INTRODUCING THE FAMILY: A REVIEW OF FAMILY SCIENCE WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

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INTRODUCING THE FAMILY: A REVIEW OF FAMILY SCIENCE WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

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INTRODUCING THE FAMILY: A REVIEW OF FAMILY SCIENCE WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT RESEARCH

ABSTRACT

While families have a large and undeniable impact on human behavior, management research is yet to fully embrace how aspects of families (e.g., family-member relationships, family structures, and family events) influence entrepreneurs, employees, managers, and their organizations. There is a large body of research known as family science that draws from sociology, psychology, and education and offers theories that describe families and explains important family outcomes. Management researchers have not widely exploited knowledge from family science, but it could be applied to advance management theories by answering questions about how families impact organizations and the people in them. Therefore, we review seven family science theories and leverage our review to map research agendas for how management researchers might use each theory to advance understanding of how families influence organizations and vice versa. Our review suggests a wide range of research topics in management that could advance by drawing upon family science research.
1. Introduction

The family is the “most important and enduring of all human social groupings” (Smith, Hamon, Ingoldsby, & Miller, 2009, p.5), but this truth has not had much impact on management research. Several topic areas in management have acknowledged that families matter. Entrepreneurship research has shown that being raised in an entrepreneurial family greatly increases the chances for subsequent entrepreneurial action (Eagly, 1997; Laspita, Breugst, Heblich, & Patzelt, 2012). Boundary theory from organizational behavior (OB) predicts that employees who keep their work and family roles separate perform better (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996), have less stress and greater job satisfaction (Kreiner, 2006), and are more promotable (Paustian-Underdahl, Halbesleben, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2013). In strategic management, research has found that a CEO’s upbringing can imprint features such as conservatism in decision-making (Schoar & Zuo, 2011).

Whereas this research acknowledged that families do indeed impact organizational actors and key organizational outcomes, a deeper understanding of family is needed to help management researchers explain why organizational actors respond differently to organizational actions (e.g., new HR policies), how organizations influence actors’ families, and how these influences feed back into the organization. Fortunately, management researchers do not need to begin de novo to construct detailed descriptions of families and their impact on family members. Researchers from various disciplines such as psychology, sociology, and education have already done much theorizing under the rubric of “family science” to describe how family-member relationships, family structures, and family events affect key individual outcomes such as personality, health, emotional well-being, and economic status – outcomes that have important implications for management research.
Although some management scholars have used specific insights from family science (e.g., Distelberg & Blow, 2011; Dyer, 1986; Eddleston & Kidwell, 2012; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), calls to leverage family science theories (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Dyer, 2006; James, Jennings, & Breitkreuz, 2012; Olson, Zuiker, Danes, Stafford, Heck, & Duncan, 2003; Rogoff & Heck, 2003) have gone largely unheeded. Management researchers have rarely drawn upon the rich descriptions of family found in family science research. Failure to do so, we submit, overlooks an opportunity for management scholars to develop richer theoretical models that link family to organizational behavior and thus better explain why individuals respond differently to a given organizational context. Our hope is that a systematic review of family science will yield new theory development by increasing management researchers’ exposure to the detailed descriptions of family provided by family science research.

We take a step toward describing family science theories and explaining how they can be leveraged to develop theory about outcomes and relationships of interest to management scholars. In particular, we selected seven heavily cited family science theories and describe their central constructs, theoretical logic, and predictions. For each theory, we then review the pioneering studies that have applied it in an organizational context, and use what has been learned to describe potentially useful ways that each theory might be further leveraged to advance management research. Our review can be read from beginning-to-end for readers interested in learning about the major family science theories and how they might apply in management research. Alternatively, it can be read as a “menu” wherein researchers focus on the theory or theories that appear most relevant to their research interests. Our review furnishes references for readers interested in a deeper understanding of the research supporting each theory.
2. Families and Family Science in Management Research

