Impacting Extension Workers’ Effectiveness: Understanding Organizational Justice

Linda M. Kutilek, Ph.D., PHR
Associate Professor; Leader, Human Resources
Ohio State University Extension
2120 Fyffe Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210
(614) 292-2968; (614) 292-5100 FAX
kutilek.1@osu.edu

Abstract:
The Extension worker’s job, and thus position responsibilities, is very complex. The Extension worker is often described as being “on the job” 24 hours a day, in their efforts to meet the developmental and educational needs of their clientele, address concerns of frustrated or struggling volunteers, and to serve as a source of information and support during times of community crisis. Many work and live in the community they support, and they are seen as a source of information, no matter the setting. These job complexities blur the lines between work, personal, and family time.

Within Extension, few studies had been conducted to identify employees’ abilities to utilize organizational policy to address concerns of work/life balance, and none were found that dealt with distributive, procedural, or interactional justice as they affected work/life policy implementation. OSU Extension has led the nation in identifying issues of work/life balance for Extension employees, and has focused on providing support and guidance to its’ own employees as they work to address their work/life balance priorities.

This study:
• identified progress toward improving employee ability to address issues of work/life balance over the past five years;
• identified issues of organizational justice which may be affecting progress;
• identified or isolated groups within the system that may not receive the full range of benefits from the program;
• created a body of research on issues of organizational justice within Extension systems; and,
• identified needs for further research, policy, or organizational change.

Within organizational institutions, justice can be seen as a virtue. Increasingly more focus has been placed toward the study of the effects of just decisions in organizational settings and on the factors that lead workers to view organizational actions and policies as
The author has conducted research to gain insight into the relationships of organizational justice and work/life policies for Ohio State University Extension personnel.

The Extension worker’s job, and thus position responsibilities, is very complex. The Extension worker is often described as being “on the job” 24 hours a day, in their efforts to meet the developmental and educational needs of their clientele, address concerns of frustrated or struggling volunteers, and to serve as a source of information and support during times of community crisis. Many work and live in the community they support, and they are seen as a source of information, no matter the setting. One survey respondent noted difficulty with “not being able to leave my work – at work. (It’s) always on my mind, people call (me) at home to ask questions”. These job complexities blur the lines between work, personal, and family time.

Extension staff reflect similar struggles of society in general. Today’s society struggles to maintain an enjoyable, low-stress lifestyle while balancing the demands of work and family. Many households have two wage earners, and they work to cooperatively address the needs of family life. Extension employees face the same challenges of increasing work demands, family responsibilities, and the struggle of trying to address personal growth and development.

In the past, there has been little research conducted to assess the impacts of balancing work and family life on the Extension employee. Several studies have been conducted with exiting employees from the Extension system which found that reasons for leaving included too many hours, demands of job affecting family, and lack of ability/resources to balance work/life demands (Kutilek, 2000; Clark, 1992; Rousan, 1994). Recently, a national study was conducted to identify the concerns of Extension employees regarding these issues; more than 65% of respondents indicated concern for the ability to create a balance between their work, personal and family lives (Clutter, 1998).

Five years after the implementation of OSU Extension’s Balancing Work/Life Guidelines, the organization was interested in identifying the current concerns facing staff in their attempts to balance the demands of work, family and personal life. This researcher was interested in determining how employees viewed the implementation of the guidelines from an organizational justice perspective. In an effort to identify the impact of the work/life guidelines in Ohio, the instrument developed by Clutter (1998) and administered nationally was used. The study focused on indicators of effective work/life balance with variables which identified primary work and family issues and perceived effectiveness of Extension workers in managing multiple roles on the job, at home, and with family and friends. The results of this study were compared to Clutter’s (1998) national study to describe the degree of congruence between the two studies, and to discover if the work/life guidelines had influenced OSU Extension employees. Findings from the Ohio study also described the current concerns of employees as they attempted to implement the guidelines for addressing work/life balance.

