

Opting to Stay: Does a Work-Time Control Intervention Reduce Turnover?

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ABSTRACT

Media and research evidence suggest that the strains of escalating work and life demands push some employees to use turnover as a work-family strategy, opting out of even desirable jobs. Allocating greater control to employees over their working time could reduce turnover by reducing some of the time pressures and conflicts they experience. We investigate the turnover effects of a flexibility innovation at a corporate headquarters aimed at realigning workplace culture from face time to measurable results regardless of time at the workplace. To model hazard rates of turnover we drew on survey data (prior to ROWE- Results Only Work Environment Initiative) from a sample of employees (N=788) along with institutional records of turnover over eight months. Multivariate Cox modeling shows the odds of turnover are lower for employees experiencing the innovation, even net of work-home spillover, job satisfaction and other predictors. The ROWE effects are moderated by job tenure as well as prior assessments of home-to-work spillover, physical symptoms, and job security.

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Introduction

Turnover is increasingly a fact of contemporary working life. Occupational trajectories no longer follow the typical career mystique path of continuous lock-step employment with the same employer (Moen & Roehling, 2005), but are contingent on global economic forces impelling employees out of particular jobs and even out of the workforce. Turnover is additionally framed as individual decisions, employees' choosing to "opt out" under conditions of uncertainty and/or chronic strain (Stone 2007; Williams, Maxwell & Bornstien 2006).

Time pressures and overloads also infuse the new reality of American employment. Employees live in households where all adults are in the workforce, meaning that most can't off load (to someone else) the multiple non-work demands of their lives. And the pace of work is escalating in light of a competitive, global labor market, with employees expected to be high-performers, doing more with less resources. We conceptualize these pressures and overloads as surfacing in employees' sense of *life-course fit* or *misfit* (Moen & Chesley, 2008; Moen, Kelly & Huang, 2009), that is, their cognitive appraisals of the degree of match or mismatch between their resources and the claims upon them, with both resources and claims varying at different points in the adult life course. Achieving life-course fit can be especially problematic in light of escalating time demands at work and at home.

These two aspects of working life – turnover and time pressures - come together in the concept of opting out (Stone 2007), with employees with high home obligations (especially mothers raising children) enjoying their jobs but unable to meet high job

demands, and, hence, choosing to leave the workforce. In support of this argument, high levels of misfit in the form of negative spillover from work to home or from home to work have been shown to predict turnover or turnover intentions (Grandey & Cropanzano 1999; Greenhaus, Parasuraman & Collins 2001; Jones, Chonko, Rangarajan & Roberts 2007; Armstrong, Riemenschneider, Allen & Reid 2007). Workers (especially women) exiting the workforce find it difficult to “opt back in” at the level of job they left, serving to perpetuate gendered inequalities (Felmlee 1995; Waldfogel 1997; Budig & England 2001; Arun, Arun, & Borooah 2004).

What can employers do to retain valued employees? It is often argued (Glass & Riley 1998; Hill, Mead, Dean, Hafen, Gadd, Palmer & Ferris 2006; Armstrong, Riemenschneider, Allen & Reid 2007) that greater schedule flexibility within a more family-friendly culture can promote retention, especially for employees with chronic overloads and time strains. However, “flexibility” is too often simply “on the books” but not widely available, in other instances, flexibility policies are too minimal to provide much relief from the time pressures of multiple obligations (Kelly & Moen 2007). Scholars are therefore suggesting broad changes in the structure and culture of time at work (Bailyn 1993; Bianchi, Casper, & King 2005; Kelly & Moen 2007; Kossek & Lambert 2005; Moen 2003; Pitt-Catsouphes, Kossek, & Sweet 2006) as key to employee and family well-being.

This study examines just such an organizational innovation rolled out at the headquarters of a large high performance corporation (Best Buy) in Minnesota’s Twin Cities. Drawing on recent data collected from this middle-class sample of employees, we assess the effects on turnover of a business innovation focusing on outcomes, not time

spent at work. Changing the organizational culture by focusing on results not face or contact time aims to increase employees' productivity as well as enhancing their degrees of freedom over where and when they do their work. The innovation goes under the acronym of ROWE (Results Only Work Environment).

A NATURAL EXPERIMENT

Prior to the implementation of ROWE, Best Buy, like most companies, equated productivity in the workplace with face time or time spent at one's desk or in meetings, with less emphasis on what was accomplished while at work. The ROWE initiative reoriented divisions of the organization towards measurable results while deemphasizing where and when work is completed and the amount of time spent completing tasks. Best Buy implemented ROWE within specific divisions of the company while others maintained their previous business practices, thereby creating a 'natural experiment.' This structure allowed us to collect data both before and after an organizational change that would have happened whether or not anyone studied it. We investigated both employees undergoing the ROWE innovation as well as a comparison group of employees continuing to work in the usual ways. All participants in the Flexible Work and Well-Being study (Moen, Kelly & Chermack 2009) completed a survey prior to the implementation of ROWE. We then drew on administrative data to track whether or not employees in our sample left Best Buy during an eight-month observation period following the ROWE implementation.

We theorize and find that the rate of turnover is reduced by participation in this innovation. We also theorize that the effects of the ROWE arrangement differs for workers in different social locations (especially as captured by their age, gender and

parental status, and by their job level) as well as by their cognitive appraisals of life-course fit (in terms of work-home stressors and enhancements), and by two traditional predictors of turnover: job satisfaction and health problems. We also include a scale assessing perceptions of a family supportive company culture, arguing that perceived supportiveness combined with the ROWE intervention should reduce the odds of actually leaving the organization.

We address three sets of questions in this study, looking for contextual as well as any direct effects of the ROWE innovation. First, does the ROWE innovation rolled out at the headquarters of Best Buy affect short-term turnover? Second, do employees' social locational markers and their assessments (at Wave 1) of life-course fit, job satisfaction, job culture, and health symptoms moderate any ROWE effects on turnover? And finally, do employees' prior (Wave 1) assessments of security and their prior turnover expectations condition ROWE effects on turnover?

A LIFE COURSE APPROACH TO ROWE AND TURNOVER

The life course as both a concept and theoretical approach is, we believe, well suited to understanding the distribution of effects of ROWE on turnover. The life course can be thought of as “a system of age- and time-related rules and regulations” (Settersten 2003) that serves to organize life events and transitions. The life course is also a *gendered* institution, assigning meaning to conditions and events in distinctive ways for women and men. As such, the life course has both a material and a symbolic aspect: it captures workforce transitions such as turnover, but also provides the framework of meaning employees apply to these transitions (Kohli 1986).

