

2017

# Working Mothers, Work-Life Balance, Locus of Control, and Perceived Supportive Factors

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*Walden University*

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# Walden University

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2017

Abstract

Working Mothers, Work-Life Balance, Locus of Control, and Perceived Supportive

Factors

by

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MS, California State University, Fresno, 2006

BA, California State University, Fresno, 2004

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Clinical Psychology

Walden University

May 2017

## Abstract

From 1948 to 2015, there was a dramatic increase of mothers in the workforce. The literature demonstrates that mothers tend to work outside of the home while also maintaining most of the domestic roles. However, the literature does not address how these women are able to balance their roles. There is a gap in the literature concerning the relationship between locus of control, perceived supportive factors, income size, and work-life balance for working mothers. The purpose of this cross-sectional quantitative study was to fill that gap as measured by Rotter's Internal- External Control Scale, Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), income size, and demographic information. The work and family border theory and the social learning theory were used as the theoretical frameworks. This online study used Facebook to recruit 164 working mothers between the ages of 18-50 with children under the age of 18. Correlations, *t tests*, and linear regressions were used to analyze the data. The results showed no significant relationship between loci of control on work-life balance. However, perceived support was associated with work-life balance and predicting work-life balance. This study is intended for employers, program developers, and mental health professionals in their efforts to support working mothers in gaining work-life balance. The social change implications of this study are to increase understanding of work-life balance, reduce mental health risks associated with imbalance, decrease job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, isolation, and increase universality and normalcy of the working mother experience.

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## Dedication

This is dedicated first to my husband for all of his loving support and care during the times I needed it most. To my children, thank you for being great-loving children, and being flexible with your willingness to reschedule playtime with mommy! I realize that you did not understand when mommy had to work long hours or when I needed quiet time. I want you to know that I will always have time for you! To my parents, thank you for teaching me all that I needed in life to survive and instilling in me that I could do all things through Christ that strengthens me. Thank you to all the friends and family that believed in me and supported me in my times of need. Words could not express how each of you planted the seed that allowed this dissertation to grow. Lastly, I want to thank every one of my Professors, my Chair Dr. Robin Oatis-Ballew, and all the committee members that endured reading and rereading my work. Without your feedback and patience, I literally would not have been able to accomplish completion. Thank you!

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

Society says that a good mother is a child-centered, full-time, stay-home mother (Giele, 2008; Johnston, & Swanson, 2006). However, times have changed. Historically, the man has been the head of the household and the provider for the family, while the woman was second in command taking care of the children (Giele, 2008). Over the past 50 years, the number of women with children under the age of 18 has increased (Alger, & Crowley, 2012). In the 1948, 17 % of mothers worked outside of the home with children under the age of 18 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007). In 2012, 69.8% of working mothers worked outside of the home as a part of a dual working household (Alger, & Crowley, 2012). In 2015, 70.8% of women with children under the age of 18 were represented in the labor force (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). Women are now the second source of income for the home (Omori, & Smith, 2010). Work demands and the tendency for women to work outside of the home have increased. Furthermore, women continue to maintain the responsibilities of caring for the children while taking care of domestic roles.

In 2008, fathers spent about 1.2 hours per day completing household chores, while women spent 2.0 hours per day completing household chores. In addition to household chores, women spent 1.2 hours taking care of children per while fathers spent .9 hours per day caring for children (Alger, & Crowley, 2012). Despite the increased number of mothers that worked outside of the home, research shows that women are still

spending more time than men maintaining household chores and taking care of children. However, the research is not yet clear on how some women can feel successful in maintaining a balance of work and life and other women cannot.

Cheng and McCarthy (2013) explain that higher the inter-role conflict the less likely one is to feel satisfied. Inter-role conflict is when individuals have trouble with one role as a result of having a competing role (Cheng, & McCarthy, 2013). Therefore, the stress of one domain (e.g., work) may negatively impact the experiences within another domain (e.g., home). Conflict can be intensified if individuals are required to choose between two or more types of activities that compete for the same time frame (Alger, & Crowley, 2012; King, Botsford, & Huffman, 2009). Juggling between the tasks of motherhood and work obligations may create a stressful environment that could evolve into numerous issues within the areas of home-life, work-life, physical health, and mental health (King, Botsford, & Huffman, 2009). King, Botsford, and Huffman (2009) suggest that work-family conflict is related to stress, job and life dissatisfaction, turnover, and absenteeism (King, Botsford, & Huffman, 2009).

Feeling a loss of control over events may increase the amount of stress that a person feels. An individual's perception of control over their internal psychological environment is related to well-being (Roddenberry, & Renk, 2010). A compromised sense of control is the core of several psychological conditions, such as anxiety and depression (Roddenberry, & Renk, 2010). One way of determining control is to apply the social learning theory's locus of control component established by Julian Rotter (Rotter,

1966). Rotter suggested that some individuals are internal and believe that rewards are contingent on their behavior while other individuals are external and believe that rewards are contingent on external events such as luck, chance, or powerful others (Roddenberry, & Renk, 2010). Individuals who believe that they are capable of impacting their stress have a more positive psychological well-being (Roddenberry, & Renk, 2010).

A working mother with an internal locus of control may feel a higher sense of stress when trying to balance the duties of taking care of the home while trying to take care of the family's needs. This stress may be due to believing that the rewards or success is contingent on their own doing. Mothers with an internal locus of control may also have a sense of empowerment in knowing that the answers to problems may reside within themselves. On-the-other-hand, mothers with external locus of control may feel stressed when attempting to balance the roles of work and life due to feeling that rewards or success is contingent on luck, fate, or chance. Feeling this way may lead to a sense of hopelessness.

The ability to find balance is important as Sayer, Bianchi, & Robinson, (2004) indicate that a parent's time with children is important to maintain a connection with the child (Sayer, Bianchi, & Robinson, 2004). Mothers are often the primary caretakers for children, and they are associated with handling most of the domestic duties in the home, therefore, imbalance can impact the relationship with the child. Not maintaining a balance between work and life could mean life dissatisfaction, poor work attendance,

stress, job turnover, mental health concerns, health problems, and relationship dissatisfaction (King, Botsford, & Huffman, 2009).

In this study I explore whether there are differences between mothers who are internally controlled and those that are externally controlled, and their report on being successful in maintaining work-life balance. I also explore other factors, including social support and income size, as they may impact the experience of work-life balance. This study has the potential to impact social change in several ways: It may impact the lives of mothers by supporting their efforts to maintain balance and reveal ways to increase support for mothers through therapeutic intervention services and program development. This study may also help to uncover ways that employers could support working mothers, thereby creating potentially increased revenue, morale, and work attendance. I hope that the information from this study will provide insight for employers and health providers while strengthening their ability to screen for work-life imbalance. I also hope that this study could provide a way to support and reduce negative outcomes that may occur within the workplace (i.e., employment termination). The findings from this study may help to create a bridge needed to reduce stress within the family, reduce psychological and physical health symptoms, as well as reduce life dissatisfaction and work related stress. Supporting mothers may help them to feel that they are not alone in their efforts to create the desired lifestyle for their families, and it may create an avenue that allows mothers to seek help. Lastly, the results of this study may increase insight into how



internal locus of control and external locus of control can be used increase work-life balance for working mothers.

Additional information regarding locus of control and how it applies to mothers with careers will be further discussed in detail in Chapter 2. Chapter 2 will also provide information on supportive factors, income size, as well as, other relevant information pertaining to mother's efforts to obtain successful work-life balance.

### **Background**

Locus of control is the general belief that outcomes are contingent upon one's own doing (Rotter, 1966; Sprung, & Jex, 2012). Moreover, it is the generalized understanding that life events occur for two basic reasons (Friedman, & Schustack, 2009). Those who have an external locus of control may believe that what happens to them is luck, happenstance, destiny, or fate. Individuals who have an internal locus of control may feel that life is about choice, personal beliefs, hard work, and dedication (Friedman, & Schustack, 2009). An individual's perception of events that occur in their life can depict how they personally. Individuals who feel life happens to them may experience difficult situations, which could later result in depressed feelings due to lack of control, or simply bad luck. However, an individual who believes they are in control or play a significant role in life events may feel empowered after going through a difficult situation. Perception influences how well an individual copes with life in terms of balancing between what they thought should occur and what actually occurred. This may also apply to work- life balance in that adults develop boundaries around work and life.

However, when they are unable to secure those boundaries, or an unexpected event occurs, conflict between those roles are increased, and stress may occur (Bulger, Matthews, & Huffman, 2007).

For many women, stress is common. Alger and Crowley (2012) suggest that women spend more time than men taking care of children as well as fulfilling the domestic responsibilities within the home (Alger, & Crowley, 2012). They do this while continuing to work and they are increasingly becoming the second income source for the family (Omori, & Smith, 2010).

Some women may find achieving work-life balance difficult. Due to changes in recent decades, studies on work-life balance demonstrate that as there are increased work hours and workloads, parents who work outside of the home report feeling increased time pressure and decreased satisfaction in work-life balance (Hilbrecht, Shaw, Johnson, & Andrey, 2008). Researchers indicate that some women who attempt to cope with the issues of time-pressure and work-life balance by working from home find that roles are diffused, and they do not necessarily contribute to the goal of increased satisfaction related to work-life balance (Hilbrecht, Shaw, Johnson, & Andrey, 2008).

Employers have also attempted to support how employees cope with work-life balance. In which case, employers attempted to increase support by developing childcare facilities, flextime and telecommuting, and emotional support such as implementing supportive leadership roles and assisting employees with childcare facilities (Ten Brummelhuis, & Van Der Lippe, 2010). However, these supportive factors are not

available to all working mothers. Women with low paying jobs, such as those who work in food retailing, struggle with caring for domestic responsibilities, timeframes, and work demands. Women in food retail may be given nontraditional work hours that conflict with their availability to care for their families (Backett-Milburn, Airey, McKie, & Hogg, 2008). Del Boca, Locatelli, and Vuri, 2005 (2005) indicate that due to the increase in women working outside of the home, there is an increase in the need to seek nonparental childcare. Specifically, in dual-earner homes, there may be a need to seek formal, private childcare, or informal childcare. The family may receive care from a more flexible source or family member (Del Boca, Locatelli, & Vuri, 2005). Mothers are more likely seek informal care when the prices of childcare are unaffordable. In this event, having a grandmother or family nearby helps women make the decision to seek informal care (Del Boca, Locatelli, & Vuri, 2005). This suggests that working outside of the home may increase the need to seek support in taking care of children and that having support nearby may help meet the needs related to taking care of children (Del Boca, Locatelli, & Vuri, 2005).

Unfortunately, research does not demonstrate the impact that having access to supportive factors within close proximity or income size has on the working woman's feeling of maintaining work-life balance. Moreover, the literature does not explain the cases in which some women may feel a sense of balance while others may not.

Researchers have been able to demonstrate that families continue to develop into dual-

earner households, and this leads to increased amounts of mothers working outside of the home (Hilbrecht, Shaw, Johnson, & Andrey, 2008).

With this in mind, this study bridges the gap in the literature to include empirical data representing women and their attempt to achieve work-life balance. Specifically, this study expands the literature by providing information on locus of control and the influence of supportive factors and income size on mothers who work outside of the home.

### **The Problem Statement**

Perez and Torrens (2009) stated that there is a myth indicating that women are, in a sense, born for the role of motherhood. Women are thought to be good mothers if they stay at home and care for their children (Giele, 2008). However, women are increasingly working outside of the home and may not be physically present to care for their children as they once were. The difficulty of having domestic and professional roles could impact a woman negatively. She may feel increased dissatisfaction with herself, as well as her career (King, Botsford, & Huffman, 2009). The feeling of dissatisfaction could impact the ability to perform proficiently within the roles of work and life.

Furthermore, juggling a variety of responsibilities could impact a woman's self-esteem, mental health, and life satisfaction. The discrepancy between the actual-self and the ideal-self could lead to a negative self-image, place the woman at higher risk of meeting mental illness criteria, and could affect her relationship with her spouse and children.

There is a gap in the literature concerning how locus of control, perceived supportive factors, and income size influence work-life balance for working mothers. Without the information from this study, women may increasingly find themselves working outside of the home struggling to balance family and personal lives resulting in life dissatisfaction, career dissatisfaction, increased work absences, and emotional strain.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to expand the current literature by increasing the understanding of the impact of locus of control, supportive factors, and income size on work-life balance within the population of working mothers. I sought to explore if there was a difference between mothers that identified as having external locus of control and those who reported having internal locus of control and their feeling of having work-life balance. I sought to understand the impact of supportive factors as well as income size on the working mother's attempt to achieve work-life balance.

Using quantitative inferential methods, working mothers were randomly selected to be participants in the study. The independent variables of this study were the mother's locus of control being either internal or external, income size, and perceived supportive factors. The dependent variable of this study was the report of work-life balance. The supportive factors included the woman's marital status, access to supportive resources, the perceived belief of being supported, geographical location of the supportive factor, and the ability to afford to pay for supportive factors. In which case, some women can pay for supportive factors such as childcare. In this study I measured perceived

supportive factors, locus of control as well as, geographical location by using self-reported surveys and demographical data collected from each participant. Specifically, I will explore if women that identified with having an external locus of control differ from those that identified with having an internal locus of control in terms of their report of having work-life balance. In this study I also looked at types of supportive factors, and income size to gain an understanding of conditions contributing to higher occurrences of work-life balance achievement.

### **Research Questions and Hypotheses**

In this study, I examined the following research questions and hypotheses:

RQ1: Is the level of Work-Life Balance higher in women that identify as having an internal locus of control than women who identify as having an external locus of control? as measured by the Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale (Rotter, 1966), and the Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale (Valcour, 2007)?

*H<sub>o1</sub>*: Women who identify having an internal locus of control will report higher levels of Work-life balance than women that identify as having an external locus of control.

*H<sub>a1</sub>*: Women who identify as having an internal locus of control will not report higher levels of work-life balance than women that identify as having an external locus of control.

RQ2: Does perceived support have a positive correlation with work-life-balance as

measured by the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Wilcox & Sherrie, 2010) and the Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale (Valcour, 2007)?

*H<sub>02</sub>*: There is a positive correlation between perceived social support and work-life balance within working mothers.

*H<sub>a2</sub>*: There is not a positive correlation between perceived social support and work-life balance within working mothers.