In addition to the Clutter (1998) instrument, Rahim’s (et al., 2000) Organizational Justice Instrument was used to examine the degree to which organizational justice issues impacted the OSU Extension work/life initiative. The Organizational Justice Inventory (OJI) was comprised of 23 items that measured distributive, procedural, and interactional justice. The distributive justice items focused on organizational rewards, which are a type of organizational outcome that is particularly important to employees. The procedural justice items focused on the organization’s formal decision-making procedures. The remaining
items in the instrument addressed interactional justice, with a focus on the immediate supervisor, the person likely to be the decision maker that employees interact with most and who may be seen as having a strong impact on the organizational outcomes they receive (Rahim et al., 2000). For comparison purposes, the OJI instrument was adjusted from a 7-point Likert scale to a 5-point Likert scale for this study to correspond with the scale of the Clutter (1998) instrument.

The instrument used to conduct this study consisted of 82 questions, 57 of which were Likert-style, 11 open-ended, and 14 directed-choice questions. The 57 Likert-style questions had values which ranged from 1 through 5, and were defined as: 1='not at all', 2='to a slight extent', 3='to a moderate extent', 4='to a great extent', and 5='to a very great extent'. This study identified whether issues of distributive, procedural, and interpersonal justice have had an effect with the implementation of work/life policy. Data from the two instruments helped to determine the current status of OSU Extension employees’ efforts to address work/life balance, and provided the basis for future decision-making regarding the development and implementation of organizational guidelines and policies.

Methodology

This was a descriptive, correlational study and is confirmatory research. As a non-experimental study, there was no manipulation of the variables. The two variables were organizational justice, which included the three components of distributive, procedural, and interactional justice; and, demographic characteristics of the employees (position, gender, job location, marital/family status and years of experience). The dependent variable was the concerns, issues, and practices related to balancing work/life as reflected in the current environment of Ohio State University Extension.

The target population included all of the employees of the Ohio State University Extension system having full-time, 100% Extension appointments. Personnel were divided into three job title categories: Program Staff, Support Staff, and Administration, and were located throughout the state in six geographical areas: five districts and campus. The sample method was random sampling, ensuring that every member of the population had an equal chance of being selected. A random, stratified sample was drawn which reflected proportionally the number of personnel in the three categories.

The objectives of the study were organized in terms of their relevance to the organization’s leaders and employees. The objectives of the study were to:

- identify if OSU Extension employees perceive a difference in work/life issues five years after the implementation of work/life guidelines than was expressed by their peers nationally;
- identify if employee’s position within the organization relate to their perception of organizational justice (ie: professional staff perceive access to work/life benefits differently than support staff);
- describe the relationship between employees’ perceptions of organizational justice and their ability to address work/life issues; and,
- describe relationships between the perceived issues of organizational justice, work/life balance, and the demographic characteristics of personnel (ie: single employees and employees without children will perceive organizational justice differently than those with children).
Data Analysis

A principal component analysis was conducted through use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program to reduce the data and to identify emerging factors. The resulting factors were compared to the factors identified in the Clutter (1998) and Rahim (et al., 2000) findings as confirmatory research. Alpha for the statistical procedures was set at .05; items were retained in these factors if their factor loadings were greater than .50.

Seven factors were identified which addressed work/life issues; four were previously identified in the Clutter (1998) study. Three factors were identified which addressed issues of organizational justice; the same three factors had been identified by Rahim (et al., 2000).

Four factors were identified in the Clutter (1998) study that addressed the issues of work/life and the concerns perceived by Extension program professionals. Program staff in the Ohio study also identified the similar factors, resulting in the Extent of Concerns factor, Communication About Concerns, Organizational Issues, and Financial Issues factors. All factors were analyzed for all staff categories, and the four factors identified in the Clutter study (1998) were also analyzed for program staff in this study for use in comparison in Objective 1. Mean scores were calculated for each identified factor.