The concept of ‘opting out’ implies a sense of choice as to whether to leave or remain with the organization. Understanding individuals as agents in the construction of their own lives (Heinz 2002; Elder 1999) requires acknowledgement that these constructions are limited by available structural and cultural frameworks (Swidler 1986; Clegg 1989). Agency thus remains bounded by existing institutions, even as these institutions are changing. ROWE is a corporate-level innovation aimed at changing both the structure and culture of the way work is done, especially when and where it is done, along with dismantling engrained cultural beliefs about work time and face time as indices of work commitment, productivity, and quality.

We theorize that turnover can both reflect risk (insecurity) *and* be a deliberate strategy for managing risks, pressures, and overloads, with ROWE offering an alternative strategy, enabling better coordination of job and home demands. The ROWE innovation might also generate a greater sense of planning. Theoretical (Beck 1986; Giddens 1991) and empirical (Li et al 2002) scholarship suggest the capacity to anticipate and plan has become an important factor in shaping life course outcomes. We argue that ROWE enhances employees’ capacity to anticipate the ebb and flow of their paid work and their unpaid family work (as well as personal needs) and to better forecast likely events on the job (such as deadlines).

Actual structural conditions (parenting, managing) and subjective assessments could well moderate ROWE effects on turnover. This argument is commonly invoked in theorizing women’s “opting out” of valued and desired jobs, with turnover seen as a strategic adaptation in the face of enormous demands at work and at home (Stone, 2007; Moen, 2007). Thus ROWE may be differentially meaningful for turnover depending on

whether the employee is a man or woman at different family stages. This is because of the cultural expectations associated with the (gendered) lock-step career mystique (of continuous, full-time employment throughout “prime” adulthood), men’s roles as breadwinners, and the primacy of caregiving in women’s lives (Moen and Roehling 2005). For example, a study of professional mothers found that workplace supports (a family-friendly workplace or supportive supervisor) are more important in predicting turnover intentions than individual characteristics, helping women identify alternative approaches to managing home and work conflicts (Raskin 2006). We contend that ROWE should especially benefit employees who are actively parenting, as well as those working in “extreme jobs,” such as managers and officers in high performance organizations (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, & Kalleberg 2000) like Best Buy, and those working under conditions of negative conflict and spillover (in both directions) between home and work. Thus formal and informal norms and opportunity structures are not only class- and race-dependent (contingencies we cannot address given the homogeneity of our sample), they are also age-, gender-, and family stage-dependent (contingencies we do address).

Research (Armstrong, Riemenschneider, Allen & Reid 2007; Bridges, Johnston & Sager 2007; Crossley, Bennett, Jex, & Burnfield 2007; Donnelly & Quirin 2006) typically distinguishes between voluntary and involuntary turnover, but in a climate of rising risk and constraint these distinctions are increasingly blurred. Some women or men might exit their jobs because of parenting obligations and/or poor life-course fit (such as high negative spillover from work to home and/or vice versa) while others quit in anticipation of being let go at some point in the future. Even when layoffs are due to large scale economic downturns, employers often choose which employees (often those

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they see as less effective) to let go. Some workers may be unable to function effectively given their personal and family situations, and therefore are at a greater risk of being laid off. While these are clearly “involuntary” exits, they could also be an indication of the absence of policies and practices aimed at fostering better fit between work and home needs/demands and necessary resources, especially if layoffs do not occur across the board. Key to our inquiry, can an intervention aimed at improving that fit alter the odds of turnover, regardless of whether employees are opting out, being pushed out, or some combination of both?

Related to the voluntary/involuntary distinction, intentions – whether measured as intention to stay or intention to quit – are powerful predictors of subsequent employee behavior. In their meta-analysis of turnover, Griffeth and colleagues (2000) confirmed that intention to leave one’s employer is one of the strongest predictors of quit behavior. Mueller and colleagues (1994), using 1983 data on women dental hygienists, found a strong negative relationship between intent to stay and voluntary employer quits. Perceived job insecurity is also a form of expectation that can lead to employee turnover. Using successive cross-sectional national surveys, Manski and Straub (2000) found evidence that quitting one’s job might actually be a preemptive move when employees perceive the risk of job loss to be high. Batt and Valcour (2003) found that job security was negatively associated with intention to quit, echoing Manski and Straub’s (2000) evidence that job quits are sometimes preemptive strikes in response to insecurity. We conceive of subjective assessments of job security and expectations of turnover as thus mirroring the structural realities and cultural norms associated with employees’ social locations. But expectations also reflect the absence of life-course fit, a way of seeking

better fit by planning to leave a job with extreme demands as a way of increasing the fit between time demands and resources. We do not theorize the direction of ROWE effects as moderated by employees' sense of job insecurity or their anticipated turnover expectations prior to the implementation of ROWE, but nevertheless assume they could be important conditioners of its effects.

To summarize, we theorize that social locational factors, especially gender and parental status as well as tenure in the organization, should moderate the effects of ROWE on turnover. Moreover, cognitive appraisals – of fit, job satisfaction, job security and job culture – become the kaleidoscope through which employees view their futures, shaping their decision-making about leaving jobs (Heinz 2002) and presumably, the effectiveness of ROWE in limiting turnover. Employees bring to new practices such as ROWE their own material and subjective realities; do these factors modify its effects?

RESEARCH DESIGN

Sample

The initial sample included 1026 individuals from Best Buy of which 825 responded to the survey, an 80% response rate. We dropped cases that had missing values on our predicted variable and of the 825 participants, 788 had valid records (from administrative Human Resource data) regarding their actual turnover. During the eight months for which we have records, 8.5% (N=67) of the 788 in the analytic sample left Best Buy. We estimated missing values for independent variables from the mean or else assigned the value for missing independent measures, where possible, from human resource data available from Best Buy.

Survey respondents included individuals at all levels of the Best Buy Corporation headquarters. The mean age for respondents was 32, 48.9% of the sample was female, 7.8% of the sample was from a minority racial group (African American, Asians, American Indians, etc.), 66.6% were married or cohabitating, and 34.0% were actively raising children. As evidenced by these statistics, Best Buy's workforce is young and many do not have children at this point in their lives. It can be argued that the disproportionate number of single individuals or married couples without children will influence our results. However, because we are interested in the turnover effects of a Results Oriented Work Environment (ROWE), as well as the effects of ROWE as moderated by gender/parental status and/or work-home spillover measures, a higher proportion of individuals without families or partners/spouses will likely make our estimates more conservative and therefore increase our confidence in the likelihood of an effect. We also find singles reporting considerable time pressures, with their jobs often consuming their lives.