In a few topic areas, management researchers have made considerable progress investigating reciprocal relationships between family and organizational life. Drawing on ideas from organizational theory (Stinchcombe, 1965), for example, researchers have widely acknowledged that behaviors in organizations are imprinted during an individuals’ youth (Jaskiewicz, Combs, & Rau, 2015a; Schoar & Zuo, 2011). Also, decades of management research have shown that work demands can interfere with family responsibilities and family demands can interfere with work responsibilities (Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Hall, 1972; Staines, 1980; Voydanoff, 1980), and described ways that organizational actors manage the work-family interface (Ashforth et al., 2000; Voydanoff, 2002). Gender is another factor that is central to both families and organizations. Gender influences how families divide labor within households (Bianchi et al., 2000; Gupta, 1999; Spitze, 1994) and how family members manage the work-family interface (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000). For organizations, gender influences HR practices and employee behavior (e.g., compensation practices – Gerhart, 2000; leadership style – Eagly & Johnson, 1990; team diversity – Jackson & Joshi, 2004), upper echelons (e.g., leadership roles – Adams & Ferreira, 2009; Post & Byron, 2015; board diversity – Campbell & Mínguez-Vera, 2008), and overall organizational success (Jennings & McDougald, 2007; Vieito, 2012).

For two reasons, we largely ignore these bodies of management research in our review. First, organizational scholars developed much of the research describing how employees manage the work-family interface (e.g., boundary theory – Ashforth et al., 2000; work-family border theory – Clark, 2000), and our purpose is to increase management researchers’ exposure to theory about families that comes from outside of traditional organizational research. Second, while imprinting, work-family interface, and gender research has shown that work and family influence
each other in important ways, it has not drawn on the rich descriptions of family-member relationships, family structures, and family events found in family science theories. As such, it has not leveraged insights from these rich descriptions to construct management theory that better explains why organizational actors respond differently to given organizational contexts. Family science also should help management researchers more fully explain how organizations influence actors’ families and, in turn, describe the positive (e.g., commitment, resources) and negative (e.g., burnout, deviance) ways these influences return to organizations.

Family science is the academic field that investigates families, their structure, relationships, processes, and outcomes. The field emerged from early researchers’ call to develop generalizable and relevant theories that describe families (e.g., Hill, Katz, & Simpson, 1957), and grew rapidly from the late 1950s as scholars developed and tested a wide variety of theoretical models that describe family phenomena from multiple perspectives (Holman & Burr, 1980; Lavee & Dolahitte, 1991). We selected seven of these theories based on their ongoing impact within family science. Specifically, we evaluated the citation count of family science theories based on published papers in prominent family science journals, such as Journal of Marriage and Family and Journal of Family Issues, and review only those that continue to garner scholarly attention. These are foundational theories that have been supported and extended over time and that have broad-based implications for management research.

After describing each of the seven theories, we review pioneering studies that have leveraged the theory in an organizational context – whether from a management or family science perspective, and use what has been learned thus far to map a research agenda for how the theory could be further leveraged in management research. As we do so, we also distinguish between implications from the family of origin (i.e., the family context in which an individual grew up) and the current family (i.e., the family context in which an individual currently lives). This is important
because while the family of origin influences how an individual behaves as an adult (e.g.,
parenting style), it is historical and thus does not respond to the individual’s current organization’s
actions (i.e., no feedback loop). The current family, in contrast, co-exists with the organizational
context and thus can involve reciprocal relationships (e.g., stress in one domain can affect behavior
in the other).

Among the seven family science theories that we review, family systems theory and family
development theory are broad perspectives with roots, respectively, in general system theory and
life cycle models from sociology. Thus, we use these two theories as umbrellas under which we
organize the five other theories. Family systems theory describes the patterns that guide family-
member interactions. We classified (1) family communication patterns theory, (2) the family niche
model of birth order and personality, and (3) parental control theory as “Theories of Family
Systems” because each describes a specific set of family-member interactions. Family
development theory describes how families experience systematic changes as they move through
life stages. We classified (1) the ABCX model of family stress and (2) intergenerational solidarity
theory as “Theories of Family Development” because each describes a specific set of family
member roles, family stages, and/or transitions. Table 1 provides an overview of these theories.

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3. Family Systems Theory

3.1 Overview of Family Systems Theory

Family systems theory has its roots in general systems theory and has been regularly
applied in family therapy (Bavelas & Segal, 1982; Broderick, 1993). According to general systems
theory, it is not the structure or the characteristics of an object that define it but its interactions
with other objects (von Bertalanffy, 1968). Applied to family systems, objects are people and their interactions are based on communication. Psychiatrists applying family systems theory have looked at the whole family in order to understand the symptoms of a patient or couple. The communication patterns and processes that link family members define the family system. The family system in this context is dynamic, open, and characterized by circular rather than causal or linear communication (Broderick, 1993). Moreover, family systems theory focuses on the relevance of current communication over initial conditions to explain a family’s status quo (Bavelas & Segal, 1982). As a result, family systems theory applies to one’s current family.