Factor analysis of items 25 through 34 on the program staff respondents’ survey resulted in five items (questions #25, 28, 29, 31, 32) loading on the Extent of Concerns factor for program staff, and five items (#27, 28, 29, 31, 32) for all-staff. Two items (questions # 33, 34) loaded on the Communication About Concerns factor for program staff and three items (#33, 34, 46) for all-staff.

A factor analysis of the remaining fifteen questions resulted in the identification of three additional factors that were not identified in the Clutter (1998) study. These factors were utilized in objectives 3 and 4, and represent the all-staff respondents. Eight items (questions # 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 13, 26) loaded on the Actions of Administration factor, three items (#15, 16, 14) on the Actions of Supervisor factor.

Three factors were identified in the Rahim (et al., 2000) study that addressed the issues of organizational justice. Employees in the Ohio study also identified the similar factors, resulting in the Procedural Justice, Interactional Justice, and Distributive Justice factors. Factor analysis of items 4 through 8 on the respondents’ surveys resulted in all five items loading on the Procedural Justice factor for all-staff. Items 17 through 24 resulted in eight items that loaded on the Interactional Justice factor, and nine items (questions #35-38, 40-44) loaded on the Distributive Justice factor.

Data analysis was conducted through the use of descriptive statistics by percentages and frequencies, t-test for independent groups, analysis of variance, and the use of Pearson’s product moment correlation to describe relationships by association terminology. Organizational justice and work/life factors were also correlated with the variables marital status, position, and district. These three nominal demographic variables were analyzed by the use of eta coefficients. The variable, gender, was a point-biserial coefficient as it was correlated with the organizational justice and work/life factors.

Research Findings
Objective 1: to identify if OSU Extension employees perceive a difference in work/life issues five years after the implementation of work/life guidelines than was expressed by their peers nationally.

With only two exceptions, the OSU Extension staff would appear currently to mirror the national sample studied in 1997. This gives cause to wonder what impact the implementation of the OSU Extension guidelines for work/life balance in 1996 had on Extension employees. Although the Ohio sample is assumed to have mirrored the national sample in 1997 (based on the use of random sampling), the national sample results may have changed (increased or decreased) since 1997 while Ohio has not.

It is also possible that Ohio, by placing additional focus on issues of work/life balance through the process of developing and implementing work/life guidelines, increased employees’ awareness but did not provide enough guidance in the area of achieving balance. One Ohio employee stated, “OSU (Extension) does a decent job of emphasizing the importance of balancing work and family and they provide enough services. I just don’t take advantage of any of it because pressure from the county is too great, and the way Extension is structured does not encourage time for our selves. General resentment from (the) community towards “state employers” makes you feel guilty to take a day off, or even run an errand after work hours”. Comments such as this supported the theory that additional assistance may be needed for employees to successfully achieve work/life balance.

Finally, Clutter (1998) recommended three specifications that Extension could undertake to help improve the work/life situation among Extension employees. They were:

1) Support flex time,
2) Clarify expectations or reduce workloads, and
3) Encourage supervisors to accept, support, and encourage balancing work/life for those who need it.

The same three recommendations were the most frequently mentioned recommendations gleaned from the qualitative analysis of Ohio respondents. It was interesting to note that ‘opportunities for flex time’ is the most often suggested solution recommended. “Flextime is one policy that has been adopted by organizations as an equal opportunity life-balancing policy; anyone can apply for the flextime, not just those with families” (Grandey, 2001, p. 155).

Clutter (1998) also found that respondents in the National study had a strong concern with a lack of written guidelines and policies. Such is not the case in Ohio, where written guidelines do exist. However, the literature notes that the mere presence of guidelines of policies will not insure fair, uniform or equitable implementation.

Objective 2: to identify if employees’ position within the organization related to their perception of organizational justice.