Methods

We analyzed actual turnover over an eight and a half-month period, from the onset of exposure to a culture change initiative, using a not-exposed sample of employees as a comparison group. We predicted turnover using Cox event history modeling, a partial likelihood method that incorporates the timing of events as well as data from cases that are right and left censored to predict outcomes. The great advantage of this technique is that it utilizes partial likelihood estimation, which does not require that the researcher specify the hazard rate as a function. Instead, Cox event history modeling only requires the rank order of when events occurs and not their exact times. Cox event history

modeling assumes a proportional hazards model. We tested the appropriateness of this assumption by graphing the hazard function and through a statistical test utilizing the Schoenfeld residuals. Graphs of the hazard estimates did not clearly indicate whether our model violated the assumption; however a test of the proportional hazards assumption indicated that our model and none of our variables were significantly disproportional. Therefore, we determined that it was appropriate to continue using the Cox models without corrections. The hazard rate estimated by Cox Event History Modeling for the i th individual is

$$h_i(t) = h_0(\beta'x)$$

where $h_0(t)$ is the baseline hazard function and $\beta'x$ are the covariates and regression parameters (Box-Steffensmeier & Jones 2004).

We have the exact date of turnover for the 67 individuals who left Best Buy during the maximum observation period of 256 days. However, because of one bout of layoffs during this time frame, we have some simultaneous exits by employees on a single day, requiring the use of the exact partial method to improve our estimates. Though this method is computationally difficult, it is more accurate than other methods, making the assumption that tied events actually occur at the same discrete point in time (Box-Steffensmeier & Jones 2004). The exact partial method is the best choice for our analysis due to its accuracy and assumptions regarding the timing of overlapping exits. We estimate three nested models, including clusters of variables (described below) in each step.

The initial analysis predicted respondents' turnover with measures of personal characteristics, work/home interface, and expectations and assessments, which are

commonly discussed in the literature as being associated with turnover. Next, we estimated a model including participation in ROWE. Finally, we tested possible moderators, including interactions between participation in ROWE as contextualized by gender/parental status, employment characteristics, life-course fit variables, and other assessments and expectations.

Variables

We grouped the independent variables included in the analysis into baseline variables, life-course fit variables capturing the work-home interface, personal expectations and assessments, and participation in ROWE. (See Appendix for survey items included in each of the scales.)

Baseline

We constructed a gendered life stage variable to capture the variability employees experience throughout the life course, which is cross-cut by their gender. We created three categories separately for both men and women, including employees under age 40 without families, parents with children under the age of 18, and 40 plus employees without children, including those who are empty nesters (employees with children older than 18).¹ These six gendered life stage categories are coded as a dummy variable in the analysis and men age 40 or under without children are the reference category in the analysis. Race was excluded from this analysis because there is no variation in the race of those turning over during the time period under study.

Workplace characteristics included in the baseline are respondents' occupational categories and their tenure at Best Buy. We divided employees into three occupational categories: individual contributors, middle managers, and senior managers (including

¹ Due to the Best Buy's young workforce, there are fewer empty nesters in our sample.

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members of senior leadership). Each category is coded as a dummy variable for the analysis; using senior managers as the reference group. Organization tenure is measured as a continuous variable, calculated in years.

We draw on four work/life interface variables including negative work to home spillover, positive work to home spillover, negative home to work spillover, and positive home to work spillover (drawn from Midlife in the United States study; see www.midus.wisc.edu). Each scale consists of four items. Spillover questions include, “Has your job reduced the effort you can give to activities at home?” (negative WF) “Have the skills you use on your job been useful for things you have to do at home?” (positive WF) “Have responsibilities at home reduced the effort I can devote to my job?” (negative FW) “Has my home life helped me relax and feel ready for the next day’s work?” (positive FW) The Likert scale responses to the questions are “all the time,” “most of the time,” “sometimes,” “rarely,” and “never.”

We include six additional variables to capture employees’ subjective expectations and assessments related directly or indirectly to life-course fit: job satisfaction, family supportive company culture scale, income adequacy, a count of physical symptoms, a job security assessment scale, and a turnover intentions scale. Job satisfaction is a single item asking respondents, “How satisfied are you with your job?” The family supportive company culture scale includes nine items such as agreement or disagreement with “Work should be the primary priority in a person’s life,” and “Employees who prioritize their families can still do well here.” (modified from Allen 2001) Income adequacy is a single item that asks, “On a scale of 0 to 10 (where 0 is very inadequate and 10 is more than adequate), how well does your current household income meet your financial

needs?” The count of physical symptoms asks respondents to select those symptoms they had experienced in the last four weeks including but not limited to headaches, muscle soreness, shortness of breath, and trembling or shaking (drawn from the Midlife in the United States study, see www.midus.wisc.edu). The majority of employees report experiencing no (15.27%) or few (1-3 – 40.85%) symptoms over the four weeks prior to the survey; however 111 employees (7.25%) report 7 or more symptoms. Job security is assessed with a two-item scale: “What are the chances that you will lose your job in the next year?” and “My job security is poor.” The turnover intentions scale includes three items about choosing to leave Best Buy, such as “I think a lot about leaving Best Buy” (Alpha=.905).

Participation in ROWE

Participation in ROWE is included in the model as a dummy variable, capturing those in our sample who were part of the ROWE innovation. These employees were not self-selected, but rather received the ROWE “treatment” based on their location within certain divisions. A sample of employees in divisions not yet part of the ROWE innovation constituted our comparison group. Recall that all respondents are middle-class, white-collar workers employed at the organization’s large headquarters.

FINDINGS

Descriptive statistics for the variables included in the analysis are shown in Table 1. Note that the sample is about evenly divided between those participating in ROWE and those in the comparison group. Note as well that 8.5% of the sample left the organization in the roughly eight months after ROWE was rolled out to part of the workforce.

(Table 1 about here)

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Figure 1 shows the cumulative hazard function of turnover across time (256 observation days). Points in time with higher rates of turnover are apparent in this graph, such as the time around which some lay offs occurred (approximately day 77). The graph also demonstrates that no one left the organization near the end of the observation period (following day 223).