RQ3: Are higher scores of income size, perceived support, and locus of control predictive of higher scores of work-life balance within working mothers as measured by the Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale (Rotter, 1966), the Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale (Valcour, 2007), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Wilcox & Sherrie, 2010), and income size demographic information?

*H<sub>03</sub>*: Higher scores of income size, perceived support, and locus of control are predictive of higher scores of work-life balance within working mothers.

*H<sub>a3</sub>*: Higher scores of income size, perceived support, and locus of control are not predictive of higher scores of work-life balance within working mothers.

### **Theoretical Framework**

I used the social learning theory and the work and family border theory to explain and conceptualize the literature related to how work-life balance and personality traits such as locus of control impact the working mother. I used these theories to understand

what people do to cope with day-to-day life. An individual may create borders or boundaries to avoid or prevent imbalances. Work and family border theory suggests that work and family are different domains or spheres that affect and influence each other (Clark, 2000). People are required to switch between roles, attempting to gain balance (Clark, 2000). Additionally, individuals may also cope with life by utilizing personality traits which can act as a buffer to stressful situations (Clark, 2000).

Social learning theory suggests that individuals who are internally driven tend to believe that the outcomes that occur within their lives are based upon their actions. However, individuals who tend to believe that their outcomes are based on outside forces such as situations, luck, or chance tend to be externally driven (Cheng, Cheung, Chio, & Chan, 2013; Sprung, & Jex, 2012). Rotter (1966) explains that locus of control is the general belief that outcomes are contingent upon one's own doing and the patterned behaviors later become a blueprint in determining outcomes. This blueprint is helpful in predicting future outcomes for personal and professional usage.. Individuals learn that they have control over events or that they have no control based on experiences that are then generalized and applied to various situations (Rotter, 1966). The tendency to identify with either an external locus of control or an internal locus of control is not dependent on choice; it is a learned expectancy that is based on past events and generalized to future situations (Rotter, 1966). For example, a working mother who has an internal locus of control may feel that it is a struggle to get home from work, prepare dinner, and get homework done with the children, and that this is her fault because the tasks are within



her control. Whereas another mother with the same tasks, who has an external locus of control, may feel that the struggle to complete tasks is out of her control. Perception largely influences the identification of locus of control in that the value that an individual places on to the outcomes may reinforce internal or external expectancy (Cheng, Cheung, Chio, & Chan, 2013). For example, if a working mother feels that she has successfully overcome difficulty in the past by utilizing her inner-strength and ability, she may see a pattern and learn to value her own strength in the future. However, if a woman has learned that she has no control, and her experiences support that fate and luck shaped her experiences, she may place more value on luck or outside forces to predict outcomes. The value that is given to an outcome or reinforcement helps to develop an expectancy that may be internal or external (Cheng, Cheung, Chio, & Chan, 2013).

Predicting outcomes is helpful in understanding how mothers may perceive the roles of motherhood and the responsibilities of maintaining domestic duties; however, the act of finding balance is still unclear. Therefore, I used the concepts of work and family border theory and the social learning theory to understand how some mothers can achieve work-life balance, and others cannot by examining if there are differences between mothers with an internal or external locus of control. Mothers who work outside of the home may attempt to achieve balance by crossing borders or spheres of work and life. Switching between borders and setting boundaries between work and life they may require the use of outside resources such as childcare, or access to supportive factors such as a spouse or nearby support system. Alternatively, they may have learned to depend on

past experiences to help them determine outcomes; such as beliefs in self, or outside others, luck or fate.

In this study, I explored whether locus of control impacts the woman's ability to feel successful at maintaining work-life balance. I combined the literature on work-life balance and the concepts of locus of control in an attempt to understand the working mother's attempt to achieve work-life balance. I also explored supportive factors that may act as buffers to achieving work-life balance; such as, family support, spousal support, and income size.

Based on a quantitative cross-sectional design, this study can provide an understanding of the relationships between locus of control, work-life balance, and possible supportive factors that may act as buffers to women seeking to feel more successful in achieving work-life balance. The data from this study were interpreted and analyzed using SPSS software.

### **Nature of the Study**

I used a cross-sectional quantitative design to look at groups of working mothers that identified as having an internal locus of control and those that identified as having an external locus of control to explore the impact of perceived social support, and income size on work-life balance. Cross-sectional designs are used to observe and to determine prevalence between variables (Mann, 2003). A Cross-sectional research design allowed me to explore the impact of locus of control, perceived social support, income size, and the influence it has on work-life balance within working mothers at different times in

their lives. Cross-sectional research designs are helpful in providing descriptive information. For example, Bernas and Major (2000) used a cross-sectional design to combine the understandings of stress, organizational leadership theory, and work-life balance for women. The findings from the study revealed that stress reduction was impacted by leader-member exchange, family support, and the ability to stay committed (Bernas, & Major, 2000).

For this study, in order to explore the impact of locus of control on working mothers and their in efforts to report increased balance and reduced stress using a cross sectional design, I used a *t test* analysis to compare the means between those who identified as having internal versus external locus of control and work-life balance. I used a correlational analysis to explore the relationship between perceived supportive factors and work-life balance. I used a linear regression model to determine the predictability of perceived support, income size, and locus of control on work- life balance within working mothers.

Achieving work-life balance is difficult for some women with families. Some women struggle to work, manage children while at work, and take care of domestic duties that occur outside of work (Backett-Milburn, Airey, McKie, & Hogg, 2008; Hilbrecht, Shaw, Johnson, & Andrey, 2008). Employers have attempted to assist women with children with their work duties by creating ways to support women with providing childcare and flextime opportunities (Cheng, & McCarthy, 2013). In addition to organizational strategizes, learning to have mental breaks and keeping a healthy distance

can act as a buffer to negative relationships associated with work conflict among three domains: Work, family, and school (Cheng, & McCarthy, 2013). Also, research suggests that locus of control has been valuable in not only individual outcomes; but, it has been associated with health outcomes, job satisfaction and performance, as well as, overall well-being (Sprung, & Jex, 2012).

I attempted to expand the literature by using a cross-sectional quantitative research design to understand how the concepts of locus of control, supportive factors, and income size impact work-life balance among working women with children. It was my hope that using a cross-sectional quantitative design would reveal prevalent relationships between locus of control, work-life balance, supportive factors, and income size as it relates to women with children.

Despite, the fact that much of the literature involving the experiences of motherhood and women utilizes information gathered from qualitative methods, quantitative methods can help to demonstrate the quantity and similarities in the experiences that women face. Weigold, Weigold, and Russel (2013) suggests that self-reported surveys, such as those used via the internet, can open opportunities to gain access to difficult to reach populations, reduce costs of survey administration, and eliminate data entry (Weigold, Weigold, & Russel, 2013). Internet surveys may also provide convenience and user friendliness. In addition, researchers suggest that internet data collection is equivalent to paper-and-pencil procedures (Weigold, Weigold, & Russel, 2013).

Therefore, in attempt to gather a variety of women I used Internet surveys. Working mothers were used as participants for the study. The independent variables of this study were the mother's locus of control, income size, and perceived supportive factors. The dependent variable of this study was the report of work-life balance. Covariates included the types of supportive factors such as marital status, location and proximity to supportive systems, and the ability to pay for childcare.

The surveys used to conduct this study were the Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale used to assess the level of satisfaction of work and life balance using a 1-5 likert scale (Valcour, 2007). To assess the locus of control, I used Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale will be used (Rotter, 1966). The Rotter's Internal-External Control scale is a forced choice scale that was used to assess internal and external locus of control (Rotter, 1966).

The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support was used to assess supportive factors (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988). This survey is a self-reported survey that assesses the support of significant others, family, and friends using a Likert scale with scores ranging from 1 to 7. The demographic information was gathered to obtain personal information such as name, age, and marital status and to determine information related to location of supportive factors, and income size.

Results from this study was analyzed using a *t test*, correlational design, and linear regression to explore the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable to determine the extent to which the MSPSS test predicts the

satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale. Information about the design will be further explained in the method section in Chapter 3.

### **Definitions of Terms**

To assist the reader in understanding important terms used throughout the paper, the following terms are defined below:

*External Locus of Control:* The belief that one's life is about luck, chance, and fate (Cheng, Cheung, Chio, & Chan, 2013; Friedman, & Schustack, 2009; Sprung, & Jex, 2012).

*Income size:* The gross amount of money that comes into the home despite family contribution to the family's income.

*Inter-role conflict:* Trouble in one role as a result of a competing role that occurs simultaneously.

*Internal Locus of Control:* The belief that one's life is about choice, personal beliefs, hard work, and dedication (Cheng, Cheung, Chio, & Chan, 2013; Friedman, & Schustack, 2009; Sprung, & Jex, 2012).

*Locus of control:* The way in which a person generalizes the events of their lives as being internal and within their control or external and being out of their control (Cheng, Cheung, Chio, & Chan, 2013; Friedman, & Schustack, 2009; Sprung, & Jex, 2012).

*Supportive Factors:* A self-reported perception of having access to buffers to shield from the stresses of day-to-day life (i.e., childcare, spousal support, family support, community support, and religious support).

*Work- Life Balance:* The ability to shift between work-life domains and home-life domains with a satisfying balance (Clark, 2000).

*Working mother:* A working woman that is employed to work either inside of the home or outside of the home while having, at least, one or more children with ages varying under the age of 18.

### **Assumptions**

There were several assumptions associated with this study. First, I assumed that participants of this study would be accurate, honest, and forthright when responding to test items. I also assumed, based upon the available information, that the measurements used in this study were valid and reliable in measuring locus of control, perceived support, and work-life balance. Additionally, I assumed that by using social media as a recruiting method participants would have access to questionnaires at their leisure, which would increase the participation rate.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

In this study, I planned to use a diverse population of working women with children of various ages. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2012), women begin having children at age 15 up to 50 years old. However, I only focused on adult mothers starting at 18 years of age. The scope of this study did not extend to working women

without children, unemployed women, or men. The study included both married and single women with the expectation that there was a dependent child under the ages of 18 years old living in the home. Furthermore, this study encompasses all types of mothers such as through a blended family, adoption, and by giving birth. Moreover, obtaining work-life balance is difficult in the United States as well as within other countries (Bernas, & Major, 2000; Del Boca, Locatelli, & Vuri, 2005). Therefore, I hope that this study will generalize to the working mothers within the United States and those living in other countries seeing as how the concern of gaining work-life balance transcends beyond the United States America. Additionally, I hope to understand how work-life balance is impacted by an individual's beliefs about their ability to control events that occur. Social Learning Theory addresses this within the concept of locus of control. Specifically, this particular study did not seek to understand the value that one has placed on themselves or their ability to perform as seen when looking at concepts relating to self-esteem or self-efficacy. Instead, I looked to understand how the belief in one's ability to control or not control life events impacts work-life balance (Judge & Bono, 2001). In this study, I also sought to understand how individuals attempt to make sense of work-life and family life and therefore, work and family border theory was chosen. I hoped that by using the theories of social learning theory and work and family border theory the results of the study could be generalized to all working mothers and help to understand how mothers attempt to balance and their feeling of being successful based on internal or external control.



Using social media to collect data allows for a randomized selection of participants. Without using a longitudinal study this study has the opportunity to capture a snapshot of a variety of women and possibly demonstrate in numbers how many women share similar stories and for that reason, a quantitative cross-sectional approach was selected. In this study, I gathered demographic information and self-reported surveys to assess locus of control, perceived social support, and work-life balance to increase understanding and generalizability. In which case, the information from this study may help to support women who are increasingly working within a dual-earning household. Research shows that individuals that have poor work-life balance report decreased satisfaction in work-life as well as home life (Hilbrecht, Shaw, Johnson, & Andrey, 2008). Therefore, I hope that the information could help women increase work-life and home-life satisfaction.

### **Limitations**

This study was limited to working women with children. Limitations of this study also included the exclusion of working women without children, mothers without dependent children living inside of the home, mothers over the age of 50, as well as men. This study was limited to only seeking the understanding of work-life balance as being impacted by perceived support, income size, and locus of control. In this study I did not extend to other explanations of self-efficacy or self-esteem to understand why some women can feel successful in obtaining work-life balance and others cannot. Moreover,

utilizing self-reported studies may be a limitation as some participants may not respond accurately.

In this study, I used a research design that did not explain cause and effect relationships. Therefore, the ability to determine what directly causes the feeling of achieving work-life balance is not possible. Additionally, I aimed to access participants by utilizing online surveys to reduce the chance of having limited participation; thereby increasing the chance of being able to generalize the results of the study.

### **Significance**

Information from this study may contribute to the field of Clinical Psychology, Social Psychology, as well as, Industrial Organizational Psychology by providing insight about how to increase the quality of life as it relates to work-life balance and motherhood. Specifically, finding out what contributes to mothers feeling successful at balancing multiple roles can reduce the conflict between home-life and work-life for those that struggle to maintain balance. In addition, research shows that individuals that struggle with work-life conflict report dissatisfaction in career, home, relationships as well as with themselves (Hilbrecht, Shaw, Johnson, & Andrey, 2008; Ten Brummelhuis, & Van Der Lippe, 2010). The information from this study has the potential to increase social change by supporting mothers and their efforts to maintain balance. Specifically, I aimed to reveal ways to increase support for mothers by increasing awareness, reducing stress in the family, reducing psychological and physical health symptoms, reducing life dissatisfaction, as well as stresses related to work. The information from this study is

hoped to help in program development in the area of mental health in which programs could be created to support mothers in outpatient programs and within employment settings. Programs could be geared to develop appropriate boundaries, provide psycho-education, and support groups. The information from this study contributes to social change by increasing the awareness of how the personal identification of having external locus of control and internal locus of control can impact how mothers perceive work-life balance. It may also contribute to social change expanding research to include fathers and various cultural groups.

### **Summary**

In efforts to balance the roles of motherhood, marriage, and career, women may face many challenges. In today's time, women contribute to the financial element of the home, as there are increasingly more dual earning families. Research suggests that by the year 2009, at least, 90 percent of parents with children under the age of 18 were employed, and at least 86 percent of those parents worked outside of the home (King, Botsford, & Huffman, 2009). As dual earning families are at a near 100 percent in terms of both parents working outside of the home, it is important to consider how balance plays a part in the roles of motherhood. Mothers are a key factor in the home environment and are said to possess a maternal caretaking instinct (Perez, & Torrens, 2009). Therefore, some mothers may have an internal desire to balance the roles of home life while taking care of their need to meet the financial needs of the home. According to Campbell Clark (2000), individuals shift from work-life domains to home-life domains

and the ability to do so successfully reduces conflict. In addition, individuals that struggle with balancing self-representations of the actual self, ideal self, and the ought-self also report difficulties and dissatisfaction if the self-representations are not in line with each other.