Because communication processes are circular (i.e., bi-directional), family systems react to inputs with feedback. According to family systems theory, positive feedback loops encourage change whereas negative feedback loops entrench a status quo. Despite the straightforward tenets of family systems theory, its practical application is complex in the sense that it requires the analyst to decipher conscious and unconscious communication, specifically the information that is encoded by the sender and the recipients’ ability to decode this information (Hall, 2010).

Starting from a basic recognition that individual outcomes are influenced by complex family systems, considerable research has sought to understand the principal family dimensions that nurture family functioning (e.g., Raush, Greif, & Nugent, 1979; Olson, 2000). In one notable typology, McCubbin and McCubbin (1988) described family characteristics such as (1) celebrating special events, (2) health, and (3) communication, and explained how different configurations of these characteristics enhanced or retarded family resilience in the face of a crisis during different stages of the family lifecycle.

Perhaps the best known family system model is the circumplex model developed by Olson and colleagues (Olson, Sprenkle, & Russell, 1979; Olson, Russell, & Sprenkle, 1983; Olson, 1986; 2000). It leverages the key family dimensions of cohesion, flexibility, and communication to
explain family outcomes. Family cohesion “is defined as the emotional bonding that family members have towards one another” (Olson, 2000, p. 145). Family flexibility is “the amount of change in its leadership, role relationships and relationship rules” (Olson, 2000, p. 146). The third dimension, family communication, encompasses the whole family’s listening skills (e.g., empathy and attention), speaking skills (e.g., speaking precision and speaking for oneself rather than others), self-disclosure (e.g., sharing feelings and relationship cues), clarity, continuity tracking (e.g., staying focused), and respect and regard (e.g., affective aspects of communication and problem-solving skills) (Olson, 2000). The circumplex model describes how specific combinations of different levels of cohesion and flexibility interact with communication quality to affect the functioning of the current family.

According to the circumplex model, moderate combinations of cohesion and flexibility lead to balanced family systems that are characterized by positive family-member communication and proper reaction to stress (e.g., work-life conflict) or crisis (e.g., job loss) (Olson et al., 1979; Olson, 2000). In contrast, combinations involving more extreme levels of cohesion (disengaged or enmeshed) and flexibility (chaotic or rigid) harm family functioning and disable proper family system reactions to stress or crisis (Thomas & Olson, 1993). Cohesion and flexibility inform the type of communication most likely found in a given family, and communication patterns determine how a family might move among cohesion/flexibility configurations. For instance, in the absence of proper communication among family members, an otherwise balanced family system might become entrenched in an unbalanced, poorly functioning state when a crisis occurs.

Research on family systems theory in general and the circumplex model in particular has generated strong empirical support. For example, Barnes and Olson (1985) and Rodick, Henggeler, and Hanson (1986) found that balanced family types enjoy significantly better communication skills than unbalanced families, and that better communication skills increase the chance that
families remain functional over time. Regarding unbalanced families, Clarke (1984) showed that schizophrenic, neurotic, and other individual traits requiring therapy are more likely to be found among people from unbalanced families. More generally, balanced families are able to address stress and crisis events and return to a balanced family structure more quickly after such events. Balanced families not only demonstrate more resilience (Conger & Conger, 2002) but also possess the ability to mobilize family resources in order to address external or internal challenges. As a result, the circumplex model might help describe how one’s current family will react to organizational events that affect a family member (e.g., managerial placement abroad, 100 hour work week) and the extent to which they can depend on their family system to compensate for the negative implications of these events. The model also might be used to describe how one’s current family structure might shape how he or she reacts as an employee to situations at work.

One challenge with family systems theory and the circumplex model, in particular, is that it is quite complex, with a family’s position along three multi-dimensional constructs interacting to predict a number of interrelated outcomes. With its roots in family counseling, the model was initially investigated on a case-by-case basis by therapists who spent time with each family member. There is evidence, however, that more quantitative tests of the theory do not always yield the same insights as do case studies (Olson & Lavee, 1989). Part of the problem is that many early studies only surveyed a single family member, but capturing complex family dynamics using survey methods remains a challenge, and it appears that triangulating survey results with case studies is critical for establishing validity (Olson & Lavee, 1989).