(Figure 1 about here)

Table 2 shows the turnover rate of different subgroups as well as means by turnover of the other scaled independent variables. Contrary to the opting out thesis of harried mothers, younger women without children had a higher rate of turnover while women with children had lower rates of turnover. Individual contributors have a higher rate of turnover than managers or upper level leaders in the organization (those not supervising others – 9.67%). In support of the ‘opting out’ thesis, those who left Best Buy scored higher (than did those remaining) on negative home to work spillover, physical symptoms, and turnover intentions. They also scored lower on job satisfaction and on rating Best Buy as a family supportive job culture. Most important for this analysis, participants in the ROWE innovation had a significantly lower turnover rate (5.68%) than did the comparison group (11.43%).

Table 2 about here

Using Cox event history modeling techniques we estimated the odds of employees leaving Best Buy during the observation period. Table 3 shows the hazard ratios for each of the independent variables in the models, which are the exponentiated coefficients produced by Cox event history modeling. Hazard ratios are interpreted like odds ratios where values between one and zero reduce the likelihood of an event and

values over one increase the likelihood of an event. The baseline model and life-course fit variables in Table 3 illustrate that those with higher levels of negative home-to-work spillover, greater numbers of physical symptoms, and higher scores on the turnover intentions scale have higher rates of leaving. This conforms to Griffeth and colleagues (2000) findings and argues for the importance of life-course fit and health status as important predictors of turnover. Model 2 in Table 3 shows that employees participating in the ROWE innovation are less likely to leave, net of the other independent variables, with ROWE reducing the rate of leaving Best Buy by 52.7%.

Testing interactions between participating in ROWE and other independent variables hypothesized to moderate the influence of ROWE on turnover, we find statistically significant interactions between participation in ROWE and organizational tenure, negative home to work spillover, health symptoms, and job security when included separately. When all four interactions are included in the full model health symptoms and job security interactions remain significant below the .05 alpha level while organizational tenure and negative home to work spillover have reduced significance and only become trends ($\alpha < .10$). Figure 2 shows the combined impact of tenure and participation in ROWE on turnover. ROWE employees with increasing organizational tenure at Best Buy had a declining rate of turnover, while those not participating in ROWE had an increasing rate of turnover during the study period.

(Figure 2 about here)

Figure 3 illustrates the moderating relationship between negative home-to-work spillover and ROWE on turnover. Specifically, although few scored high (4 or 5), those with higher negative spillover from home to work at the initial (pre-ROWE) interview

and then participated in ROWE have a steeper rate of turnover than is the case for non-ROWE employees. Though the relationship is steeper for ROWE employees the rate of turnover is noticeably lower at all levels of negative home-to-work spillover, especially the lower levels.

(Figure 3 about here)

Figure 4 depicts the interaction between number of health symptoms and ROWE in predicting turnover. ROWE employees with a greater number of symptoms prior to the ROWE innovation have an increasing rate of turnover, while non-ROWE employees with a high symptom count report a decreasing rate of turnover. However, ROWE employees with six or fewer symptoms have a lower rate of turnover than the comparison group despite the rising rates across all numbers of symptoms.

(Figure 4 about here)

Figure 5 captures the moderating effects of job security on ROWE in predicting turnover. ROWE employees with low values of job security before the intervention have considerably lower rates of turnover, compared to non-ROWE employees with prior low job security. However, the ROWE/non-ROWE difference in turnover narrows with increasing job security.

(Figure 5 about here)

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

We began by asking the question whether providing employees with greater control over the time and timing of their work would lower the risks of their opting out, drawing on data from a natural experiment of a work-time innovation (ROWE) at Best Buy's corporate headquarters. We found the answer to be in the affirmative. ROWE

participants were considerably less apt to leave Best Buy during the study period than were employees in the comparison group, supporting the argument that broad cultural changes may better retain employees (Bailyn 1993; Kelly & Moen 2007; Moen, Kelly & Chermack 2009). This remained the case when estimating a Cox model of turnover including a variety of measures theorized to predict turnover, such as gender and parental status, occupational level, work-home assessments, health symptoms, job satisfaction, a family-supportive organizational culture, job security, and expectations of turnover.

We also theorized that the effects of ROWE on turnover would vary by employees' social location, assessments, and expectations. To our surprise, our combined measure of gender and family stage did not moderate the effects of ROWE, and did not predict turnover net of the other variables in the model. This may be due to the young labor force at Best Buy, many of whom do not yet have children. While employees who worked as individual contributors (with no supervisory responsibilities) had a higher rate of turnover than senior management, occupational level did not moderate the effects of ROWE. However, ROWE employees with longer tenure at Best Buy were more apt to opt to stay than similarly long tenured comparison employees.

We had theorized that life-course fit variables would moderate the effects of ROWE, such that those with the most strain might benefit most from greater control over the time and timing of their work. However, again to our surprise, employees in ROWE reporting higher home to work spillover were increasingly similar in their exit rates as similarly strained employees in the comparison group. Still, the turnover rate of ROWE employees was consistently lower than the comparison group at all levels of negative home-to-work spillover. Note that this is *home* to work spillover; it could be that ROWE

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employees experience a greater buffer, especially from mild negative spillover from their personal lives to their jobs and those employees with greater home to work conflict may find that even ROWE is unable to improve the challenges they face.

Health symptoms altered the effects of ROWE on the prospects of remaining with Best Buy. Employees participating in ROWE who reported up to six health symptoms were less apt to opt out than comparison group employees with a similar number of symptoms. But ROWE employees with more than six symptoms were more likely to exit the corporation than comparison group employees with a comparable number of health symptoms. Though ROWE may act as a buffer for those with moderate levels of health concerns and thereby increase the chances of staying with the company, it could provide the opportunity for those with high levels of health problems to recognize that no “fix” at work is going to ease the pressures of their health difficulties.

We theorized ROWE as possibly moderating the effects of prior job (in) security on actual turnover. We found ROWE employees with low pre-ROWE job security were more apt to opt to stay than were comparison employees with low job security. Though previous research (c.f. Manski and Straub 2000) has demonstrated that leaving an insecure workplace can be a preventative measure in the face of an unplanned job transition, employees exposed to the ROWE cultural shift were less likely to exit the corporation than those in the comparison group. It is unclear if this was due to changing perceptions of job security due to ROWE or a greater desirability of staying with the ROWE initiative but it illustrates the importance of context in predicting turnover due to ROWE.