Locus of control presents the understanding that some women may be able to cope with multiple roles differently based on the locus of control as being internal or external. In which case, some women may feel that they have control over the events that occur in their lives such as having to work and maintain the household. While others may not feel that they have control and instead may feel that the events that occur in their lives are happenstance. Other supportive factors may play a role in how well a woman copes with multiple roles of motherhood; such as income size and supportive factors. Furthermore, factors like income size, spousal support, and the ability to afford childcare may act as a buffer and increase the tendency for self-reported work-life balance. This study aims to explore how locus of control, income size, and supportive factors influences a working mother's tendency to report having successful work-life balance.

Gaining more understanding as to why some women are able to cope with the roles of motherhood and achieve the feeling of work-life balance may help others to decrease the feeling of burnout, reduce work absences, decrease reporting of dissatisfaction, and increase supportive resources to support mothers that work. Therefore, the findings of this study may have the potential to be generalized to women of diverse backgrounds and populations, thereby influencing the lives of mothers on a

global level. Further details regarding working mothers, locus of control, income size, supportive factors, and work-life balance will be discussed in Chapter 2.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

A good mother is often defined as one who is a traditional stay-at-home mother (Giele, 2008; Johnston & Swanson, 2006). However, the number of paid married women with children under the age of 18 has dramatically increased over the past 50 years (Alger & Crowley, 2012). Women are now the second source of income for families (Omori & Smith, 2010). In addition to working outside of the home, women continue to devote more time to domestic duties and caring for the children when compared to men (Alger & Crowley, 2012).

For these reasons, there is an increased need to understand how some women are able to feel successful at maintaining work-life balance and others are not. The literature provides limited information within the recent 5 years on why some mothers are able to feel balanced and others are not. There is a gap in the literature regarding the impact of how locus of control, perceived supportive factors, and income size influence work-life balance for working mothers. Without the information from this study, women may increasingly find themselves working outside of the home struggling to balance family and personal lives, resulting in life dissatisfaction, career dissatisfaction, increased work absences, and emotional strain.

The purpose of this study was to expand the current literature by increasing the understanding of the impact of locus of control, supportive factors, and income size on work-life balance within the population of working mothers. I sought to explore if there

is a difference between mothers who identified as having external locus of control and those who report having internal locus of control and their feeling of having work-life balance. I also sought to understand the impact of supportive factors as well as income size on the working mother's attempt to achieve work-life balance.

In the United States, 69.8% of mothers represent the working force within a dual working household (Alger & Crowley, 2012). This suggests that over two-thirds of mothers are now working along with fathers to provide for the family. Women, however, continue to manage the majority of the household duties, as well engaging in most of the responsibilities of caring for the children (Alger & Crowley, 2012).

Hilbrecht, Shaw, Johnson, and Andrey (2008) suggests that to increase the feeling of work-life balance, some women decided to work from home, but found that their work and home life became meshed together (Hilbrecht, Shaw, Johnson, & Andrey, 2008). Balancing work and life is difficult, even when working from the convenience of your own home. Because mother's roles can sometimes be multilayered, some mothers struggle to balance caring for children, work, and leisure activities. Mothers working in telecommuting found relief in believing they had some control over their schedule (Hilbrecht, Shaw, Johnson, & Andrey, 2008). The difficulty in balancing work and life has negative implications for physical health, emotional and psychological well-being, and overall quality of life (Hilbrecht, Shaw, Johnson, & Andrey, 2008).

In this chapter, I will explore the literature and provide information regarding social learning theory and locus of control and family border theory as means to explore

the history of work-life balance. This chapter also included information on how locus of control affects working women in the workplace, and how supportive factors and locus of control can aid or act as a buffer to the working mother. I hope to expand on how locus of control influences the working mother in terms of work-life balance, income size, and supportive factors that may act as a buffer to the working mother. I obtained the literature from the libraries of Walden University and EBSCO and ProQuest databases. Some of the keywords used in the search were *locus of control*, *internal and external control*, *working mothers*, *work-life balance*, *supportive factors*, and *work-life conflict*. The literature review consisted of peer-reviewed journals published from year the 1966 to 2015.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

Sue Campbell Clark introduced work and family border theory in 2000 explaining that people make transitions daily, crossing borders between the world of work and the world of home life. People mold their lives to fit the needs of the environment. Work and family border theory and social learning theory was used to conceptualize the literature related to how work-life balance and personality traits such as locus of control affect the working mother. According to the combined theories, people do a number of things to adjust and balance to their lives.

Social learning theory suggests that people have personality characteristics that may act as a buffer to the feeling of being unbalanced or act as a contributor to feeling unbalanced (Rotter, 1966). Social learning theory's locus of control suggests that



personality characteristics such as internal and external locus of control may be helpful in making connections to stress that is attached to obtaining balance between work and family life. The social learning theory suggests that people are equipped with buffers and moderating attributes that may help to ease the perception of stress given by conflicting events that occur in life (Rotter, 1966). Therefore, this theory creates the basis for exploring the present study's research questions related to the possible differences between internal and external women and their report of achieving work-life balance. Also, using social learning theory, this study may add to the literature to address how factors such as income size, and perceived support also impact locus of control in a way that affects work-life balance (Rotter, 1966).

Work and family border theory speaks to an additional factor pertaining to the point at which people cross over to a different mind-frame to achieve balance (Campbell Clark, 2000). For example, when does the working mother switch between roles to become the mother, taking care of domestic duties, and how does she handle leaving the world of work to enter into the world of family? This theory provides an understanding of how individuals manage work and family borders in order to gain a sense of balance by crossing over to other spheres to avoid a stressful environment. This theory also provides an explanation of what it means to achieve work-life balance (Campbell Clark, 2000). By using this theory to understand balance in terms of work and family life, I was able to explore the research question relating to whether there is a difference between women who report internal or external locus of control and work-life balance. Also, this theory

provides the basis for understanding how balance is impacted by income size and perceived support.

### **Work and Family Border Theory**

Sue Campbell Clark (2000) developed work and family border theory out of the need to fill the gap between spillover theory and the compensation theory (Campbell Clark, 2000). The spillover theory suggests that regardless of physical and temporal boundaries existing between work and family, an emotional spillover expected. Therefore, if someone had a bad day at work, they would essentially carry this emotion over into the home. Similar to the spillover theory is the compensation theory, which explains that there is an inverse relationship between work and family spheres (Campbell Clark, 2000). This suggests that individuals compensate for lives they are dissatisfied with by using something that makes them feel satisfied. Therefore, if they are unhappy with their personal lives, they will try to create a work environment that makes them feel satisfied. Together, the spillover theory and the compensation theory did not fully explain how individuals were able to obtain balance between work and life. However, they were able to provide an understanding of how work and family life influence each other (Campbell Clark, 2000).

Researchers have applied the theories of work and family border theory to areas aiming to create balance in the lives of employees. In the field of organization and development, employers realize the importance of work and border theory, as well as the spillover theory and its impact on job satisfaction. Lambert, Kass, Piotrowski, and

Vodanovich (2006) suggests that when organizations implement family responsive human resource policies and practices, individuals can be helped to improve work and family balance (Lambert, Kass, Piotrowski, & Vodanovich, 2006).

Researchers, Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw (2003) explored the relationship between work-family balance and quality of life, using employees from the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003). Participants of this study included 232 men and 121 women with an average age of 35.2 years. Participants were married, in a long-term relationship, or had at least one child (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003). Participants held employment titles such as accounting managers, supervisors, staff accounts, and senior accountants who worked in auditing tax, national or international firms, as well as other specializations, and they had an average employment of 6 years and 4.4 years, respectively, in their positions (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003). Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw (2003) used work and family border theory along with other theories such as Marks and MacDermid's (1996) role balance theory as a way to explore the definition of work and family balance (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003; Marks, & MacDermid, 1996). In order to obtain balance, there needed to be three components: time balance, with equal amounts of time for work and family; involvement balance, meaning an equal amount of psychological involvement; and satisfaction, meaning an equal level of satisfaction with work and family (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003).

To explore time balance, Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, (2003) compared the amount of time spent at work and with family along with the involvement with work and family, and satisfaction with work and family. The researchers asked how much time was spent and divided by 52 to calculate the amount of time spent within a year. The hours spent with family, childcare activities, chores, and work was summed, and the balance coefficient was used with ranges of -1 to 1. The number 0 was used to represent balance signifying equal amounts of time spent at work and with family (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003).

Numbers pulling toward the positive side represented work imbalance, signifying that the participant spent more time at work. Numbers pulling to the negative side represented family imbalance signifying that individuals spent more time with family. Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, (2003) also used the same method to explore involvement assessing the personal value that was attached to the time spent at work or with family. Specifically, career involvement was assessed using items from the Job Involvement Scale by Lodahl and Kejner's using a 5-point Likert scale (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003; Lodahl, & Kejnar, 1965). Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw, also measured family involvement and career satisfaction Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, (2003). To measure family satisfaction Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw, (2003) a two-item instrument with five possible responses ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The questions required bipolar responses such as, "empty-full and disappointing-rewarding." Responses were on a 5-point scale in which 1 represented the negative phrase while 5 represented

the positive phrase. All items were then averaged to obtain the quality of life score (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Warmley, 1990).

Lastly, the study examined mediating factors, work-family conflict, and life stress. Work to family conflict was measured using four items and family to work conflict was measured using two items on a 5-point response scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Stress was measured using two items, also on a 5-point response scale (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003).

The results from this study indicated that work-family balance was related to quality of life only when there was limited time devoted to engaging in family and work roles or when they found these roles to be unsatisfactory. This indicated that due to the lack of time or involvement, the level of balance had no implications for the quality of life. This suggested that, in terms of quality of life, there was no significant difference between those who felt balanced and those who did not feel balanced. Results also found that there was a connection between family-work and quality of life with participants who were significantly more involved in family instead of work. Results indicated lower connection with quality of life when there was more involvement in work as opposed to being more involved in family. For example, a person who spends more time at work may present as being more stressed than they would if they were spending more time at home with family (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003). This study indicated that there is a connection between having difficulty balancing the worlds of work and family and this could have a negative impact on the quality of life. It indicated that there is a need to

understand how individuals obtain balance and why others are unable to. It has been documented that personality characteristics may affect the personal experience of stress. For example, in social learning theory, locus of control may contribute to some individuals feeling more stressed if they believe that events are not within control, and other individuals who believe they have control may feel less stressed.

### **Social Learning Theory**

Social learning theory was developed by Julian B. Rotter and provides an explanation of how reinforcements act to increase the chances of expectancy of a particular behavior reoccurring in the future (Rotter, 1966). Depending on an individuals' experiences of reinforcements could determine how they attribute reinforcements (Rotter, 1966). The concepts typically explored in research have been related to high-level learning skills, stating that individuals are not the same in terms of their generalized expectancies.

Generalized expectancy refers to an individual's general belief that things occur as a result of the individuals own doing; referring to having an internal locus of control or an external locus of control believing that things occur as a result of fate, luck, or powerful others (Rotter, 1966). As a result of the generalized expectancies, characteristic changes may occur, affecting the way an individual may respond to situations (Rotter, 1966). Therefore, individuals respond differently to situations, and expectancies are generalized (Rotter, 1966). Rotter (1966) developed social learning theory based on studies that were unable to provide a clearer understanding of how to determine

individual differences in behavior. Social learning theory proceeded to simplify the understanding of individual differences in behavior based on the expectancy reinforcement.

Historically the concept of believing in luck or fate has been explored since 1899 and was referred to as general passivity (Rotter, 1966). Rotter further developed the understanding by exploring how individuals were applicable to the concept of general passivity. Once applied to the individual, individuals having an internal locus of control appeared to have higher self-esteem and was able to make more predictable choices as opposed to individuals that identified as an having external locus of control.

### **Internal-External Control**

Social learning theory provides the understanding of the nature and effects of reinforcement (Rotter, 1966). In social learning theory, reinforcements act as a way to strengthen the expectancy of a certain behavior or event as it is followed by the expected reinforcement. This relationship of expectancy and reinforcement is dependent upon whether or not the person perceives that there is a casual relationship between his or her behavior and the reinforcement that follows (Rotter, 1966). Individuals who believe that events that occur are based on their own behavior are deemed to have internal locus of control. Rotter (1966) states that individuals who believe that events are contingent upon luck, chance, fate, or powerful others are believed to have external locus of control. The idea of generalized expectancy occurs when similar situations are perceived to be related (Rotter, 1966).

One of the first attempts to measure individual differences within generalized expectancy and within the field of psychology was initially started by Phares in 1957. In his study, Phares used a 13-item Likert scale to explore external attitudes and found that it was possible to predict behavior within individual differences. Phares also found that items geared towards external locus of control resulted in low prediction in comparison to individuals with external beliefs who tended to respond in similar patterns (Rotter, 1966). James further explored this study in a dissertation in 1957, which increased test items from 13 to 26. The study conducted by James, hypothesized that individuals who scored towards the external continuum would behave in similar ways in comparison to those who scored towards internal continuum who behaved more skillfully. James found that there was significance in task situation and behavior. Specifically, external subjects showed more unpredictability when compared to internal subjects (Rotter, 1966). Shepard Liverant, who was affiliated with Rotter and Seeman, broadened the test and expanded the test to include achievement, affection, general social and political attitudes, and control for social desirability. The new scale compared internal beliefs to external beliefs. With this test, it was observed that there were correlations between achievement and social desirability and the test revealed that there were connections between subscales and internal consistencies. As a result, items used to identify external versus internal control were left out of the test (Rotter, 1966). Validity was tested using a comparison to the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale on a large population. The test was also reworded eliminating items that highly correlated with Marlowe-Crowne



Social Desirability Scale providing a split so that the participants were required to endorse internal or external by 85%. The final version of the test, known as the I-E scale included 29-item force-choice test questions with six filler questions to provide some test ambiguity. The I-E scale was administered to 200 males and 200 females in a combined group setting. The results indicated that the test measured the subject's view of the world and their beliefs about how reinforcement is controlled (Rotter, 1966). I-E scale has been established in classifying individuals as either having internal or external locus of control. Locus of control has been associated with self-efficacy, stress, and illness (Roddenberry & Renk, 2010). Roddenberry and Renk (2010) also indicates that are some benefits to having external locus of control. For example, individuals who had higher levels of external locus of control also had higher levels of stress and lower levels of self-efficacy (Roddenberry & Renk, 2010). Therefore, locus of control was found to be a mediating factor between stress and illnesses (Roddenberry & Renk, 2010). Social learning theory, locus of control, was chosen for this reason; it provides the understanding that personality characteristics such as internal and external locus of control may be helpful in managing stress that is attached to obtaining balance between work and family life. Essentially, social learning theory suggests that people are equipped with buffers and moderating attributes that may help to ease the conflicting events that occur in life.