No statistically significant difference was found between employee positions regarding responses to factors of organizational justice. All three groups (support, program, and administrative staff) indicated that they felt, to a moderate extent, satisfaction with work/life benefits, which represented the Distributive Justice factor. This was reflected through mean scores of 2.8 – 3.0 on a 5 pt. scale.

The three groups were also consistent in their indications of satisfaction to a great extent with personal treatment and interactions with supervisors, which related to Interactional Justice. The mean for this factor ranged from 3.8 for administrative network members to 4.1 for support staff.
The greatest difference between positions was noted in reference to Procedural Justice. Program and support staff recognized that formal organizational procedures existed to ensure open communication and un-biased decisions to only a moderate extent (mean of 3.0), and members of the Administrative Network recognized the existence of these procedures to only a slight extent (mean of 2.4). The lack of clear procedures and processes will limit the impact of the work/life guidelines, while the presence of consistent procedures will help to strengthen their effectiveness. Research has found that clear, consistent procedures enable employees to more easily accept unpopular outcomes. Tyler (1987) notes that an individual will accept a less than desirable distributive outcome if procedural justice is followed. Scandura (1999) adds that negative reactions to a low pay raise would be offset if consistent performance appraisal measures and procedures were applied in creating the raise. Finally, Lind and Tyler (1988) point out that procedural fairness seems to permit leaders to make unpopular decisions.

The slight to moderate extent of satisfaction or understanding of organizational procedures and distribution outcomes may indicate a need to reflect upon and clarify organizational commitment to consistency in actions. One respondent referred to “…unclear expectations and mixed messages from co-workers, supervisors, and administration”. Another respondent suggested there were “…inconsistent rules in the workplace”. It was interesting to note that members of the Administrative Network reflected consistently lower means on all three factors of organizational justice. This finding may indicate that local administrators were implementing structures for program and support staff that were not reflective of actual statewide procedures. Or, it may be a reflection of the nature of the administrative position and role within the organization. Another possible explanation is that the work/life guidelines were not seen as providing consistent benefits to all individuals, or as policy with specific direction to follow.

The higher mean scores of respondents in all three positions on the factor of Interactional Justice indicated that employees felt they were treated with respect and dignity in their interactions with supervisors. This was confirmed by Berrio’s (1999) research in which he found the culture for the OSU Extension organization was a clan culture; one that was committed to close interactions and supportive actions of co-workers and clientele. Additionally, the finding was reassuring because higher mean scores with regard to interactions with the supervisor would work to off-set negative feelings about other organization justice issues. Rahim & Magner (1999) summarized by noting that satisfaction with one factor of organizational justice will help to offset lower levels of satisfaction with other factors.

Objective 3: to describe the relationship between employees’ perceptions of organizational justice and their issues related to work/life balance.

Statistically significant differences were observed on seven dimensions of distributive justice, six dimensions of procedural justice, and six dimensions of interactional justice (Table 4.a). Five of the 19 had coefficients greater than .50 indicating substantial to very strong positive association. They were:

- Distributive Justice – Actions of Administration, Actions of Supervisor
- Interactional Justice – Actions of Supervisor
- Procedural Justice – Actions of Administration, Actions of Supervisor

The work/life factor, Actions of Supervisor, had a substantial to very strong association with all three factors of Organizational Justice. Employees with high quality
relationships with their supervisors viewed the workplace as more fair than their peers with low quality relationships (Manogran et al., 1994). Scandura (1999) noted that studies suggest the interactions between the employee and supervisor are significantly related to perceptions of organizational justice. The elements of the Actions of Supervisor work/life factor reflected Interactional Justice, but were associated with satisfaction of benefits received and understanding of organizational procedures (Distributive Justice, Procedural Justice) as well.

Supervisory support is a major element for the success of work/life guidelines. From the employees’ point of view, supervisors must be consistent with the organization’s goals. In most cases, supervisors receive requests for work/life benefits and have the power to decide if the request can be granted. As Grandey (2001) noted, supervisors may be considering different justice rules even though operating under the same organizational guidelines. When this happens, the inevitable result is lack of uniformity and presumably equity throughout the system.