While this is a young, middle-class sample in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota, a sample that should not be generalized from, these findings offer tantalizing evidence that worksite innovations providing greater work-time control can encourage employees to opt to stay. Further tantalizing, this is the case regardless of their gender or parental status, and regardless of their occupational level. The interactions of ROWE with health symptoms, home-to-work spillover, tenure, and job security suggest the complexity and contingency of decisions to opt out or opt to stay in the light of an innovation shifting expectations away from face time to results. In particular, ROWE may not be the solution for all conflicts between work and personal life for those experiencing the greatest challenges. However, we agree with Stone (2007) that opting out is really a consequence of being pushed out given the intransigencies of the temporal structure of work. The ROWE innovation may free employees to alter the conditions under which they work and live, rendering opting out less necessary.

The evidence reported here makes the case for other experimental or quasi-(natural) experiments of innovations in other settings, with other occupational groupings, and for longer time periods. Despite the body of research (see review by Kelly et al, 2008) suggesting the minimal impact of flexibility policies that are on the books, it could well be that providing real work-time control to employees is a promising path to employee retention.

Table 1. Descriptions of Variables

	Mean/ Percentage	Standard Deviation	Total
<i>Baseline</i>			
<i>Gender/Stage</i>			
Women without Children	29.52%	-	240
Women with Children	15.25%	-	124
Empty Nest Women	3.32%	-	27
Men without Children	28.98%	-	233
Men with Children	18.03%	-	145
Empty Nest Men	2.86%	-	23
<i>Job Level</i>			
Individual Contributors	65.05%	-	536
Middle Managers	19.05%	-	157
Senior Managers or Leaders	15.90%	-	131
<i>Tenure</i>	4.396	3.251	818
<i>Life Course Fit - Expectations and Assessments</i>			
Negative Work-to-Home Spillover Scale	2.945	0.646	775
Negative Home-to-Work Spillover Scale	2.272	0.590	775
Positive Work-to-Home Spillover Scale	2.973	0.625	772
Positive Home-to-Work Spillover Scale	3.305	0.588	775
Job Satisfaction	3.984	0.923	811
Family Supportive Company Culture Scale	3.388	0.619	809
Income Adequacy	6.469	1.871	772
Count of Physical Symptoms	3.384	2.593	825
Job Security Assessment Scale	2.930	0.638	776
Turnover Intentions Scale	2.57	1.479	773
<i>ROWE Exposure vs Comparison</i>			
Treatment	49.09%	-	405
Comparison	50.91%	-	420
<i>Outcome Variable</i>			
<i>Turnover-Exit Employment at Best Buy</i>			
No	91.39%	-	754
Yes	8.61%	-	71

Table 2: Characteristics of Employees Leaving Best Buy

Variable	Left		Stayed		Total	
	Mean/ Percentage	Standard Deviation	Mean/ Percentage	Standard Deviation		
Analytic Sample	8.50%	-	91.50%	-	788	
<i>Baseline</i>						
<i>Gender/Stage</i>						
Women without Children	12.13%	-	87.87%	-	239	**
Women with Children	4.07%	-	95.93%	-	123	**
Empty Nest Women	7.41%	-	92.59%	-	27	
Men without Children	7.79%	-	92.21%	-	231	
Men with Children	7.59%	-	92.41%	-	145	
Empty Nest Men	8.70%	-	91.30%	-	23	
<i>Job Level</i>						
Individual Contributors	9.67%	-	90.33%	-	517	†
Middle Managers	8.39%	-	91.61%	-	143	
Senior Manager and Leaders	3.15%	-	96.85%	-	127	
<i>Tenure</i>	4.50	3.77	4.37	3.19	788	
<i>Life Course Fit - Expectations and Assessments</i>						
Negative Work-to-Home Spillover Scale	3.05	0.60	2.94	0.64	775	
Negative Home-to-Work Spillover Scale	2.45	0.58	2.26	0.57	775	**
Positive Work-to-Home Spillover Scale	2.99	0.54	2.97	0.62	772	
Positive Home-to-Work Spillover Scale	3.22	0.51	3.31	0.58	775	
Job Satisfaction	3.57	0.99	4.02	0.91	810	***
Family Supportive Company Culture Scale	3.22	0.54	3.40	0.62	809	*
Income Adequacy	6.24	1.86	6.49	1.81	772	
Count of Physical Symptoms	4.31	3.29	3.37	2.47	824	**
Job Security Assessment Scale	2.90	0.65	2.93	0.62	773	
Turnover Intentions Scale	3.32	1.62	2.50	1.41	776	***
<i>ROWE Exposure vs Comparison</i>						
ROWE	5.40%	-	94.60%	-	399	**
Comparison	11.53%	-	88.47%	-	389	

Note: The significance test on Gender/Stage variable compares women with and without children to all other workers.

Table 3. Multivariate Predictors of Actual Turnover

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Hazard Ratio	S.E.	Hazard Ratio	S.E.	Hazard Ratio	S.E.
<i>Baseline</i>						
<i>Gender/Stage</i>						
Women without Children	1.543	(0.484)	1.557	(0.490)	0.472	(0.315)
Women with Children	0.396 †	(0.207)	0.479	(0.253)	-0.649	(0.532)
Empty Nest Women	0.763	(0.578)	0.678	(0.516)	-0.392	(0.768)
<i>Men without Children (Reference)</i>						
Men with Children	1.274	(0.515)	1.382	(0.566)	0.368	(0.412)
Empty Nest Men	1.584	(1.229)	1.810	(1.421)	0.399	(0.836)
<i>Job Level</i>						
Individual Contributors	2.892 †	(1.618)	2.916 †	(1.648)	1.162 *	(0.570)
Middle Managers	2.360	(1.390)	2.361	(1.394)	0.953	(0.603)
<i>Senior Managers and Leaders (Reference)</i>						
<i>Tenure</i>	1.052	(0.048)	1.059	(0.049)	0.096 †	(0.053)
<i>Life Course Fit - Expectations and Assessments</i>						
Negative Work-to-Home Spillover Scale	0.802	(0.194)	0.858	(0.210)	-0.176	(0.258)
Negative Home-to-Work Spillover Scale	1.635 *	(0.396)	1.627 *	(0.394)	0.194	(0.294)
Positive Work-to-Home Spillover Scale	1.375	(0.333)	1.362	(0.336)	0.320	(0.245)
Positive Home-to-Work Spillover Scale	0.814	(0.197)	0.780	(0.190)	-0.265	(0.248)
Job Satisfaction	0.837	(0.111)	0.870	(0.117)	-0.097	(0.131)
Family Supportive Company Culture Scale	0.856	(0.181)	0.901	(0.194)	-0.049	(0.221)
Income Adequacy	1.018	(0.071)	1.030	(0.072)	-0.011	(0.072)
Count of Physical Symptoms	1.109 *	(0.053)	1.091 †	(0.052)	-0.007	(0.058)
Job Security Assessment Scale	1.145	(0.258)	1.008	(0.238)	-0.477	(0.308)
Turnover Intentions Scale	1.391 ***	(0.137)	1.439 ***	(0.143)	0.417 ***	(0.098)
<i>ROWE Exposure vs. Comparison</i>						
Treatment			0.473	(0.138)	-6.620	(2.009)
<i>Comparisons (Reference)</i>						
<i>Interactions</i>						
Treatment*Tenure					-0.187	(0.104)
Treatment*Negative Home-to-Work Spillover Scale					0.914 †	(0.480)
Treatment*Count of Physical Symptoms					0.315 ***	(0.097)
Treatment*Job Security Assessment Scale					1.034 *	(0.470)
<i>Model Fit Statistics</i>						
R-Squared	0.082	***	0.088	***	0.098	***
Change in R-Squared	-		0.006	**	0.009	***
(df)	18		19		23	
Number of Cases	788		788		788	
Number of Failures	67		67		67	