### **Locus of Control and Working Women**

Susan Bullers (1999) suggests that there is a relationship between working women and perceived control. In a study conducted by Susan Bullers (1999) exploring

the selection effects in the relationship between women's work/family status and perceived control, literature from past debates on perceived control and employment factors (Bullers, 1999). Bullers analyzed results from the National Longitudinal Study of Young Women's Labor Force Experience (NLSYW) from 1973 and 1988, data representing detailed information on health, socioeconomic demographics, and various attitudes of the female population. The sample included 3,508 women gathered from a previous longitudinal study conducted in 1968 who, at the time, were between 14 and 24 years old. Researchers selected a sample from the study in 1988, using women from 34 to 44 years old along with a perceived control sample from the 1970 and 1973 surveys. The study had 68% retention and researchers weighted the sample to increase the representation of the study as it pertains to the time of the current study. Bullers used perceived control, marital status, parental status, employment status, and job quality (Bullers, 1999). Bullers also used education and income as the control variables (Bullers, 1999).

Perceived control was measured using Rotter's External-Internal Scale described as a short-form scale used to identify individual beliefs of personal influence over their lives or beliefs that their lives are influenced by external forces (Bullers, 1999). The scale required that individuals choose between two statements that closely represented their beliefs. The questionnaire also required the participants to state whether they believed their response was close or slightly close to their beliefs. Items were scored by taking the sum and subtracting it by 4 points, then divided by 12, leaving the score range of 0 to 1

with 1 representing the higher perceived control (Bullers, 1999). To rectify data with missing information, consisting of three or four perceived controls, the missing items were thrown out from the study. Final respondents included 3,287 for work/family status, and 2,443 employed respondents for job quality analyses (Bullers, 1999).

Work/family status was explored and consisted of four variables: employment status, marital status, parental status, and combination status. The study included 2,334 married with live-in spouses, 12 non-married individuals, 65 widowed, 573 divorced, 169 separated, and 355 never married individuals. The study also included parents with children under the age of 18 years old, employed, and unemployed individuals. During the Work/Family analysis, each respondent was assigned to a combination category. The second part of the analysis included only employed women and divided the respondents into four combination categories.

Job quality explored the relationship between the job quality and perceived control. This selection included a total of 2,566 employed women, and variables included earnings, occupation, supervisory status, self-employment, and job satisfaction (Bullers, 1999). The study measured occupation by a prestige score from 2 to 93, representing lowest to highest occupational status. Earnings were measured by dollar amount, and supervisory status and self-employed status were coded with a 1 if the status applied and 0 if the status did not apply. Job satisfaction was also coded with 1 representing most satisfied and 0 for all other categories (Bullers, 1999). Researchers used standard variables to explore job quality with scores ranging from 0 to 5 and 5 being the highest.

Lastly, education and income variables were used as controls. Education was coded with numbers ranging from 0 to 18, representing the number of years in formal education. All reported income resources were used as the income and to compensate for missing income data, researchers used income values in order to refrain from excluding respondents (Bullers, 1999).

After combining all of the data, the results revealed that, when looking at work/family status and perceived control, there was an increase in perceived control as education and income increased. Increased control was also associated with marriage. The research showed that there was no significance when trying to predict early perceived control within the 1988 selection. Also, perceived control was not reduced after adding early perceived control to the study, enabling researchers to conclude that perceived control was not a stable personality characteristic as described in past studies. Results showed that perceived control does not speak to subsequent employment status for women (Bullers, 1999). Further, results indicated that early perceived control has some effect on subsequent job quality, but there is no effect when job quality factors are constant. Job quality continues to have an independent effect on perceived control within the 1988 selected data (Bullers, 1999). Family status was shown to have a direct effect on perceived control and job quality.

Ultimately, this study showed that work/family status has an effect on perceived control in women and that employment provides the most positive effect on women's perceived control. However, being a parent only or a single parent, being nonemployed,

or nonparent provides the most negative effect on perceived control in women (Bullers, 1999). The findings from this study support the literature that employment and marriage increase perceived control and having children typically decrease perceived control.

### **Locus of Control and Social Support as Moderators**

Noor (1995) demonstrates that being employed has a positive effect on perceived control and that having children is often associated with decreasing perceived control. However, this is not always the case, and perceived control may be impacted by perception of the role and the potential for gratification (Noor, 1995). Noor's study explored job-role quality and women's psychological well-being with locus of control and social support as moderators, the researcher used both positive and negative mental health symptoms as well as aspects of work-role experiences under the assumption that they could provide a more comprehensive view of the relationship between job-role quality and women's well-being.

Participants of Noor's study included 109 working women with full-time hours totaling at least 35 hours per week. Participants represented at least, one of the three categories: single, married or cohabiting without children, and married or cohabiting with children. The participants were gathered from their employers, which included, 78.2% from helping professions and 21.8% from skilled nonmanual occupations such as secretaries and clerical workers (Noor, 1995). The mean age of the participants was 33.24 years of age with a standard deviation of 8.29 years, and the educational mean was 14 years of education. Noor used self-reported questionnaires to assess demographic

information, role variables, locus of control, negativity affectivity, social support, and well-being. The demographic questionnaire gathered information on age, education, partner status, mother status, and number and ages of children. Information gathered from role variables was assessed using Barunch and Barrett's measures of role attributes. This measure used rewarding aspects of role to assess the positives of role experiences and distressing aspects of role to assess negative role experiences. The questionnaire included a 4-point scale to represent the level of rewards or distress, and participants were given three scores: a mean reward score, a mean concern score, and a mean balance score. According to the researchers, using the balance score allowed them to have both the negative and positive role-quality experiences. Using factor analysis, the researchers found two factors, Job Challenge and Job Demand, which appeared to be the common core of both negative and positive role-quality experience. Negative affectivity was measured using the neuroticism scale of the Eysenck's EPQ-R Short Scale by Eysenck, Eysenck, and Barrett (Noor, 1995). Researchers indicated that they used this scale to predict possible confounds between measures of job-role quality, locus of control, and well-being.

Psychological well-being was measured by Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI) by Argyle, Martin, and Crossland. This 29-item measure was used to assess positive affect. Researchers combined only subscales of Positive Cognitive and Positive Affect to create a happiness measure as well as to reduce the time needed to complete the questionnaire (Noor, 1995). The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) by Goldberg was used to

measure psychological distress. GHQ was a 12-item questionnaire consisting of questions assessing somatic and affective symptoms of distress. This scale was used for its validation against clinical ratings and psychometric foundation (Noor, 1995). Overall, both the OHI and GHI-12 scales used a 4-point rating scale describing how the participant felt over the past week, assessed by the happiness scale. Additionally, using the GHQ-12, participants were asked how they felt within the past six-weeks. Researchers also explored locus of control measured by Paulhus's Spheres of Control Scale (1983) and work-related social support, which was measured using a modified scale by House. The scale was used to measure emotional support as it relates to supervisors, co-workers/others at work, and spouses and friends/relatives. All of the respondents' scores were used to develop an index of total work support (Noor, 1995).

The results of the job-role quality and women's psychological well-being study demonstrated that when age and negative affectivity were controlled, perceived support was not buffered (Noor, 1995). This indicated that perceived support was a matter of personal sources as opposed to environmental sources. Noor's study also revealed that the inconsistency in the moderating effect of social support could be a result of the relationship between social support and the stressor. The findings indicated that, in this study, the relationship between social support and the stressor was not simplistic enough to demonstrate the most complex relationships between variables. Noor found that locus of control, combined with work support, helps to moderate job challenge as it relates to happiness; however, locus of control and work support do not independently act as

moderators (Noor, 1995). Support was significant for individuals who identified as being internal but was not significant for external individuals. The study also confirmed the predicted directional interaction in which job challenge and support were predicted to be associated with internal individuals. This was also true for person-environment as high work support, low work support, and low job challenge was associated with high levels of happiness; however, this was not the case for external individuals. Lastly, the GHQ-12 was unable to demonstrate any predictable relationships between locus of control and support in relation to happiness (Noor, 1999).

In another study exploring work-family conflict, locus of control, and women's well-being, Noor (2002) assessed 310 Malaysian employed women with children. In the study, women worked full-time jobs and 170 participants were from universities, 58 were from organizations, 56 were from schools, and 26 were from businesses. The women were grouped into two groups: academic-professional and secretarial-clerical. Women were between 19-59 years old; 230 women were Malays and 80 women were Chinese. The average years of education were 13.2 years for Malays and 12.6 years for Chinese, and socioeconomic statuses for both groups were similar. All women had children and 76.2% of the women had children living inside of the home (Noor, 2002).

In Noor's study (2002) participants were given the option to take the questionnaires in English or Malaysia, the questionnaires was interpreted by a psychologist and a linguist, and no items of the questionnaire were excluded from the study. Participants were given four questionnaires. The first questionnaire was the



Interaction Strain Scale by Parry and Warr (1980), a work-family conflict scale that measures any strain related to being a working mother who has to cope with work and domestic responsibilities (Parry, & Warr, 1980). The questionnaire included twelve self-reported items. The responses consisted of a 3-point Likert scale with questions such as, “the hours I work make it very difficult to look after the children” (Noor, 2002). The second questionnaire was the Spheres of Control Scale by Paulhus of 1983. This scale was used to measure locus of control and divided items into three separate spheres of behavior: personal efficacy, which was later omitted; interpersonal control; and social-political control. Each sphere consisted of 10 questions with responses rated on a 7-point scale. The third questionnaire explored well-being, the researcher using the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12). The last scale was the 5-item General Job Satisfaction Scale measuring the employees overall satisfaction and happiness with the job.

Participants were required to respond using a 7-point Likert scale rating items from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Control variables of the study were age, occupation, number of children at home, and annual income (Noor, 2002).

Results of this study indicated that locus of control was negatively correlated with work-family conflict and distress but was positively correlated with job satisfaction (Noor, 2002). Locus of control was significant in positively predicting job satisfaction, and work-family conflict negatively correlated with job satisfaction. Job satisfaction was predicted by the regression of both control and conflict occurring at the same time; also, when job satisfaction was regressed on the locus of control and work-family conflict

scale, the significance between control and job satisfaction was reduced while the relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction upheld significance (Noor, 2002). The study also revealed that individuals with internal locus of control and high work-family conflict did not report lower job satisfaction. However, locus of control was associated with distress, in which, women who reported internal locus of control reported lower distress (Noor, 2002). Work-family conflict was also significantly associated with distress and locus of control remained significant while work-family conflict was reduced.

The literature of Bullers, (1999), Noor (1995), and Noor (2002) demonstrates that working mother's carry challenges that affect work-life balance (Bullers, 1999; Noor, 1995; and Noor, 2002). Using research from a past study, Bullers selected data from the 1970, 1973, and 1988 gathered from the National Longitudinal Study (NLSYW) to explore women's association between work-family status and perceived control. The findings revealed that work and family status impacts perceived control. Also, perceived control is higher for employed women, married women, and single women who are either employed or unemployed. However, when the women had children, perceived control was lower compared to perceived control in women with no children (Bullers, 1999). Having children appeared to be the factor that contributed the most to being overwhelmed. This study did not find early perceived control to be a mediating factor between work-family status and perceived control. However, the study was able to demonstrate that women's perceived control was negatively affected when children were

involved, and mothers were associated with higher tendencies of conflict when paired with family and work (Noor, 1995; and Noor, 1999). Moreover, based on the literature, there appears to be a need to find some form of balance as higher tendencies of stress and loss of control lead to mental health symptoms such as depression and anxiety (Roddenberry & Renk, 2010).

Buffering effects have been shown to be a matter of personal sources as opposed to environmental sources (Noor, 1995). Locus of control plus work support has been shown to moderate the effects of job challenge; however, locus of control and work support independent of each other do not act as a moderator (Noor, 1995). Research also confirmed the prediction that internal individuals were affected by support and the effect of work support was not observed in external individuals. Additionally, research indicated that predicted, such as the directional interaction between job challenge and work support, high work support and high job challenge, low work support and low job challenge, and personal-environment fit model of stress, were associated with high levels of happiness and internal individuals (Noor, 1995). These findings suggest that there are both positive and negative relationships among mothers who identify as being internal and external in terms of work and family. However, the research does not provide recent information conducted with the past five years on how these individuals would respond to specific factors such as income size and supportive environments that go beyond the work environment. Specifically, the research does not show how having more or less income impacts the mother's ability to feel balanced. For example, some mother's ability

to afford childcare services may add to their perceived support, which may also affect work-life balance.

When looking at pathways in which locus of control can affect the relationship between work-family conflict and well-being, work-family conflict is significant in predicting negative job satisfaction and positive symptoms of distress. Work-family conflict was also associated with psychological distress and appeared to have influence over the women's general well-being (Noor, 1995). Also, research shows that there are direct and mediator effects on control within the relationship between work-family conflict and job satisfaction; specifically job satisfaction was mediated by perceptions of conflict (Noor, 1995). Moreover, the study demonstrated that locus of control has the potential to influence relationships, work-family conflict, and well-being. Locus of control as a personality characteristic also helps to shape perceptions of work-family conflict that either increase or reduce the perception of conflict (Noor, 2002). Furthermore, control has a positive relationship with job satisfaction, in which control helps to reduce perception of conflict. The study also demonstrated that while literature states that internal control is associated with positive outcomes, it could also have a negative outcome in some situations. The study showed that individuals identifying as being internal showed no difference in comparison to externals when it came to experiencing high work-family conflict. Researchers gathered that when there is a high intensity of conflict with internals, they essentially perform as externals in terms of job

satisfaction. Therefore, when situations were out of their control, internal individuals were no different from external individuals (Noor, 2002).

