Y	8-Oct
U	2-Oct	2-Oct	Y	Y	
V	3-Oct	6-Oct	Y	Y	
W	3-Oct	5-Oct	Y	Y	9-Oct

Appendix C: Case Study Protocol

- 1) Case Study Introduction
 - a) Research Questions
 - i) In what ways does leader support affect new mother's commitment to working?
 - ii) How does an employee's perception of leader support of her infant feeding decision, and her dual role as a mother and an employee, affect her commitment to working?
- 2) Conceptual Framework
 - a) Social learning theory
 - b) Feminist theory
 - c) Social role expectation theory
- 3) Protocol Purpose and Intended Use
 - a) Protocol to be used by the researcher to guide and inform all study data collection, analysis, and conclusions
 - b) Researcher will use the protocol to ensure dependability of case study methods, findings, and conclusions
- 4) Data Collection Procedures
 - a) Researcher will recruit interviewees from (a) online social media support groups
 - b) Prepare informed consent forms for each interviewee
 - c) Review and finalize planned interview questions
 - d) Case Study Interview Questions

- i) Please describe your career path – from the beginning. How did your decision to start a family affect or not affect your career choices?
- ii) What makes a good leader?
- iii) How would you rate the leadership of your organization? Why?
- iv) What kind of feedback do you receive from your supervisor?
- v) How did you plan for your maternity leave? How did you know or learn what you would be entitled to and what decision did you make?
- vi) Please describe your conversations held with supervisors or Human resources in regards to your becoming a mother before, during, and after your maternity leave?
- vii) How has your job changed in duties or responsibilities or in other ways since you became a mother?
- viii) Please describe your reasons for working?
- ix) Please describe how your organization and your direct supervisor supported you during your pregnancy, leave, and your return to work afterwards.
- x) What challenges have you faced combining motherhood and work since returning after having your baby?
- xi) In what ways has your organization and your leader supported your decisions regarding your infant feeding choice? (to breastfeed or to formula feed your child)
- xii) Are employees who are parents treated differently than employees who do not have children? And does the gender of the parent make a difference in this treatment?

- xiii) What advice should be given to new mothers who aspire to continue working after having a child?
 - xiv) What are the social implications of creating or eliminating policies that allow privileges to parent's in the workplace?
 - e) Collect data from the review of documents, and the review of available services
- 5) Data collection tools
- a) Digital audio recordings and typed transcripts
 - b) Researcher field notes
 - c) Case study database
- 6) Outline of Case Study Report Contents
- a) Overview of study
 - b) Presentation of the findings
 - c) Applications to professional practice
 - d) Implications for social change
 - e) Recommendations for action
 - f) Recommendations for further study
 - g) Reflections
 - h) Summary and study conclusions
- 7) Data Analysis Techniques and Tools
- a) Coding (within case, and cross-case)
 - b) Analysis tools

- i) NVivo
 - ii) Microsoft Excel
- 8) Study Dependability, Credibility, and Transferability Methods
- a) Dependability methods
 - b) Case study protocol use
 - c) Case study database creation
- 9) Credibility and transferability methods
- a) Multiple data sources (dependability)
 - b) Research bias identification, and member checking (credibility)
 - c) Rich description of study sample population and context (transferability)

Appendix D: Case Study Documents

Document Identification	Description
Document 1	Sample paid leave policy A, Received from The Maine Society for Human Resource Management on Oct. 1, 2015
Document 2	Sample paid leave policy B received from Human Resource Association of Maine on October 1, 2015
Document 3	Sample Family and Medical Leave Policy received from The Maine Society for Human Resource Management on October 1, 2015
Document 4	State of Maine Employees Family and Medical Leave Policy, from the Maine State Employee Handbook on October 16, 2015

Appendix E: List of Themes

Codes	Sources	References
Priorities	14	42
Family Needs	10	24
Infant Feeding	14	22
Fatigue	8	8
Financial Concerns	12	20
Reasons for working	4	4
Work Demands	8	10
Policies	14	34
Implementation	10	12
Education	10	10
Leadership	14	36
Communication	10	44
Work Culture	12	26
Expectations	14	38
Gender	6	10

Appendix F: List of Resources available to Mothers

Number	Name	Service Offered	Time and place
1	La Leche League	Breastfeeding Support	1st wed./ month, 10:30 or support by phone
2	Hospital support group breastfeeding	Breastfeeding Support	1st thurs./ month 10 am
3	Hospital new mothers group	General baby care	1st tues. / month 10:30 am
4	Maine Cloth Diaper	Breastfeeding Support	Monday evenings, 5-7:30 downtown or facebook