*** = $p < 0.001$ ** = $p < 0.01$ * = $p < 0.05$ † = $p < 0.10$

Figure 1 Cumulative likelihood of leaving Best Buy

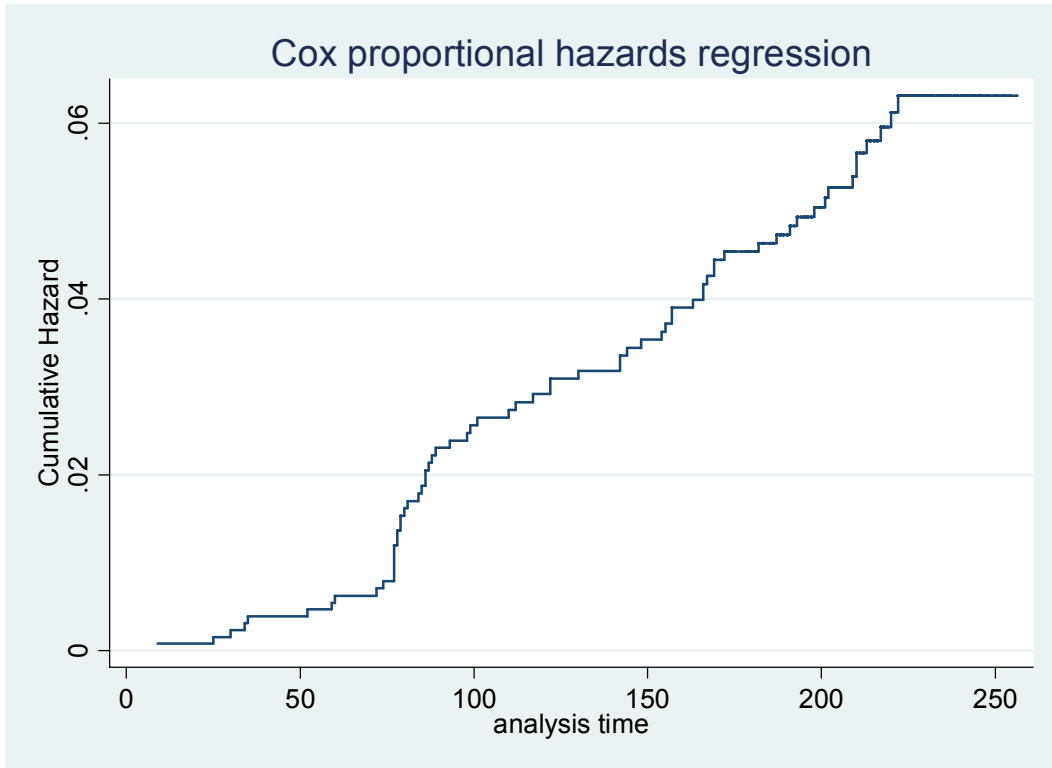


Figure 2