### **Summary and Conclusions**

Attempting to balance work and life can be challenging. Over the years, mothers have tried several things to balance the world of work and family, and, at times, balancing has been stressful. Although women are increasingly working more hours, they continue to perform domestic duties. People attempt to balance their worlds by crossing over from work spheres to family spheres in an attempt to obtain a more favorable structured life. To aid women in the workforce, employers have offered work support to assist women in obtaining balance; however, some individuals purposefully or unintentionally rely on their personality characteristics. According to Rotter (1966) Locus of control has been shown to affect work and life by influencing perceived control. Research suggests, however, that women with children have more difficulty trying to balance compared to women without children (Rotter, 1966). The inability to maintain balance may increase mental health concerns such as depression and anxiety. These types of concerns suggests that there is still a dearth in understanding how women can be helped to increase balance in the home and at work so that they may live more productive and less stressful lives.

Over the past 5 years, literature pertaining to working women and the combined topic of locus of control, supportive factors, and income size has been limited. As of now, the literature does not address direct information from women providing their self-

reported experience of how being a working mother be affected by personality characteristics such as locus of control, perceived support, and income size. The literature does provide information regarding income as a part of demographic information, but it does not explore whether income size acts a buffer to the working mother as it pertains to achieving work-life balance. Additionally, support has been reviewed by the literature but does not extend beyond support from work resources. The literature speaks of support as being offered by the employer (Noor, 1995; and Noor, 2002) as opposed to the support of spouses, family, and friends.

Therefore, the current study sought to explore if there were differences between internal and external working mothers as it relates to feeling successful at achieving work-life balance. This study explored if support factors, such as that coming from family, friends, or spouses, and income size make a difference in the women's tendency to report work-life balance. In doing so, this study helps to bridge the gaps in knowing if there are contributions or hindrances that may relate to work-life balance, and why some mothers and not others are able to report having a successful work-life balance.

This study utilized working mothers with children within a randomized cross sectional quantitative study to explore independent variables: mother's locus of control, income size, and perceived supportive factors, and the dependent variable: work-life balance. This study gathered and assessed demographic information to assess benefits or hindrances of perceived support and income size as it relates to working women and locus of control. In addition, Chapter 3 will discuss the detailed methods of measuring

how the issues of the working mother and her attempts to maintain balance are affected by locus of control, support, and income size.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to expand the current literature by increasing the understanding of the effect of locus of control, supportive factors, and income size on work-life balance within the population of working mothers. I sought to explore if there is a difference between mothers who identify as having external locus of control and those who report having internal locus of control and their feeling of having work-life balance. I also sought to understand the impact of supportive factors as well as income size on the working mother's attempt to achieve work-life balance. This chapter provides a detailed description of the research design and rationale, the method I used in the study, and threats to validity. This chapter brings together research related to the Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale, the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), and the Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale and explains its relevance to the present study.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

In this study, the independent variables were the mother's locus of control, income size, and perceived supportive factors. The dependent variable of this study was the report of work-life balance. The supportive factors included the woman's marital status, access to supportive resources, the perceived belief of being supported, geographical location of the supportive factor, and the ability to afford payment of supportive factors such as childcare. Resource constraints for this quantitative study



included funding internet survey sites required for the study. Time constraints included time spent to gather enough participants to increase the validity of the study and time spent to analyze the data.

Martins, Eddleston, and Veiga (2002) was able to achieve significant results using a cross-sectional quantitative design. For example, the researchers used a cross-sectional design to explore work-life balance, stress resource prospective, and organizational leadership. Martins, Eddleston, and Veiga (2002) found that stress with regard to work-life balance was reduced when there was support. The researchers also showed that the more a boss interfered with work for women, the more the interference could be seen as an issue. Specifically, the closer an individual was to a boss, a dynamic that reduces stress, the more responsibilities they could have, potentially increasing stress (Bernas and Major, 2000).

In another study using descriptive quantitative research, Tong and Wang (2006) measured work locus of control and its relationship to stress perception, related affections, attitudes, and behaviors from a domain perspective. The researchers used Likert scales to measure both work and general locus of control. General locus of control was measured by Tong and Wang's Chinese version of Rotter's I-E scale (Tong, & Wang, 2006). Work locus of control was measured by Spector's 16-item WLCS scale, and perceived stressors were measured by Evers, Fresem, and Cooper's Source of Pressure Scale. In addition to this, job satisfaction was measured by Evers et al.'s Job Satisfaction Scale (Tong, & Wang, 2006).

In similar research, assessing work cultures and work/family balance, students collected demographic information, such as family status, gender, working conditions, income, and age, to gather prequalifying information for a study. The demographic information collected helped to determine if the participants would be able to continue on with the study (Clark, 2001). This quantitative study used self-reported surveys as well as demographic information to obtain an understanding of the effect of locus of control, supportive factors, and income size on work-life balance within the population of working mothers. A cross-sectional design allowed groups of working mothers with internal and external locus of control to be observed and explored to determine the prevalence work-life balance, income size, and perceived support (Mann, 2003). This study used a *t test* statistical analysis to compare individuals that identified as having external locus of control with those that identified as internal locus of control and their report of work-life balance. This study used a correlational analysis to explore the relationship between perceived support and work-life balance. Additionally, a linear regression model was used to determine the extent to which perceived support, income size, and locus of control predicts work-life balance. I hoped that the results of this study could reveal any relationships between the variables, thereby providing further insight regarding locus of control, working mothers, work-life balance, income, and supportive factors.

## Methodology

Based on the National Vital Statistics Reports (2015), the average age ranges that women conceive their first child in the United States are between ages 15 and 45. The United States Census Bureau indicates that 62.1% of women between the ages of 15 to 50 who had given birth within the years of 2011 and 2012 were represented in the labor force. This percentage excludes the 2,021 and 211 women who were 15 years old (U.S Census Bureau, 2012).

Based on this, the target population of this study consisted of adult working women who are between the ages of 18 through 50 with dependent children living within the home. Participants were married or single, and the household income was used to determine income size. Using a G-power analysis based on a *t test* searching for mean differences between two independent means (two groups), and a priori: compute required sample size given alpha, power, and effect size and sample size of 128 was indicated. Specifically, the allocation ration of  $N_2/N_1$  was 1, The effect size .0.5 was used along with an error of probability of .05, and power (1- err prob) was 0.80. According to Kazdin, & Bass (1989) using a 0.80 is acceptable and can be used to determine differences between groups (Kazdin, & Bass, 1989). This provided output parameters of Noncentrality parameter 2.8284271, Critical t 1.9789706, degrees of freedom of 126, Group 1 sample size of 64, Group 2 sample size of 64, Total sample size of 128, and an actual power of 0.8014596.

Participants were randomly selected using internet recruitment and SurveyMonkey and Facebook. Participants will be recruited on Facebook pages and by word of mouth, as participants will be able to share the survey link provided on their personal pages if they desire to do so. I hoped that this type of random selection would allow for an increase in diversity of economic status, solicit various backgrounds, and beliefs, various ages and number of children as well as various degrees of supportive factors.

Participants from this study were provided written informed consent and were allowed to sign the document electronically. Participants were informed of the conditions of the study, time limits and hour constraints for the study, purpose of the study, as well as information regarding the instruments and instructions used for the study. Upon completion of the study, the participants were provided, in written form, a debrief of the study with an overview of the purpose of the study, as well as information regarding confidentiality. The debrief included a statement of appreciation for the completion of the study and each participant will be encouraged to share the study by clicking the “Share” hyperlink provided by Facebook, after which participants were not required to take the survey again, and no follow-ups were required. I downloaded the data and the results were analyzed using SPSS software.

### **Instrumentation and Operationalization of Constructs**

**Rotter’s Internal-External Control Scale.** The Rotter’s Internal-External Control Scale was used to assess locus of control. The scale was developed in 1966 by Julian B. Rotter

and was determined to be appropriate for assessing individual differences in a generalized expectancy for internal-external control. Rotter and M. Seeman set out to broaden the test and developed a forced-choice questionnaire, comparing external and internal beliefs. The results for internal consistency were stable but slightly high. According to Rotter (1966) researchers believed that the internal consistency results were due to the items not being arranged in a difficulty hierarchy but being samples of the large range of attitudes of a wide variety of situations. A split-half or matched-half may have reduced the internal consistency. Kuder-Richardson reliabilities were also limited due to the test being a force-choice scale. Test/retest reliability was 1 month at a time for 2 months. The first month resulted in consistent results and the second month the test was given without conditions and points dropped by one moving toward external locus of control. The test was given to various types of participants such as both male and female, prisoners, University students, individuals with an eighth-grade reading level, and twelfth-grade college applicants. There were no major differences; however, they found that inmates were more likely to indicate having external locus of control (Rotter, 1966).

Danes (1998) used the Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale to explore locus of control along with the roles of work and leisure and satisfaction with living (Danes, 1998). The study included a random sample of 1,509 participants from a state Agricultural Statistical Service, not including individuals who considered themselves hobby farmers. This study found that when it came to locus of control and work-life balance, locus of control, self-esteem, and age were significant in predicting role

involvement. Therefore, the younger the woman, the more the woman perceived the farm to be controlled by external forces (Danes, 1998). For this study, I hoped to clarify any difference between working mothers identifying as having internal or external locus of control.

**Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS).** The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) created by Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley (1988) was used to assess perceived social support. The MSPSS is a 12-item self-report measure that explores the social support of family, friends, and significant others on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from “very strongly disagree to very strongly agree” (Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, & Farley, 1988).

The test demonstrated strong validity for each subgroup and moderate construct validity. The test also had good internal and test-retest reliability. Specifically, the test internal reliability was .88 indicating good internal consistency. Test/retest was .85, meaning that the test’s reliability remained intact over time. The test was also valid in demonstrating an inverse relationship between perceived support and depressive symptoms and anxiety. The test showed validity among gender indicating that there were no significant differences within gender.

Respler-Herman, Mowder, Yasik, and Shamah’s (2012) study explored parenting beliefs, parental stress, and social support relationships, the MSPSS was used to examine parenting and social support. The study included 87 parents with children within preschool and elementary from private and small schools. This study used the MSPSS to

explore perceived social support from family, friends, and significant other and revealed that more parenting stress equaled less positive parenting perception and less parenting stress equaled more positive parenting perception. Also perceived social support did not act as a moderator between parenting stress and parenting perceptions (Respler-Herman, Mowder, Yasik, & Shamah, 2012). I hope that the current study will add to the literature by adding information on how perceived social support impacts working mothers as it relates to work-life balance.

**Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale.** The Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale was developed specifically for the study “Work-Based Resources as Moderators of the Relationship Between Work Hours and Satisfaction With Work-Family Balance” by Monique Valcour in 2007, to measure the level of satisfaction of work and family balance using a 5-item scale. Specific items were gathered from other studies such as the item “How successful do you feel in balancing your paid work and family life” from the U.S. General Social Survey (Valcour, 2007). Other items were developed based on previous research and were determined to be a good assessment of satisfaction with work and family balance (Valcour, 2007). Additionally, the test was independently assessed to determine how much the items fit the construct definition and were found to be appropriate (Valcour, 2007). This study was conducted using participants from a telecommunication firm and included 572 male and female participants. This study used the Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale to expand the literature to include working mothers and their report of work-life balance.

### **Threats to Validity**

In this study, the participants were working mothers. I excluded working women without children and working mothers who have nondependent children or children living outside of the home. I did not intend to generalize results beyond working women with dependent children living in the home. Not including both male and female participants of all backgrounds may have reduced the generalizability and may have minimized the understanding of the impact of locus of control, income size, and perceived support on work-life balance. Other potential threats to external validity included test reactivity in which a participant may alter their responses to avoid unwanted attention or feelings that may arise while taking the test. Therefore, questionnaires were switched around throughout the study to avoid having some participants becoming sensitive to test items that could result in poor responses to the test, thus reducing generalizability. Participants who failed to complete survey online as requested, who were not truthful and forthright on test items, or who had difficulty accessing the link to the survey may have affected external validity and may have reduced potential participant response. Other complications that could impact external validity included interruptions in internet service that could have prevented the completion of the survey, and failure to complete all test items. These potential threats could have impacted the test generalizability and could have also increased barriers that could have prevented participants from completing the test. Lack of accurate information impacts the validity



of the results and could have reduced the generalizability of the results to other working mothers.

I used volunteers to participate in the study and this could have resulted in potential self-report bias that could have also impacted the ability to generalize results to larger populations. For example, participants may have felt emotionally connected to the subject matter and this could have placed them at a higher risk of being biased. Potential threats to internal validity included confounds such as financial stability and the ability to pay for supportive factors such as domestic services, live-in nanny services, and the ability to live with additional supportive individuals. These confounds also included grandparents living within the home or a spouse that lives inside of the home. These types of confounds may have impacted scores as some may have had the ability to pay for supportive factors whereas others could not. Lastly, this study used the exclusion criterion to increase the validity and generalizability of the study by excluding participants that failed to meet the criterion of the study.

### **Ethical Procedures**

Prior to being this study, I establish approval by submitting the IRB application, which included copies of institutional permission, IRB approvals, and proposals. Participants were recruited using electronic postings on Facebook that permitted the ability to share the link to the study randomly. Possible ethical concerns included having participants omit information and falsify information that could have skewed the results of the study. Therefore, a discloser requesting that participants be honest and forthright

was added. Other ethical concerns related to not completing all of the surveys, resulted in participants being removed from the study. This may resulted in having to reopen the link to obtain the sample amount.

The data collected from this study was kept confidential to protect the integrity of the individuals. Data was stored on an encrypted flash drive and hardcopy documents were stored in a locking container that included information from the study and was only be assessable by the researcher.

### **Summary**

The purpose of this study was to expand the current literature by increasing the understanding of the effect of locus of control, supportive factors, and income size on work-life balance within the population of working mothers. In this study, I sought to explore if there is a difference between mothers who identify as having external locus of control and those who report having internal locus of control and their feeling of having work-life balance. This study sought to understand the impact of supportive factors as well as income size on the working mother's attempt to achieve work-life balance. This study used the following surveys: Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS), Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance Scale, and Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale to explore any differences between working women who identify as having internal or external locus of control and perceived social support and work-life balance. Using a cross-sectional quantitative design, this study gathered data using the social media site Facebook and survey site SurveyMonkey to randomly recruit participants and

gather data. The data was analyzed using SPSS software. Based on the G-Power analysis, this study sought to obtain 128 participants, and all information with information regarding the participant was kept confidentiality during the data collection process. Data from this study was assessable only by the researcher, and information within the study was locked away and stored on an encrypted flash drive to protect the integrity of the study and the participants. Chapter 4 will further explain the detail in the data collection process and results of the study.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to expand the literature by increasing the understanding of the effect of locus of control, supportive factors, and income size on work-life balance within the population of working mothers. In this study, I explored if there were any differences between mothers who identified as having an external locus of control and those who reported having an internal locus of control and their feeling of having work-life balance. I sought to understand the impact of supportive factors as well as income size on the working mother's attempt to achieve work-life balance. This chapter will cover detailed descriptions of the data collection that took place in this study. In this chapter I will also provide descriptive graphs and tables, as well as the results of the study.