3.2 Family Systems Theory Research in the Context of Organizations

Of the theories we review, family systems theory has attracted the most attention from management researchers. A few entrepreneurship studies drew on family systems theory, but it has
thus far mostly attracted attention from management researchers interested in family business and
OB. Family business researchers have long pointed to the relevance of family systems theory for
understanding the intricate relationship between family and business systems. Davis and Stern
(1981) and Davis (1983), for example, pointed to ways that the family and the business form a
joint system in which family-based principles can hinder effective business decisions. Other
studies have drawn on family systems theory to describe how one particular aspect of a family
system, such as the parent-child relationship (Dumas, 1989, 1992) and intergenerational rivalry
(Grote, 2003), hamper rational decision-making in family businesses. Likewise, family businesses
can challenge the family system. Shepherd (2009), for example, explained how the emotional
intelligence of individual family members and the emotional capability of the family as a whole
influence families during grief recovery after the loss of a business. The family system of the
business family also can impact non-family employees. Distelberg and Blow (2011) showed how
exclusive communication among family members in a family firm diminished communication
with non-family employees, thereby reducing morale among non-family employees and
encouraging a secondary communication network that excluded family members.

Most of these studies, however, have done little more than point to the fact that family
systems influence or are influenced by the business, or assess only one system dimension (e.g.,
dyadic relationship quality) without embracing the complex multidimensional family system that
family systems theory describes. One exception is Distelberg and Sorenson’s (2009) description of
five archetypes of family business based on the family’s emphasis on family system development,
business system development, or both. Other recent exceptions adopted the circumplex model and
found that effective family functioning is critical for successful successor development (Lansberg
& Astrachan, 1994) and family business sustainability (Danes, Lee, Stafford, & Heck, 2008;
Stafford, Duncan, Danes, & Winter, 1999).
OB is a second management domain that has started to adopt family systems theory. Caligiuri, Hyland, Joshi, and Bross (1998) showed that elements of the family system (i.e., family support, communication, and adaptability) influenced expatriate families’ adjustment in a host country, which then influenced the expatriate’s commitment to work. Grzywacz, Carlson, Kacmar, and Wayne (2007) introduced family-work facilitation as the extent to which an individual’s engagement in the work or family system enables her or him to grow in the other system. The authors concluded that organizations need to be aware of, foster, and actively manage family-work facilitation. Hammer, Bauer, and Grandey (2003) used family systems theory to ground their study of spillover effects from conflicts between the family system and a spouse’s work. They found that work withdrawal (i.e., work interruptions, lateness, and absence) is a common strategy for individuals to deal with their own and their partner’s work-family stress, suggesting that work withdrawal is an adaptive mechanism for dealing with stress from the family system. In a similar study, Hammer, Neal, Newsom, Brockwood, and Colton (2005) described how the use of flexible work arrangements (e.g., job-sharing, unpaid leave) should contribute to employees’ job satisfaction. To the authors’ surprise, however, the use of such support also fostered female employees’ family-work conflicts. Building upon family systems theory, the authors speculated that female employees who use work support do not benefit from this support because their families might expect them – as the main family caregivers in a gendered society – to use such additional resources to take on even more family responsibilities. Finally, Ferguson, Carlson, Boswell, Whitten, Butts, and Kacmar (in press) developed and tested a family systems model of turnover that includes two paths – one for the employee and the other for the spouse – through which the use of a mobile device for work during family time relates to turnover intentions. Use of a mobile device for work during family time was associated with greater work-to-family conflict and burnout, and lower organizational commitment for the employee. For spouses, the employee's
use of a mobile device for work during family time and greater work-to-family conflict were
associated with increased resentment and lower spousal commitment to the employee’s
organization.

Entrepreneurship research is a final area that, in a small way, has adopted family systems
theory. Dyer (1994; 2003) pointed to the important role that a person’s original family system has
for fostering and supporting subsequent entrepreneurship careers, and a few studies described how
one or two elements of an entrepreneur’s original family system fuel entrepreneurial career choices
(Zellweger, Sieger, & Halter, 2011), entrepreneurial motivation and skills (Jaskiewicz et al.,
2015a), and opportunity recognition and venture creation (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003).

3.3 Implications of Family Systems Theory for Management Research

Family system theory shows that family structure, communication, and relationships affect
how people view challenges, interact with others, and respond to stress. More generally, we see
opportunities for management researchers to leverage family systems to better explain attitudes
and behaviors at work, and how organizations, in turn, impact families.