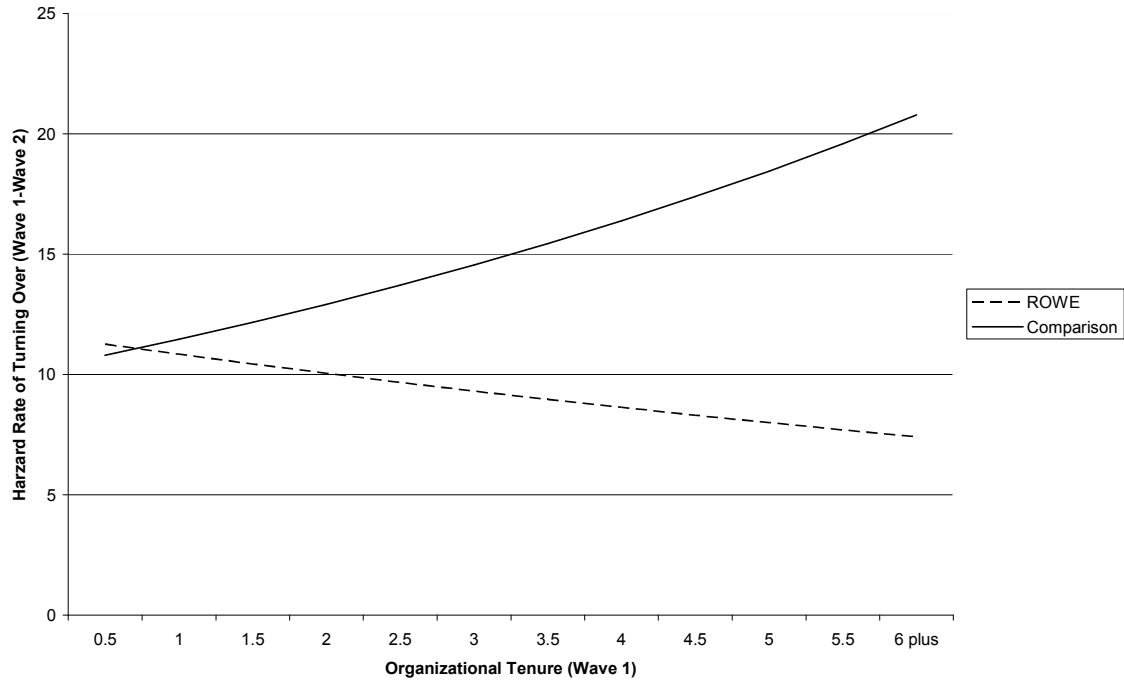


Figure 3

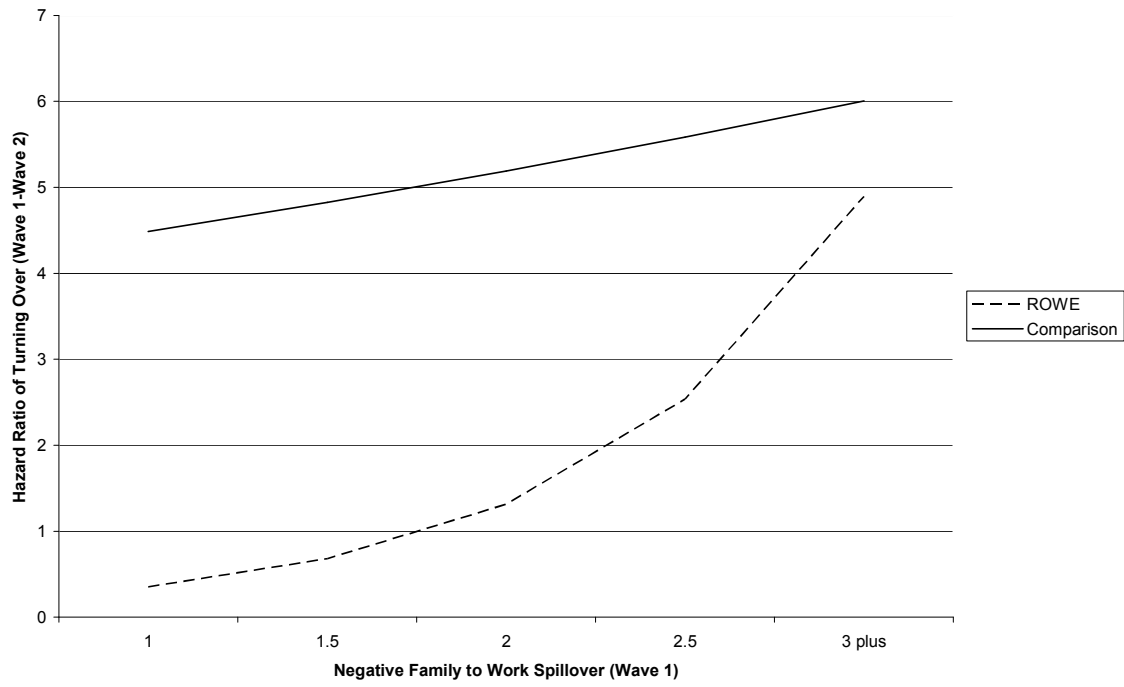


Figure 4

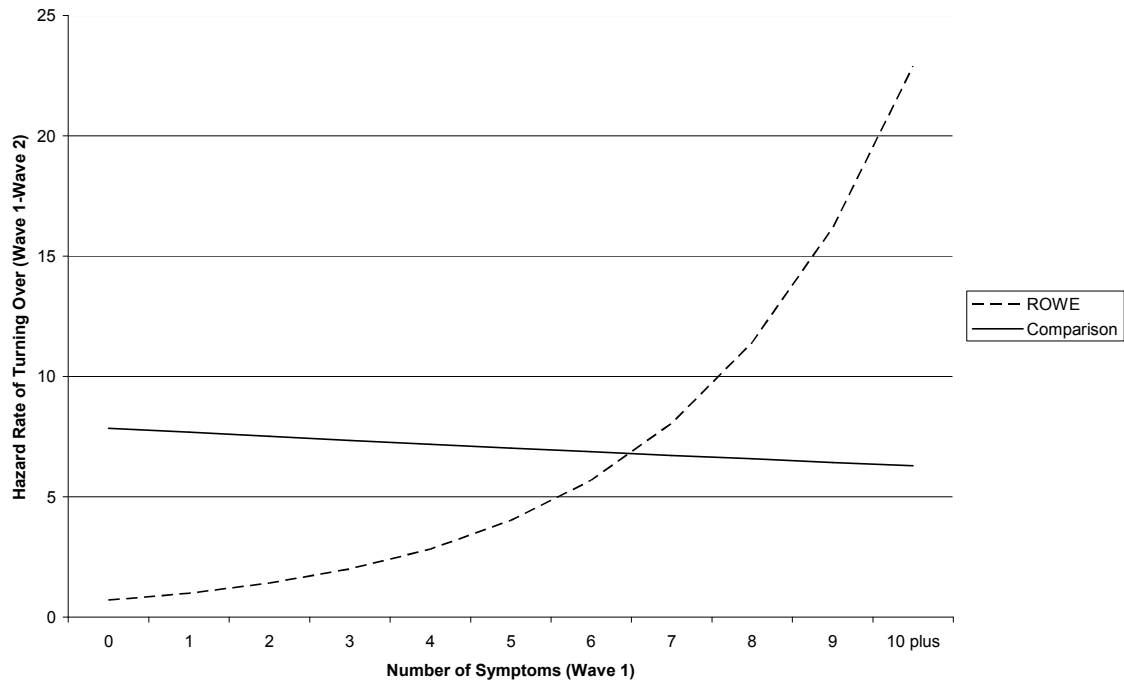
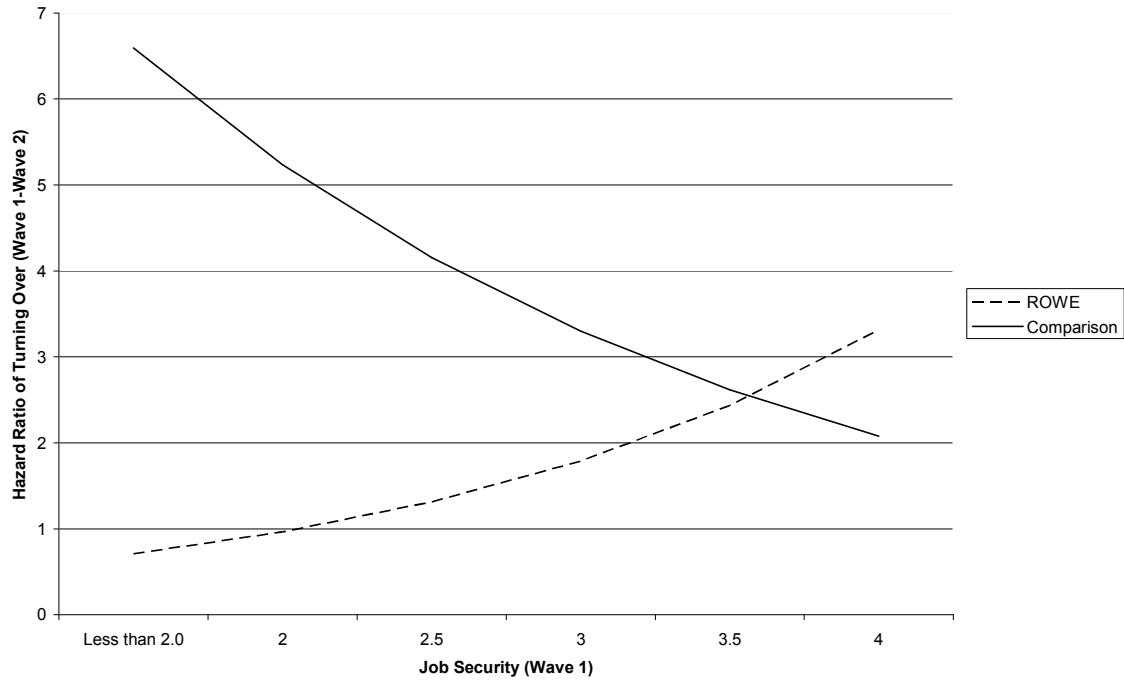