I utilized three research questions to explore the impact of locus of control, perceived support, and income size had on work-life balance within the population of working mothers:

RQ1: Is the level of Work-Life Balance higher in women that identify as having an internal locus of control than women who identify as having an external locus of control? as measured by the Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale (Rotter, 1966), and the Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale (Valcour, 2007)?

*H<sub>01</sub>*: Women who identify having an internal locus of control will report higher levels

of Work-life balance than women that identify as having an external locus of control.

*H<sub>a1</sub>*: Women who identify as having an internal locus of control will not report higher levels of work-life balance than women that identify as having an external locus of control.

RQ2: Does perceived support have a positive correlation with work-life-balance as measured by the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Wilcox & Sherrie, 2010) and the Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale (Valcour, 2007)?

*H<sub>o2</sub>*: There is a positive correlation between perceived social support and work-life balance within working mothers.

*H<sub>a2</sub>*: There is not a positive correlation between perceived social support and work-life balance within working mothers.

RQ3: Are higher scores of income size, perceived support, and locus of control predictive of higher scores of work-life balance within working mothers as measured by the Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale (Rotter, 1966), the Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale (Valcour, 2007), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Wilcox & Sherrie, 2010), and income size demographic information?

*H<sub>o3</sub>*: Higher scores of income size, perceived support, and locus of control are predictive of higher scores of work-life balance within working mothers.

*H<sub>a3</sub>*: Higher scores of income size, perceived support, and locus of control are not predictive of higher scores of work-life balance within working mothers.

### **Data Collection**

Before beginning the data collection for this study, I received IRB approval, I created a SurveyMonkey account to develop an electronic version of the test items as well as to generate a sharable link to place on Facebook. Prior to publishing the survey, I made a second request to IRB to expand the demographic questionnaire to include a question about race and ethnicity. Once the study was approved, the survey was published and the link was placed on Facebook from July 13, 2016 to July 14, 2016. A specific Facebook account was also created to serve as the question hub for the study. I used the flyer approved by IRB to recruit participants and Facebook friends were able to take the survey and share the survey anonymously as they desired.

Based on G-power analysis 128 participants were required for the study. Within 24 hours of being posted, 228 responded to the study; however, 64 participants did not complete the survey and were excluded from the final results. Participants were excluded due to failure to complete the survey, opening the survey but not completing the consent form, or not meeting the requirement based on screening questions. The response rate for this study was 72 percent response rate in which 164 working mothers consented to participate in the study and indicated that they met all requirements of the study. Working mothers with dependent children under the age of 18 participated in the study. This study required that mothers worked outside of the home but did not specify full-time

or part-time employment. However, mothers were either married or single and were between the ages of 18-50 years old.

Demographic results of the study sample are shown in Table 1. The majority of the participants were between the ages of 28 and 47. Just over 70% of the sample reported African-American ethnicity while approximately 18.9% reported Caucasian ethnicity. Approximately 40% of the participants reported income levels between \$40,000 and \$100,000 per year and 67% of the participants reported being married. Mothers working between 20 and 60 hours per week represented 98% of the population and the average number of children for each individual was two. ( $M = 2.05$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ).

Table 1

*Demographic Results*

	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Age Group</b>		
18 to 22	3	1.8
23 to 27	12	7.3
28 to 32	24	14.6
33 to 37	37	22.6
38 to 42	34	20.7
43 to 47	40	24.4
48 to 50	14	8.5
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	54	32.9
Married	110	67.1
<b>Income Level</b>		
Under 10,000	3	1.8
10,000 to 19,999	3	1.8

Table 1 continued

20,000 to 29,999	5	3.0
30,000 to 39,999	15	9.1
40,000 to 49,999	24	14.6
50,000 to 74,999	21	12.8
75,000 to 99,999	24	14.6
100,000 to 150,000	38	23.2
Over 150,000	31	18.9

**Ethnicity**

African-American	116	70.7
Caucasian	31	18.9
Hispanic	9	5.5
Asian	3	1.8
Hawaiian-Pacific Islander	2	1.2
Native American	3	1.8

*Note.* Demographic information for working mothers with children under the age of 18.

Descriptive statistics for the MSPSS and the work and family balance satisfaction scale stratified by locus of control are shown in Table 2. Scores for the work and family balance satisfaction scale met the assumption of normality ( $z = 1.93$ ) while scores for the MSPSS did not ( $z = 5.79$ ). While the sample yielded mothers representing diverse populations, the vast majority of the participants were African-American. However, the participation responses did provide broad representation in terms of age, time spent at work, number of children, marital status, childcare, and age of children. This study was representative of working mothers with dependent children under the age of 18 years old. Mothers indicated that they worked outside of the home in which 1.22 % worked 0-20



hours per week, 33.54 worked 20-40 hours weekly, 64.63% worked 40-60 hours, and .61% stated working 60 hours a more weekly. The target population of this study was mothers between the ages of 18 to 50 years of age and who worked outside of the home with dependent children under the age of 18 years old. Therefore, based on demographic results the study was able to obtain representation from the desired population.

Table 1

*Descriptive Statistics for MSPSS and Satisfaction With Work and Family Balance Scales for Locus of Control Groupings.*

	Internal Locus of Control	External Locus of Control	Total
<b>MSPSS</b>	(M = 5.69, SD = 1.20)	(M = 5.49, SD = 1.08)	(M = 5.59, SD = 1.19)
<b>Satisfaction</b>	(M = 16.72, SD = 5.27)	(M = 16.26, SD = 4.17)	(M = 16.48, SD = 4.72)

## Results

**Research Question 1.** Is the level of work-life balance higher in women who identify as having an internal locus of control than women who identify as having an external locus of control, as measured by the Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale (Rotter, 1966), and the Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale (Valcour, 2007)?

*H<sub>01</sub>:* Women who identify having an internal locus of control will report higher levels of Work-life balance than women that identify as having an external locus of control.

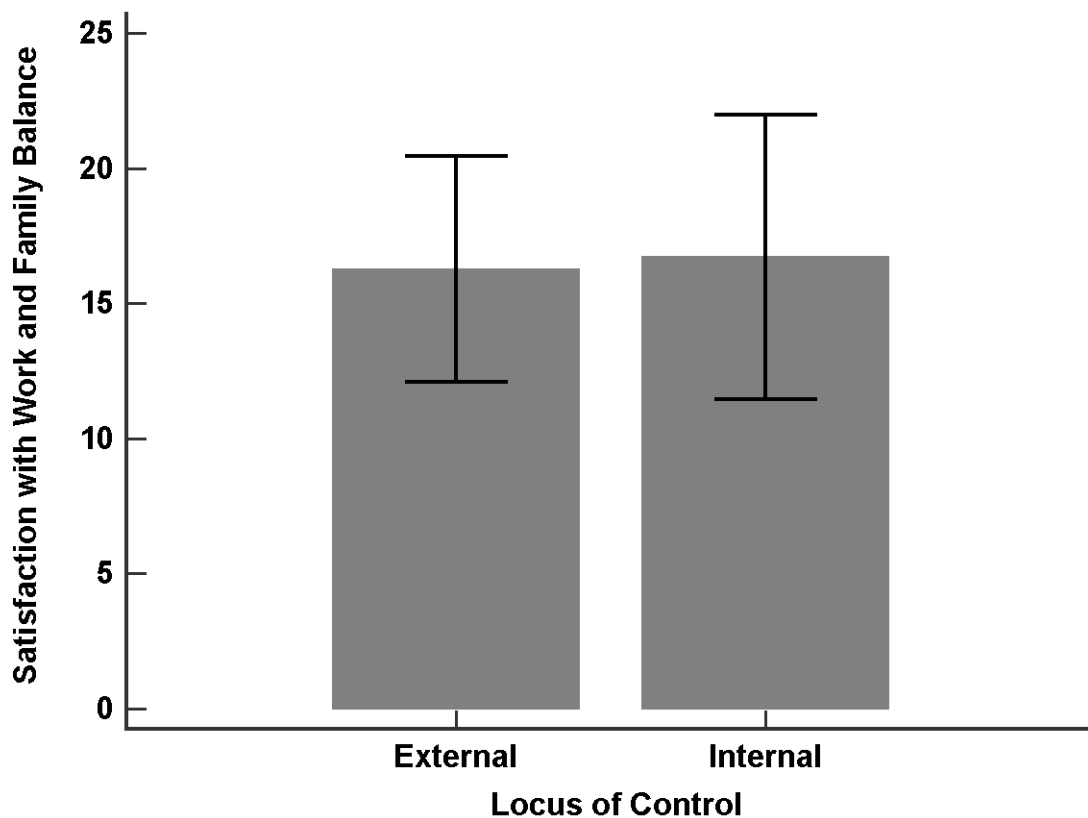
*H<sub>a1</sub>*: Women who identify as having an internal locus of control will not report higher levels of work-life balance than women that identify as having an external locus of control.

Prior to the analyses being carried out, raw scores for the Rotter, MSPSS, and the Satisfaction with Work and Life Balance Scale were tested to determine whether or not their distributions met the assumption of normality. Using the skewness values and their standard errors for each of the variables a z-score was derived ( $z = \text{skewness value} / \text{standard error of skewness value}$ ) which was then compared against the value of 3.29. Values lower than 3.29 indicate that the data for a variable do not deviate significantly from a normal distribution, while larger values indicate significant deviance from normality (Kim, 2012).

To test the first hypothesis, the sample was divided into two groups based on their Rotter scores to create the internal and external locus of control groups. Currently there is no standardized cutoff to determine external versus internal locus of control, however the general interpretation scheme is that higher scores indicate an external locus of control and lower scores indicate an internal locus of control (Rotter, 1966). For the current investigation, the median Rotter score for the sample (median = 11) was used as the cutoff to classify individuals' locus of control (internal: <11, external: ≥11). A two-sample *t test* was used to determine whether satisfaction with work and family balance scores were significantly different between the internal and external locus of control groups. Results of the two-sample *t test* yielded no significant differences in satisfaction

with work and family balance between those with internal and external locus of control,  $t = -0.62$  (148.58),  $p = 0.54$  (Figure 1, Table 3).

**Figure 1.** Locus of Control and Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance



*Figure 1.* Differences in Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance between individuals classified as having External or Internal Locus of Control. Tops of bars represent the mean and error bars represent the standard deviation for each group.

Table 2

*Descriptive Data for External Versus Internal Locus of Control Comparison on Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance.*

	<i>N</i>	Mean	Standard Deviation
<b>External Locus of Control</b>	85	16.26	4.17
<b>Internal Locus of Control</b>	79	16.72	5.27

*Note.* Descriptive data for external vs. internal locus of control compared to satisfaction with work and family balance.

**Research Question 2.** Does perceived support have a positive correlation with work-life-balance as measured by the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Wilcox & Sherrie, 2010) and the Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale (Valcour, 2007)?

$H_{o2}$ : There is a positive correlation between perceived social support and work-life balance within working mothers.

$H_{a2}$ : There is not a positive correlation between perceived social support and work-life balance within working mothers.

To test the second hypothesis, a Spearman rank correlation was used to assess the linear association between perceived support and work and family balance satisfaction.

The use of the Spearman correlation was justified given that work and life balance satisfaction scores deviated significantly from the normal distribution. Spearman

correlation analysis yielded a positive, but weak correlation between perceived support and satisfaction with work and family balance ( $\rho = 0.35$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ; Figure 1).

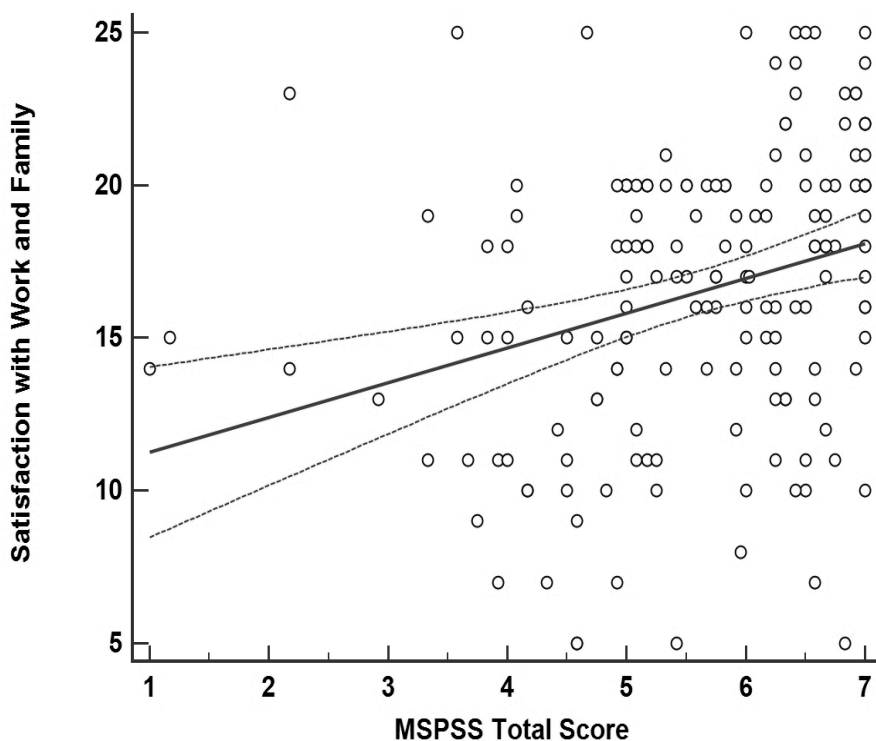
**Research Question 3.** Are higher scores of income size, perceived support, and locus of control predictive of higher scores of work-life balance within working mothers as measured by the Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale (Rotter, 1966), the Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance Scale (Valcour, 2007), the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (Wilcox & Sherrie, 2010), and income size demographic information?

*H<sub>o3</sub>*: Higher scores of income size, perceived support, and locus of control are predictive of higher scores of work-life balance within working mothers.

*H<sub>a3</sub>*: Higher scores of income size, perceived support, and locus of control are not predictive of higher scores of work-life balance within working mothers.