The work/life factor, Actions of Administration, reflected positive recognition of administration’s understanding of issues of work/life balance. This factor had a substantial to moderate level of association with all three factors of Organizational Justice. The more employees recognized administration’s understanding and commitment to meeting needs of work/life balance, the greater the satisfaction with current benefits (Distributive Justice), with procedural practices within the organization (Procedural Justice), and with treatment received by the supervisor (Interactional Justice). This provided additional emphasis to the role of Administration in setting the tone and modeling the expectations for efforts to balance work, family and personal lives.

Four comparisons between work/life issues and organizational justice were moderately, positively related (coefficient .30 to .49). They were:

Distributive Justice – Communication About Concerns
Interactional Justice – Actions of Administration, Actions of Co-Workers
Procedural Justice – Actions of Co-Workers

The work/life factor, Actions of Co-Workers, reflected the employees’ recognition of peers’ abilities to discuss and achieve work/life balance. This factor was moderately associated with Interactional Justice and Procedural Justice, both factors that related to interpersonal behaviors and organizational procedures. As employees’ awareness of peers’ ability to achieve balance increased, they expressed more satisfaction with these two organizational justice factors.

The work/life factor Communication About Concerns reflected the employee’s impressions about the appropriateness to talk about work/life issues with co-workers and supervisors within the workplace. This factor was moderately associated with Distributive Justice, as satisfaction with communication increased, so did satisfaction with available benefits.

Four comparisons between work/life issues and organizational justice were moderately, negatively related. They were:

Distributive Justice – Organizational Issues, Financial Issues
Interactional Justice – Organizational Issues
Procedural Justice – Organizational Issues

The factor Organizational Issues reflected employees’ concerns about administrations’ lack of support of achieving work/life balance, inconsistencies in attitude,
and lack of role models. As concern for this factor increased there was, with moderate association, decline in satisfaction with all three factors of Organizational Justice. Young (1999) suggested that unless decision-makers are clear about their own and others’ guiding principles, employees will continue to disagree with each other about what is, and is not, fair. The findings of this study indicate that OSU Extension was not unique in this regard of Organizational Justice.

Although statistically significant, a low or negligible association was identified with the factors of Organizational Justice and seven work/life factors. They included:

- Distributive Justice – Extent of Concerns
- Interactional Justice – Extent of Concerns, Financial Issues, Communication About Concerns
- Procedural Justice – Extent of Concerns, Financial Issues, Communication About Concerns

The work/life factor, Financial Issues, identified respondents concerns about inadequate wages and costs of personal needs (child care, elder care) limiting their ability to balance work/family/personal roles. It is understandable that this factor was negatively associated with all three factors of Organizational Justice at moderate and low levels. This result indicated that respondents in limiting financial situations were associated with feelings that the benefits package was inadequate and inappropriately distributed (Distributive Justice), with less clarity about organizational procedures (Procedural Justice), and less than positive interaction experiences with supervisors (Interactional Justice). This suggested that employees with financial concerns and high cost of dependent care were less familiar and accepting of organizational practices.

Similarly, the greater the difficulty employees experienced with achieving work/life balance (Extent of Concerns) the less likely they were to recognize benefits available (Distributive Justice), and the organizational procedures in place (Procedural Justice). Additionally, in this scenario, they were less likely to have positive interaction experiences with supervisors (Interactional Justice).

A positive, low or moderate association was identified between the work/life factor Communication About Concerns and all three Organizational Justice factors. Folger & Cropanzano (1998) note that issues of organizational justice do not exist if people work in isolation. It is through communication that inconsistencies, inequities and biased treatment among employees become apparent. There was positive association between the work/life factor Communication About Concerns and all three Organizational Justice factors. It appears that as higher levels of confidence are established around the appropriateness to discuss work/life concerns with peers and supervisors, the greater the satisfaction with factors of Distributive, Procedural and Interactional Justice.