For researchers interested in understanding the work-family interface, family systems
theory implies that future studies can go beyond individual-level theories (e.g., boundary theory,
role theory), including crossover individual-level theories (e.g., Hammer et al., 2003), and move
toward a multivariate configurational approach. Grzywacz et al. (2007) took an important step by
developing a theoretical model wherein engagement in either the work or family system changes
employees’ resource configurations, which provides a catalyst that changes the other system. One
possibility might be to take a process model like Grzywacz et al.’s (2007) and use it to investigate
changes across multiple elements of a family system, such as described by Olsen (2000) or
McCubbin and McCubbin (1988), to better explain how events initiated within either the family or work system become a catalyst that changes how key elements of the other system interact.

While OB research has focused on the relationship between work and the current family, entrepreneurship research has focused on the family of origin. It seems likely, however, that gains could be achieved in both literatures by shifting the focal family. That is, it seems likely that employees’ original family system might affect attitudes and behavior at work and the way employees respond to changes in organizational design and culture. For example, employees originally from highly enmeshed and rigid families (i.e., high in closeness, loyalty, and dependency, and subject to strict leadership and discipline – Olson, 2000) might find it difficult to be effective in decentralized, team-based, organizational designs. Likewise, elements of an entrepreneur’s current family might either encourage or discourage the search for entrepreneurial opportunities, the desire to take action, and the success of those outcomes. For example, are people from more cohesive families less likely to strike out independently or embrace entrepreneurial opportunities that negatively affect family time? For those who do become entrepreneurs, do more cohesive family systems provide a stronger foundation for overcoming challenges? The current family is also likely to be influenced by outcomes of the entrepreneurial process. Shephard (2009), for example, theorized that grief hampers entrepreneurs’ ability to learn from failure. Might grief hamper the ability of an entrepreneur’s family system to regain balance?

Finally, there are areas of management research where family systems theory has been largely absent, such as organization theory or strategic management. Taking strategic management as an example, it seems likely that CEOs’ and other top managers’ current family systems can either support or interfere with their organizational effectiveness, and that (1) the impact of the family system on the organization is potentially broader than at lower levels, and (2) family systems and their impact might be quite different due to the nature of their jobs and membership in
the social elite. As an example of how a CEO’s family system might have broad impact, the level of flexibility and cohesion in the CEO’s family system could spill over into how CEOs allocate incentives among top managers and how those managers are held accountable. CEOs with flexibly connected current families (i.e., shared leadership, democratic discipline, family member interdependence) might, for instance, avoid TMT pay dispersion and foster a similarly cohesive and collaborative culture among managers (Fredrickson, Davis-Blake, & Sanders, 2010; Jaskiewicz, Block, Miller, & Combs, 2015) while those with separated current families (i.e., little closeness or loyalty, and independent family members) might encourage competition among top managers (Lee, Lev, & Yeo, 2008). With respect to how family systems might impact top managers differently, on one hand, the high work-related stress relative to other managers seems likely to lead to more severe consequences for managers’ family systems (e.g., disengaged marriage, chaotic parent-child relationship). On the other hand, CEOs’ high earnings and social status might offer stress-reducing avenues for achieving performance across a wide-range of household tasks that might facilitate greater balance (e.g., expensive nannies on-call 24-7).

4 Family Communication Patterns Theory

4.1 Overview of Family Communication Patterns Theory

Family communication patterns theory (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994; Ritchie & Fitzpatrick, 1990) describes specific ways in which family members interact and communicate. According to the theory, family communication varies across two dimensions: conversation and conformity. Conversation is the degree to which family members are encouraged to freely interact with one another and participate in discussions (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Parents who are high in conversation encourage their children to exchange ideas, examine multiple sides of an issue, and express feelings. Parents high in conversation also communicate with their children for relational
reasons (e.g., affection) (Barbato, Graham, & Perse, 2003) and tend to view communication as
rewarding (Avtgis, 1999). Conformity, in contrast, refers to a family culture that is homogenous in
terms of attitudes, beliefs, and values (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Thus, parents who are high in
conformity expect obedience from their children and communicate with their children for
influential reasons (e.g., control) (Barbato et al., 2003).