Hypothesis 3 was tested by using a multiple linear regression model to determine whether Rotter scores, perceived support, and income level were predictive of work and family balance satisfaction. Age and marital status were also included in the model to account for their impact on work and life balance satisfaction. The results of this Linear regression analyses found no significant association between individuals' Rotter scores and satisfaction with work and life balance after adjusting for age, marital status, income size, and perceived support ( $b = -0.08$ ,  $t(158)$ ,  $p = 0.48$ ). Within this model, perceived support did show a significant positive association with work and family balance satisfaction ( $b = 1.14$ ,  $t(158)$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ; see Figure 2).

**Figure 2.** Perceived Support and Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance



*Figure 2.* Scatterplot and Regression Line for the Association between Perceived Support and Satisfaction with Work and Family Balance. The middle line represents the regression line and outer lines represent the 95% confidence band for the regression line.

### Summary

This study included 164 participants who met requirements, consented to the study, and who completed all test items. Participants included working mothers with dependent children under the age of 18-years-old living inside of the home. Participants were either married or single; however, majority of participants within this study were

married women between the ages of 28-47 years of age with an average of two children living in the home. Results indicated that there was no difference between women that identified as having external locus of control and those identifying as having internal locus of control when compared with satisfaction of work-life balance. Information from this study revealed that there was a weak correlation between perceived support and satisfaction with work-life balance. Additionally, there was no significant difference between Rotter scores and satisfaction with work and life balance, however there was a significant positive association with perceived support and family balance satisfaction.

Chapter 5 will further provide a detailed interpretation of the findings, limitations of the study, as well as recommendations for further research.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to address the gap in the literature by demonstrating how locus of control impacts supportive factors and income size on work-life balance within the population of working mothers. In this study I explored differences between mothers who identified as having an external locus of control and those who reported having an internal locus of control and their feeling of having work-life balance. Lastly, I sought to understand the impact of supportive factors as well as income size on the working mother's attempt to achieve work-life balance. This chapter will provide an interpretation of the findings, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for future studies.

Using a cross-sectional quantitative design, I examined groups of working mothers who identified as having an internal locus of control and those that identified as having an external locus of control to explore the impact of perceived social support, and income size on work-life balance. King, Botsford, and Huffman (2009) suggest that an unhealthy work-life-balance could lead to life dissatisfaction as well as decreased mental health (King, Botsford, & Huffman, 2009). I conducted this study as a way to help provide some understanding in how some women are able to obtain the feeling of having work-life balance and others are not. The knowledge from this study could create avenues for mothers to feel supported within themselves, at work, and in society.



I found that there was no significant difference between women who identified as having external locus of control or those with internal locus of control in terms of their satisfaction with work-life balance. There was a slight correlation suggesting that perceived support is associated with satisfaction with work and family balance. I found that there was a significant association between perceived support and work-life balance; however, locus of control was not predictive of satisfaction with work -life balance.

### **Interpretations of the Findings**

I used three research questions to explore the impact of locus of control, perceived support, and income size on work-life balance within the population of working mothers. To analyze differences in satisfaction with work-life balance within mothers who identified as having internal or external locus of control, I used a two-sample *t test*. Researchers such as; King, Botsford, and Huffman, (2009); and Roddenberry, and Renk, (2010) suggests that individuals who view life events as based on luck, fate, or chance are typically more prone to stress and they are at higher risk of having mental health issues (King, Botsford, & Huffman, 2009; Roddenberry, & Renk, 2010). However, in the present study, the results revealed that there was no significant difference between internal and external locus of control and satisfaction with work and life balance. This means that mothers who view life events as being within personal control are at the same risk of feeling overwhelmed and stressed as mothers who view life events as being based on chance.

Rotters (1966), suggested that the identification of locus of control is helpful in determining outcomes that can be generalized over a series of events (Rotters, 1966). Ideally the ability to make predictions could determine which group of mothers would be more prone to stress. However, I was unable to confirm the findings presented in the literature provided by Rotters in 1966. I was also unable to confirm Roddenberry & Renk's (2010) indicating that identifying personality characteristics such as those in found in external and internal locus of control can aid in stress management. This study does not prove association between locus of control and work-life balance among working mothers. Additionally, Noor (2002) indicated that locus of control was significant in predicting job satisfaction and that work and family balance was negatively correlated with job satisfaction (Noor, 2002). In the current study, I was unable to confirm the research that suggests locus of control is able to predict job satisfaction.

The second research question asked if perceived support has a positive correlation with work-life balance. I was able to accept the null hypothesis and demonstrated a positive association between perceived support with work and family balance satisfaction. Therefore, this study extends to the Noor's findings and suggests that when mothers perceive themselves to be supported they also report increased satisfaction with work and family life.

Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw (2003) showed that having an imbalance between work and life reduces quality of life and may be indicative of a need to understand how to increase balance (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003). According to Greenhaus, Collins,

and Shaw (2003) that there were three components to having a balanced life. Specifically, an individual needs to have time to balance work and family with equal amounts of time and have psychological involvement balanced with satisfaction (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2003). The current study extends the research by showing that when mothers perceive that they have support, they also reported feeling increased balance between work and life. While the Greenhaus et. al.'s (2003) study did not use the term "perceived support," such as the current study, the basis of feeling satisfied is based on perception. Therefore, the current study confirms that in order obtain balance the presence of satisfaction is important. Also the study shows that family involvement can aid in helping individuals feel balanced.

When looking at job quality and perceived control, the more supportive factors there are, the more individuals showed an increase in perceived control (Bullers, 1999). In the same way, this study demonstrated a weak, but significant correlation between perceived support and work-life balance, thus confirming the literature. This suggests that one way to reduce the feeling of being unable to achieve work-life balance could be to seek outside support. It also suggests that seeking support could be just as helpful for those that identify as having internal locus of control and those identifying as having an external locus of control. The type of support may vary and depend on the need. The third research question examined if higher scores of income size, perceived support, and locus of control could predict higher scores of work-life balance. I hypothesized that higher scores of income size, perceived support, and locus of control were predictive of

higher scores on work-life balance within working mothers. The results of this study revealed that having internal locus of control or external locus of control does not predict work-life balance. However, perceived support did show a significant association with work-life balance. These results confirmed Noor's (1999) suggesting that individuals who feel supported report higher instances of happiness and less stress (Noor, 1999).

When looking at the theories of work and family border theory and the results of this study, like suggested in the theory, it appears that individuals may move through their daily routine of work and life seeking balance. This may be demonstrated by the indication that perceived support helps to support the feeling of having work-life balance in comparison to those individuals that feel less supported. The tendency to seek support may be an act of seeking balance. Granted, the type of support may vary depending on the need (Noor, 1995; Noor, 1999). For example, if financial support is needed seeking monetary support may help to increase the feeling of work-life balance. Seeking adequate childcare may provide an increase of balance to a mother who worries if her child is taken care of while she is at work. Del Boca, Locatelli, and Vuri (2005) suggest that mothers who worked in dual earning households found use for paid childcare. Mothers who found childcare rates to be high or unaffordable were prone to seek childcare from a family member or a more flexible source (Del Boca, Locatelli, & Vuri, 2005). This confirms the current findings suggesting that seeking support may increase the feeling of balance and suggests a need for the mother to perceive the support as being supportive.

Social learning theory, general belief that outcomes are contingent upon one's own doing (Rotter, 1966; Sprung, & Jex, 2012). Specifically, reinforcements act to increase the chances of expectancy of a particular behavior or pattern that becomes internal locus of control and external locus of control (Rotter, 1966). Research indicates that an individual would be able to predict behavior as a result of determining if the individual identifies as having internal or external locus of control (Rotter, 1966). However, I could not accept the first null hypothesis suggesting a significant difference between mothers that identified as having internal locus of control and those with external locus of control. Therefore, locus of control does not predict a mother's ability to obtain work-life balance. These findings suggest that in trying to help mothers find balance between work and life, there are no tests needed to determine if a mother has internal or external locus of control. Instead, one would need to help the mother figure out how they could feel more supported therefore; increasing the mother's perceived support.

### **Potential Explanations for Data**

One of the major goals of this study was to clarify any differences between mothers who identified as having an having internal locus of control and those that identified as having an external locus of control. Bulger, Matthews, & Huffman (2007) and King, Botsford, and Huffman (2009) suggests that individuals who identify as having an internal locus of control are more likely to feel in control over life events whereas individuals with an external locus of control are viewed as more prone to stress

and feeling out of control (Bulger, Matthews, & Huffman, 2007; King, Botsford, & Huffman, 2009). The first hypothesis explored the difference between internal and external loci of control and satisfaction with work and family balance. I could not reject the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis was accepted. During the analysis of this study, the Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale was modified to establish a cut of score to separate high scorers from low scorers. . Individuals who fell below a score of 11 were considered low scores and high scores were above 11. This adjustment excludes scores that fell into the ambiguous middle score. As a result, participants who may have fallen into what could have been a middle score were forced to be a high or low score. This eliminated ability to have two extremes, such as having a true high or low score. Out of 164 total participants, there were 79 individuals who identified as having internal locus of control and 85 that identified as having external locus of control. This leaves a difference of 9 participants, which may not have been a strong enough difference to provide significant results.

Creating high and low categories may also have impacted the results that occurred in the second hypothesis. While the null hypothesis was accepted demonstrating that there is a correlation between perceived support and work-life balance, the correlation was weak. This suggests that, while there could be several reasons that the correlation was weak, there is enough to look further into how perceived support correlates with work-life balance. Finally, the third test explored whether income size, perceived support, and locus of control were predictive of work-life balance. After adjusting for

income size, perceived support and locus of control the results were not significant in predicting based on income size and locus of control. However, perceived support was significant. This supports the association revealed in the second hypothesis indicating that perceived support is impact work-life balance.

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was limited in several ways. One limitation was that this study did not provide qualitative data and did not reveal specifically what mothers do to maintain the feeling of work-life balance. The results did not provide detailed explanations about the type of support that the mothers felt and where this support was received; such as from friends or family. In this study, I only considered how locus of control impacts work-life balance and did not incorporate other characteristics such as personality type, self-concept, or self-efficacy. Therefore, the information from this study did not provide details on what makes a person achieve work-life balance based on how they feel about themselves or their personal abilities. Other confounds included mothers with older children who are able to help with household duties or childcare responsibilities that may act as buffers increasing work-life balance. The amount of time a mother spent at home or at work may impact work-life balance. While the majority of mothers indicated working between 40 to 60 hours weekly at 64.65%, mothers were not required to provide an exact amount of hours indicating full-time or Part-time employment status. A possible limitation could have occurred as a result of grouping the amount of time spent at work into ranges. Therefore, this may have prevented a clear

view of how many hours' mothers spent away at work. Additional information could have been received if the study included how hours spent away from home and from work such as time used for religious activities, volunteering, or other leisure and recreational activities. As a result, the information from this study provided information based on time spent away from home while at work. Additional confounds included mothers who may have religious backgrounds or spiritual practices that may act as buffers in reducing the stress associated with imbalance.

Another limitation of this study was that the study did not include children that were old enough to take care of themselves and did not require childcare. This could have increased self-reporting bias forcing mothers to choose test items like "childcare," or "family member," when asked who takes care of the children when in fact the child is old enough to take care of themselves. Therefore, forced choice responses and Likert scales force participants to respond to items only on the test. Other self-reporting biasness may have occurred if participants responded emotionally to test items or if they wanted to present themselves in a more positive or negative way. Additionally, I did not include mothers over the age of 50 and therefore could not incorporate those working mothers who have dependents under the age of 18. Also, as a result of the sample being 70% African American this study did not examine differences between ethnicities and therefore the study is unable to determine if ethnicity can somehow impact work-life balance. The disproportionality within the sample population could be a result of sampling bias resulting from Facebook friends sharing the study with their friends who



may also represent the same ethnicity. This resulted in the inability to explore ethnic differences and generalize results to other groups. Lastly, due to the Rotter not having a standardized cutoff score, this study utilized the score 11 as the cutoff score to determine high and low scores and did not include individuals that may have been closer to a middle score. Instead borderline scores were forced into either high or low scores. This is a limitation because it does not provide a clear view of the differences that may exist between internal and external locus of control. These limitations affect the generalizability of the test and will be invalid to populations outside of working mothers that are married or single with dependent children under the age to 18 years old living inside of the home.

### **Recommendations**

The findings of this study help to expand the literature to include the impact of supportive factors such as income size, perceived support, and locus of control on work-life balance within the population of working mothers. However, there were limitations within the study and there were several questions left unanswered. As a result of this and based on the limited results of this study, I recommend that future research examine other characteristics such as personality type, how self-concept and self-efficacy can impact work-life balance, and include men in the study. Specifically, I focused on working women with children, but did not include how fathers are impacted by work-life balance. Therefore a future research question could be “How does perceived support, and income size-impact work-life balance within the population of fathers with dependent children

under the age of 18?” This question would expand the current research by clarifying any differences between genders, how support is viewed among men, and the impact of income size in comparison to women.

In this study utilized the location of locus of control as a way to determine predictable personality characteristics. The results revealed that there was no significant difference between internal and external locus of control; however, exploring other personality characteristics could provide essential information into determining if there are differences in the report of work-life balance based on personality types. Therefore, a future research questions are “Does personality impact work-life balance and does personality type make a difference?” Additionally, I did not explore cultural influence and the impact that culture has on work-life balance. The information gathered from this question would expand the literature by providing information regarding cultural strengthens, differences, and it would provide more insight into cultural barriers to stressful events. Another research question stemming from the results of this study include, “How does religious beliefs, cultural practices, and educational background influence work-life balance amount working mothers?” Lastly, the use of qualitative methods could also provide additional information and reveal specifics about what has helped to increase work-life balance for working individuals.

The information from this study demonstrated that there is a significant correlation between perceived support and work-life balance. The results of this study suggest that perceive support is predictive of reported work-life balance within the

population of working mothers. The information from this study supports Alger, & Crowley and (2012), and Omori, and Smith (2010) research suggesting that mothers are increasingly working outside of the home while maintaining the domestic roles within the home (Alger, & Crowley, 2012; Omori, & Smith, 2010). In this study, I identified a need to support mothers in their efforts to find balance while working outside of the home in efforts to prevent life dissatisfaction, mental health risk, and issues related to employment. This study has also expanded the literature in ways to increase work-life balance by increasing perceived support based on the mother's specific need. Therefore, the information from this study provided the groundwork needed to understand if differences such as ethnicity, cultural beliefs and practices act as buffers to women attempting to find work-life balance. The information from this study has created a pathway to understand that women are in need of support and suggests the possibility that men may require support as well. I hoped that the information from this study helps to close the gap in the literature by addressing how locus of control, perceived support, income size impacts work-life balance within working mothers. I also hoped that the limitations of this study contribute to the broadening of all that is understood about work-life and working mothers.