**Objective 4:** to describe relationships between the perceived issues of organizational justice, work/life issues, and the demographic characteristics of personnel (ie: single employees and employees without children will perceive organizational justice differently than those with children). Of the seven factors of work/life issues, there were statistically significant relationships with Gender for two of the factors, with Position for one of the factors, with Districts for three of the factors, and with Number of Children for one. No statistically significant associations were observed between any work/life factors and demographic variables of age or marital status. The three organizational justice factors had
A low association between Gender and Distributive Justice was found. A moderate level of satisfaction with the availability and quality of benefits was identified with women noting higher satisfaction than men. A low association between Gender and two work/life issues of Financial Issues and Actions of Co-Workers was found. Moderate levels of concern for limitations in achieving work/life balance due to salary and costs of work and family needs was expressed by both men and women, with men’s concerns slightly higher than those of their female counterparts. Both genders indicated moderate awareness of co-worker’s ability to achieve and support work/life balance; women had a slightly higher level of awareness than men on this factor.

Young (1999) noted that perceptions about work/life issues could vary within an organization, related to variations of position and gender. Low, statistically significant, associations with the work/life factor, Actions of Co-Workers, were identified with the Gender and Position variables. Gender was also associated with the work/life issue, Financial Issues.

The demographic variable of Position had a low association with the work/life factor Financial Issues. The highest level of concern about inadequate wages, high costs of family/personal needs, and their affect on respondent’s ability to balance was expressed by members of the Administrative Network. Support Staff and Program Staff indicated moderate levels of concern about the work/life factor, Financial Issues.

The variable, Number of Children, had a low, negative association with work/life factor, Actions of Co-Workers. As the number of children increased within the family, awareness of co-worker’s ability to achieve and support work/life balance decreased. Also, the more children within a family, the less satisfaction with interpersonal treatment received by the supervisor as noted by a low, negative association with Interactional Justice and Number of Children.

The variable of District, or location, had a low to moderate association with three of the work/life factors: Extent of Concern, Organizational Issues, and Financial Issues; and, with one of the Organizational Justice factors: Procedural Justice. Moderate levels of difficulty in achieving work/life balance, Extent of Concern, were expressed at all six locations (five Districts and State level), with slightly higher levels in the Northwest and Northeast parts of the state, and slightly lower levels in the South and Southwest Districts. Moderate levels of concern with inadequate wages and costs of work and personal needs creating limitations in achieving work/life balance, Financial Issues, were expressed in the Southwest District and at the State level, with slightly less concern about this factor expressed in all other locations across the state.

In addition, employees had slight concerns about the organization’s support for work/life issues, Organizational Issues, in the Southwest District and at the State level. All remaining locations expressed a slightly higher level of concern, although the mean scores of less than 2.5 on the 5 pt. Likert scale for this factor indicated only a moderate level of concern about this work/life factor.

Discussion
The impact of the Ohio efforts to address work/life issues was difficult to ascertain. The process utilized to introduce the effort was strategic, and closely followed the recommendations of Schein (1992). In so doing, OSU Extension could appropriately assume that the guidelines and introduction processes were acceptable. Even though there are no definitive conclusions about the effectiveness of the Ohio program, the implementation of the efforts followed recognized design.

This study also took into account the effect that culture has in sustaining the very essence of an organization. Changing the culture of OSU Extension to alter the current struggles of balancing work and family lives may be very difficult. Berrio (1999) described OSU Extension as exhibiting characteristics of a clan culture. In such a culture, employees value helping others and are very committed to the value. It is possible that the profession itself may attract individuals who hold this value, and thus further this basic value of helping others. While employees in such an environment may be troubled by the resulting lack of time for family and friends, they are hesitant to change their work habits. In the presence of such a scenario, the organization must increase its emphasis upon the importance and appropriateness of a life reflective of both work and family commitments and the role that organizational justice plays in achieving the outcome.