Figure 5



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APPENDIX A

I. Baseline Model

Gendered Life Stage

Women without children (1=women under the age of or age 40 who do not have children at home.)

Women with children (1=women with children under the age of 18 at home.)

Empty nest women (1=women over the age of 40 who do not have children under the age of 18 at home,)

Men without children (1=men under the age of or age 40 who do not have children under the age of 18 at home.)

Men with children (1=men with children under the age of 18 at home.)

Empty nest men (1=men over the age of 40 who do not have children under the age of 18 at home.)

Job level

Individual Contributor (1=Individual contributor, 0=Manager, Senior Manager, Director, Senior Director & VP)

Manager (1=Manager, 0=Individual contributor, Senior Manager, Director, Senior Director & VP)

Senior Manager, Director, Senior Director & VP (1=Senior Manager, Director, Senior Director & VP, 0=Individual contributor or Manager)

Job Tenure

(Continuous variable calculated from the following questions.)

- How long have you worked at Best Buy?
- If less than a year, how many months have you worked for Streamline?

II. Work-Home Interface

Negative work to home spillover scale ($\alpha=.823$)

(Scale 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Most of the time, 5=All of the time)

- Has your job reduced the effort you can give to activities at home?
- Has stress at work made you irritable at home?
- Has your job made you feel too tired to do the things that need attention at home?
- Have job worries or problems distracted you when you are at home?

Source: All modified from The Hotel Work and Well Being Study: The Penn State Hotel Managers Initiative (Modified from MIDUS)

Negative home to work spillover scale ($\alpha=.763$)

(Scale 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Most of the time, 5=All of the time)

- Have responsibilities at home reduced the effort I can devote to my job?
- Have personal or family worries and problems distracted me when I was at work?

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- Have activities and chores at home prevented me from getting the amount of sleep I needed to do my job well?
- Has stress at home made me irritable at work?

Positive work to home spillover scale (alpha=.691)

(Scale 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Most of the time, 5=All of the time)

- Have the skills you use on your job been useful for things you have to do at home?
- Have the things you do at work help you deal with personal and practical issues at home?
- Have the things you do at work make you a more interesting person at home?
- Has having a good day on your job made you a better companion when you get home?

Positive home to work spillover scale (alpha=.549):

(Scale 1=Never, 2=Rarely, 3=Sometimes, 4=Most of the time, 5=All of the time)

- Has my home life helped me relax and feel ready for the next day's work?
- Has the love and respect I get at home made me feel confident about myself at work?
- Has talking with someone at home helped me deal with problems at work?

III. Expectations & Assessments

Job Satisfaction

(1=Very unsatisfied, 2=Somewhat unsatisfied, 3=Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 4=Somewhat satisfied, 5=Very satisfied)

- How satisfied are you with your job?

Source: See Taylor, J.L. & Bowers, D.G. (1972).

Family Supportive Company Culture Scale:

(Scale 1=Strongly agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly Disagree)

- Work should be the primary priority in a person's life.
- The way to advance is to keep non-work matters out of the workplace.
- Employees who take time off to attend to personal matters are not committed to their work.
- Employees are given ample opportunity to perform both their job and their personal responsibilities well. (recoded)
- It is assumed that the most productive employees are those who put their work before their family life.
- The ideal employee is one who is available 24 hours a day.
- Managers pay more attention to the quality of work than to how many hours an employee puts in. (recoded)
- You are considered a more valuable employee at Best Buy if senior management sees you working long hours.

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- Employees who prioritize their families can still do well here. (recoded)

Income Adequacy

(Scale 0=Very inadequate, 10=More than adequate)

- On a scale of 0 to 10 (where 0 is very inadequate and 10 is more than adequate), how well does your current household income meet your financial needs?

Count of physical symptoms

In the last 4 weeks, did you experience any of the following physical symptoms?

- headache
- constipation/diarrhea
- muscle soreness
- shortness of breath
- tightness in chest
- trembling/shaking
- backache
- cold/flu symptoms
- heart pounding
- nausea/upset stomach
- hot or cold flashes
- congestion
- poor appetite
- sore throat
- dizziness

Source: Physical symptoms were assessed using the physical health symptoms checklist used in the MIDUS studies. http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~carrds/midus/midus_saq.pdf

Job security assessment scale

(Scale 1=Very likely, 2=Somewhat likely, 3=Not very likely, 4=Not likely at all)

- What are the chances you will lose your job in the next year?

(Scale 1=Strongly agree, 2=Agree, 3=Disagree, 4=Strongly disagree)

- My job security is poor.

Source: See Siegrist, et al. (2004)

Turnover intentions scale (alpha=.905)

(Scale 1=Strongly disagree, 2=Moderately disagree, 3=Slightly disagree, 4=Slightly agree, 5=Moderately agree, 6=Strongly agree)

- The next few questions ask about **choosing** to leave Best Buy...I think a lot about leaving Best Buy. (recoded)
- The next few questions ask about **choosing** to leave Best Buy...I am actively searching for an alternative to Best Buy.(recoded)
- The next few questions ask about **choosing** to leave Best Buy... As soon as it is possible, I will leave Best Buy. (recoded)

Turnover Paper

Source: See Mobley, Griffeth, Hand and Meglino (1979) and Neal and Hammer (1998)

IV. ROWE

(1=Participation in ROWE, 0=Comparison group)

V. Predicted Variable

Terminate

(1=Yes, 0=No)