### **Positive Social Change Implications**

Aside from adding to the literature by providing information of how supportive factors such as income size, perceived support, and locus of control impacts work-life balance among the population of working women; The information from this study also

sheds light on how to help mothers. Specifically, it reveals that providing support is helpful in reducing stress and increasing work-life balance among working mothers. Also, learning to seek support is equally effective in getting needs met in attempt to increase work-life balance. The information from this study may contribute to the fields of Psychology, Social Psychology, and Industrial Organizational Psychology and provide a new perspective on what is helpful to increase balance for some working mothers that are increasingly working out side of the home. As a result, this would help to reduce absenteeism from work and could establish universality and normalize the working mother experience. Therefore, by increasing universality, mothers may feel a reduction in isolation within the settings of work and home life, which could bring about more insight into program development. Supporting mothers' efforts to find balance may benefit the family by reducing stress, reducing psychological and physical health symptoms, life dissatisfaction, and work related stress. Additionally, the information from this study has the potential to support working mothers by providing program development geared to help mothers balance their roles between life and work demands. Specifically, programs could focus on ways to help families increase the quality of their relationships and lives by teaching clients how to maintain balance and setting boundaries. These types of services could be provided within individual, group, and family counseling. Additionally, the findings of this study could help to develop a screening tool to help define the supportive need in efforts to increase work-life balance.

## Conclusions

The percentage of mothers who work outside of the home with children under the age of 18 has grown from 17% to 70.8% from 1948 to 2015. This growth suggests that times have not only changed, but some mothers are increasingly challenged with having to find balance between the roles of being a mother and a woman in the workforce. For some, this may be found with ease and others may find the pathway to balance difficult. The inability to handle the stressors associated with imbalance could impact more than just a state of mind. King, Botsford, and Huffman (2009) showed that without balance individuals are at risk of increased mental health concerns, increased absenteeism from work, life dissatisfaction, poor relationships, and health risks (King, Botsford, & Huffman, 2009). In addition, the inability to maintain domestic roles along with the responsibilities of work, may impact a mother in a way that increases self-dissatisfaction and career dissatisfaction. (King, Botsford, & Huffman, 2009).

Research is limited in providing information on what it takes for mothers to feel that they have obtained work-life balance, despite the increase of mothers working outside of the home. In this study I attempt to provide clarity while combing the literature to better understand how some mothers are able to achieve work-life balance and others are not. The purpose of this study was to fill the gap in the literature by examining the impact of supportive factors such as income size, perceived support, and locus of control on work-life balance within the population of working mothers. While the results indicated that there was no significant difference between mothers that identified with

having internal locus of control and those with external locus of control, perceived support was significant. There was a slight positive correlation between perceived support and satisfaction with work and life balance. Results also demonstrated that after adjusting for income size, age, marital status, and perceived support there was no significant difference between the reporting of internal and external locus of control. However, the information from this study showed that perceived support was significantly predictive of work-life balance. The information from this study demonstrated that the key to supporting mothers during the challenge of find working life-balance was to provide them with support that they perceived to be supportive. This information is important because creates opportunities for program development geared towards supporting mothers become better at balancing the roles and work and life. The information from this study also suggests that program development could be useful in treating mothers who have been at risk of mental health concerns, life dissatisfaction, and issues within the family. I recommend that the information from this study be used to treat mothers by helping them identify the type of support that would best fit their needs; therefore, providing a clearer assessment and treatment plan for the professional and the consumer. The information from this study may also help to identify appropriate recourses for mothers struggling to find balance between work and life and may create ways to access needs within a timely manner and increase continuity of care for the mother or consumer. For example, while the identification of internal or external locus of control may not be needed, a screening tool be developed to quickly identify

supportive factors and needs for support that would be perceived as helpful to the mother. The information from this study impacts social change by increasing the awareness around the need to support mothers who may struggle to find balance between work and life. Therefore, as a result may be at risk for mental health concerns, dissatisfaction, or other risks. This study uncovers societal expectations requiring mothers to increase work outside of the home while maintaining domestic duties. The information from this study also helps to reduce absenteeism, and establishes universality and normalization within the working mother experience. As a result of increasing universality, mothers may feel less isolated within work settings and home life, which could reduce stress and increase the quality of relationships within the home. Additional implications of this study include the reduction of psychological and physical health risks, life dissatisfaction, and work-related stress.

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## Appendix A: Demographic Information Survey

### Demographic Information

**1. Are you a working mother with children living in your home?**

- Yes. If "Yes," please move on to the next question.
- No. If "No," please discontinue at this time.

**2. What is your age?**

- 18-22
- 23-27
- 28-32
- 33-37
- 38-42
- 43-47
- 48-50

**Race (Ethnicity) (Check one or more boxes).**

- American Indian or Alaska Native
- Hispanic or Latino
- Black or African American
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- White
- Other

**3. What is your marital status?**

- Married
- Single

**4. How many children do you have?**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10

**5. How old are your children? Check all that apply.**

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-18

**7. How many hours a week do you work?**

- 0-20
- 20-40
- 40-60
- 60 or more

**8. What is your yearly household income size?**

- Under \$10,000
- \$10,000-\$19,999
- \$20,000-29,999
- \$30,000-\$39,999
- \$40,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$74,999
- \$75,000-99,999
- \$100,000-\$150,000
- Over \$150,000

**9. Do you spend money on Childcare Services?**

- Yes
- No

**10. Who takes care of your children when you are at work?**

- The parent
- The grandparent
- A family member
- Childcare service
- Live in Nanny, or nanny service

**11. Do you feel supported?**

- Yes
- No

**12. Is the location of your support within...**

- 0-5 miles
- 5-10 miles
- 10-20 miles
- 20-30 miles
- More than 30 miles away



## Appendix B: Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale



### Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale

Note: Test name created by PsycTESTS

**PsycTESTS Citation:**

Rotter, J. B. (1966). Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: 10.1037/101671-000

Test Shown: Full

**Test Format:**

Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale is a forced-choice test.

**Source:**

Rotter, Julian B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. *Psychological Monographs: General and Applied*, 80(1), 1-28.

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doi: 10.1037/t01671-000

### Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale

#### Items

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- 1 a. Children get into trouble because their parents punish them too much.  
b. The trouble with most children nowadays is that their parents are too easy with them.
- 2 a. Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck.  
b. People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make.
- 3 a. One of the major reasons why we have wars is because people don't take enough interest in politics.  
b. There will always be wars, no matter how hard people try to prevent them.
- 4 a. In the long run people get the respect they deserve in this world.  
b. Unfortunately, an individual's worth often passes unrecognized no matter how hard he tries.
- 5 a. The idea that teachers are unfair to students is nonsense.  
b. Most students don't realize the extent to which their grades are influenced by accidental happenings.
- 6 a. Without the right breaks one cannot be an effective leader.  
b. Capable people who fail to become leaders have not taken advantage of their opportunities.
- 7 a. No matter how hard you try some people just don't like you.  
b. People who can't get others to like them don't understand how to get along with others.
- 8 a. Heredity plays the major role in determining one's personality.  
b. It is one's experiences in life which determine what they're like.
- 9 a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.  
b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.
- 10 a. In the case of the well prepared student there is rarely if ever such a thing as an unfair test.  
b. Many times exam questions tend to be so unrelated to course work that studying is really useless.
- 11 a. Becoming a success is a matter of hard work, luck has little or nothing to do with it.  
b. Getting a good job depends mainly on being in the right place at the right time.
- 12 a. The average citizen can have an influence in government decisions.  
b. This world is run by the few people in power, and there is not much the little guy can do about it.



doi: 10.1037/t01671-000

### Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale

#### Items

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- 13 a. When I make plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.  
b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.
- 14 a. There are certain people who are just no good.  
b. There is some good in everybody.
- 15 a. In my case getting what I want has little or nothing to do with luck.  
b. Many times we might just as well decide what to do by flipping a coin.
- 16 a. Who gets to be the boss often depends on who was lucky enough to be in the right place first.  
b. Getting people to do the right thing depends upon ability, luck has little or nothing to do with it.
- 17 a. As far as world affairs are concerned, most of us are the victims of forces we can neither understand, nor control.  
b. By taking an active part in political and social affairs the people can control world events.
- 18 a. Most people don't realize the extent to which their lives are controlled by accidental happenings.  
b. There really is no such thing as "luck."
- 19 a. One should always be willing to admit mistakes.  
b. It is usually best to cover up one's mistakes.
- 20 a. It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you.  
b. How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are.
- 21 a. In the long run the bad things that happen to us are balanced by the good ones.  
b. Most misfortunes are the result of lack of ability, ignorance, laziness, or all three.
- 22 a. With enough effort we can wipe out political corruption.  
b. It is difficult for people to have much control over the things politicians do in office.
- 23 a. Sometimes I can't understand how teachers arrive at the grades they give.  
b. There is a direct connection between how hard I study and the grades I get.
- 24 a. A good leader expects people to decide for themselves what they should do.  
b. A good leader makes it clear to everybody what their jobs are.

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doi: 10.1037/t01671-000

### Rotter's Internal-External Control Scale

#### Items

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- 25 a. Many times I feel that I have little influence over the things that happen to me.  
b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life.
- 26 a. People are lonely because they don't try to be friendly.  
b. There's not much use in trying too hard to please people, if they like you, they like you.
- 27 a. There is too much emphasis on athletics in high school.  
b. Team sports are an excellent way to build character.
- 28 a. What happens to me is my own doing.  
b. Sometimes I feel that I don't have enough control over the direction my life is taking.
- 29 a. Most of the time I can't understand why politicians behave the way they do.  
b. In the long run the people are responsible for bad government on a national as well as on a local level.
- 

*Note.* Score is number of underlined items.

*Instructions:* This is a questionnaire to find out the way in which certain important events in our society affect different people. Each item consists of a pair of alternatives lettered a or b. Please select the one statement of each pair (*and only one*) which you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you're concerned. Be sure to select the one you actually believe to be more true rather than the one you think you should choose or the one you would like to be true. This is a measure of personal belief: obviously there are no right or wrong answers. Your answers to the items on this inventory are to be recorded on a separate answer sheet which is loosely inserted in the booklet. REMOVE THIS ANSWER SHEET NOW, Print your name and any other information requested by the examiner on the answer sheet, then finish reading these directions. Do not open the booklet until you are told to do so. Please answer these items *carefully* but do not spend too much time on any one item. Be sure to find an answer for every choice. Find the number of the item on the answer sheet and black-in the space under the number 1 or 2 which you choose as the statement more true. In some instances you may discover that you believe both statements or neither one. In such cases, be sure to select the one you more strongly believe to be the case as far as you're concerned. Also try to respond to each item *independently* when making your choice; do not be influenced by your previous choices.

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## Appendix C: Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support



### Multidimensional Survey of Perceived Social Support Version Attached: Full Test

**PsycTESTS Citation:**

Zimet, G. D., Dahlem, N. W., Zimet, S. G., & Farley, G. K. (1988). Multidimensional Survey of Perceived Social Support [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/102380-000>

**Instrument Type:**  
Survey

**Test Format:**  
7-point, Likert-type, ranging from very strongly disagree (1) to very strongly agree (7).

**Source:**  
Supplied by author.

**Original Publication:**  
Zimet, Gregory D., Dahlem, Nancy W., Zimet, Sara G., & Farley, Gordon K. (1988). The Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, Vol 52(1), 30-41. doi: 10.1207/s15327752jpa5201\_2

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## Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support

Instructions: We are interested in how you feel about the following statements. Read each statement carefully. Indicate how you feel about each statement.

Circle the "1" if you **Very Strongly Disagree**  
 Circle the "2" if you **Strongly Disagree**  
 Circle the "3" if you **Mildly Disagree**  
 Circle the "4" if you are **Neutral**  
 Circle the "5" if you **Mildly Agree**  
 Circle the "6" if you **Strongly Agree**  
 Circle the "7" if you **Very Strongly Agree**

	Very Strongly Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mildly Disagree	Neutral	Mildly Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
1. There is a special person who is around when I am in need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. There is a special person with whom I can share joys and sorrows.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My family really tries to help me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. I get the emotional help & support I need from my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I have a special person who is a real source of comfort to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My friends really try to help me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I can count on my friends when things go wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I can talk about my problems with my family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. There is a special person in my life who cares about my feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. My family is willing to help me make decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I can talk about my problems with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Scale Reference:

Zimet GD, Dahlem NW, Zimet SG, Farley GK. The Multidimensional Scale of Percieved Social Support. *Journal of Personality Assessment* 1988;52:30-41.

Scoring Information:

To calculate mean scores:

Significant Other Subscale: Sum across items 1, 2, 5, & 10, then divide by 4.

Family Subscale: Sum across items 3, 4, 8, & 11, then divide by 4.

Friends Subscale: Sum across items 6, 7, 9, & 12, then divide by 4.

Total Scale: Sum across all 12 items, then divide by 12.

## Appendix D: Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance Scale



### Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance Scale

Note: Test name created by PsycTESTS

PsycTESTS Citation:  
Valcour, M. (2007). Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance Scale [Database record]. Retrieved from PsycTESTS. doi:  
10.1037/108744-000

Test Shown: Full

Test Format:  
Respondents are asked to indicate, on a scale from (1) very dissatisfied to (5) very satisfied, their level of satisfaction with each of the measure's five items.

Source:  
Valcour, Monique. (2007). Work-based resources as moderators of the relationship between work hours and satisfaction with work-family balance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol 92(6), 1512-1523. doi:  
10.1037/0021-9010.92.6.1512

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doi: 10.1037/t08744-000

#### Satisfaction with Work-Family Balance Scale

##### Items

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Respondents were asked to indicate, on a scale from (1) *very dissatisfied* to (5) *very satisfied*, their level of satisfaction with the following five items:

The way you divide your time between work and personal or family life

The way you divide your attention between work and home

How well your work life and your personal or family life fit together

Your ability to balance the needs of your job with those of your personal or family life

The opportunity you have to perform your job well and yet be able to perform home-related duties adequately