When Ohio Extension respondents were asked to identify the greatest challenge faced in managing their work life, they overwhelmingly referred to difficulties in scheduling due to work overload, time management, and complexities of their position. One employee, in response to this question, said, “Without a doubt: managing multiple roles – 2 program areas and county chair with all (of) the meetings, paperwork, etc. that goes with each”; and another employee noted being challenged by “Multiple tasks/responsibilities (are) more than I can accomplish”. Employees were also asked to identify the greatest challenge faced in managing their family/personal life. Two areas of concern became most apparent as responses were compiled: 1) lack of time for family, friends, community and home; and, 2) scheduling conflicts due to evening/weekend work meetings, traveling involved with inservices, commuting time, work overload, etc. One respondent lamented, “Explaining to family and significant other that my job doesn’t always fit the 8-5 workday model”, while another said, “There doesn’t seem to be enough time for children and grandchildren. Makes me feel guilty”. These comments provided insight into the personal struggles faced by Ohio’s Extension employees as they strive to create balance within their work, family and personal lives.

The role of administration, and especially the direct supervisor, is unquestionably a key factor if the work/life effort is to be successful. In a decentralized system, such as found in OSU Extension, the possibility for administrative inconsistencies and lack of uniformity in policy application increases, resulting in employee perceptions of injustice. As one employee commented “I am very happy with the flexibility and trust the Extension organization gives its employees”, while another employee noted, “Currently policies for Agents are controlled by the organizational culture, which means that the ‘policies’ are interpreted differently in each of the 5 districts”. It seems imperative that OSU Extension take every administrative precaution to assure that work/life benefits are uniformly available to all eligible employees.

OSU Extension employees are very committed to meeting clientele’s needs. This level of commitment has made the organization the success it is nationally recognized to be.
However, it must be made clear that it is not the intention of this organization to achieve success at the expense of its employees. A workforce that is successful at, and can exhibit the actions of, addressing work/life balance will serve as an exemplary model for its local citizens.

**Limitations of the Study**

This study was a descriptive, correlational study utilizing a stratified, randomly selected group of employees of OSU Extension with 100% appointments. Therefore, the results can only be generalized to Ohio State University Extension. In addition, comparisons of OSU Extension data and findings to the results found in the national work/life study were made. It was determined that Ohio Extension employees would share similar personal demographics, educational background, role responsibilities, and organizational priorities with those in the national sample that were chosen through a stratified, random sample.

Only issues of organizational justice and demographic variables were studied. The study examined the extent to which organizational justice might have accounted for limited or restricted adoption of the work/life guidelines statewide. It will not be known whether other factors could have impacted the adoption of these guidelines as well.

**Significance of the Study**

Five years after the implementation of OSU Extension’s guidelines, the organization was interested in identifying the current concerns facing staff in their attempts to balance the demands of work, family and personal life. Within Extension, few studies had been conducted to identify employees’ abilities to utilize organizational policy to address concerns of work/life balance, and none were found that dealt with distributive, procedural, or interactional justice as they affected work/life policy implementation. OSU Extension has led the nation in identifying issues of work/life balance for Extension employees, and has focused on providing support and guidance to its own employees as they work to address their work/life balance priorities.

The study:

- identified progress toward improving employee ability to address issues of work/life balance over the past five years;
- identified issues of organizational justice which may be affecting progress;
- identified or isolated groups within the system that may not receive the full range of benefits from the program;
- created a body of research on issues of organizational justice within Extension systems; and,
- identified needs for further research, policy, or organizational change.

**References**
Berrio, A. A. (1999). Organizational culture and organizational learning in public, non-profit institutions: A profile of Ohio State University Extension. Unpublished Ph.D., The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.