Based on the combination of these two dimensions, family communications patterns theory
has described four types of communication patterns: consensual (high conversation, high
conformity), protective (low conversation, high conformity), pluralistic (high conversation, low
conformity), and laissez-faire (low conversation, low conformity). Although the theory had
described four communication patterns, subsequent empirical tests focused on the two distinct
dimensions of conformity and conversation rather than the four pattern types (e.g., Afifi & Olson,
2005; Huang, 1999; Schrodt, & Ledbetter, 2007; Schrodt, Ledbetter, & Ohrt, 2007). Specifically,
researchers have examined how the family of origin’s high versus low conformity and high versus
low conversation relate to a number of outcomes for family members.

These studies showed that families that were on the high end of the conversation dimension
developed mentally healthy individuals (Schrodt & Ledbetter, 2007; Schrodt et al., 2007) who had
a desire for and a belief that they are in control of events in their lives. They possessed higher self-
estee, disclosed more personal information to others, and developed stronger social skills
(Huang, 1999). The family of origin’s conversation pattern also influences willingness to
communicate in order to develop relationships (Barbato et al., 2003). Finally, Koerner and
Fitzpatrick (1997) found that high conversation family members did not avoid conflict. Instead,
they sought social support to reduce the frequency of negative feelings, and thus the need to
express anger when in conflict (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997). Families on the low end of this
dimension interact less frequently and do not openly discuss topics (Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997).
Studies also showed that families on the high end of the conformity dimension developed individuals who were more likely to suffer from mental health issues and lacked healthy relationships. In terms of personality and well-being, individuals from high conformity families maintain higher levels of controlling behavior in order to gain social approval, are less guided by inner values and beliefs, tend to be shy socially (Kelly, Keaten, Finch, Duarte, Hoffman, & Michels, 2002), and lack self-esteem (Huang, 1999). These individuals are more passive, non-assertive, and are much more likely to assume a follower role in group situations (Schrodt et al., 2007). Finally, families that were high in conformity raised individuals who handled conflict less effectively (Dumlao & Botta, 2000; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 1997; Shearman & Dumlao, 2008). Families on the low end of this dimension were characterized by more individuality, uniqueness, and independence (Koerner & Fitzpatrick).

Though tests of family communication patterns theory suggest that both high conversation and low conformity in the family of origin are associated with the best outcomes in terms of personality, well-being, and relationship quality, offering indirect support for the theory’s prediction that pluralistic communication patterns are most desirable (Fitzpatrick & Ritchie, 1994), we observed at least two empirical challenges that remain. First, many studies only measured one of the two key dimensions. As a result, researchers lack empirical evidence on the interaction between the two dimensions of conversation and conformity. Second, most studies investigated either husband-wife or parent-child relationships, leaving it unclear whether the theory generalizes across many other family relationships, such as ex-wife and ex-husband, men and mother in-law, same-sex partners, grandchild and grandparent (Floyd & Morman, 2014).
4.2 Family Communication Patterns Theory Research in the Context of Organizations

A few studies already recognized the value of the theory and highlight how family communication patterns shape individuals’ confidence, decision-making capacity, and leadership. Prasitthipab (2008) provided evidence that non-academic university staff from high conversation and low conformity families were more likely to engage in relationship- rather than task-motivated leadership. Individuals from such families were also more effective at managing conflicts among coworkers (Koesten, 2004) and more likely to express dissent to superiors (Buckner, Ledbetter & Bridge, 2013) than individuals from low conversation and high conformity families.

While most family communication research focused on the original family, family business researchers have leveraged the theory to investigate links between the current business family’s communication patterns and workplace outcomes. Carmon and Pearson (2013), for example, found that when the controlling family was high on conversation and low on conformity, family member employees were more involved in both the current family and the family business. Further, business families that were high in conversation and moderate in conformity appeared to foster innovativeness because they guided, but did not limit, next-generation members’ pursuit of novel ideas (Sciascia, Clinton, Nason, James, & Rivera-Algarin, 2013).

Finally, workplace communication appears to impact current family communication. Ritchie (1997) showed that workplace communication that favors openness, autonomy, and initiation was positively associated with conversation and negatively related to conformity in employees' current family. This effect was stronger for women than for men.

4.3 Implications of Family Communication Patterns Theory for Management Research

While management scholars agree that effective communication is an important antecedent for a number of work-related behaviors and outcomes, such as team effectiveness, conflict
management, and firm performance, researchers still know relatively little about factors that shape
the communications patterns that employees, managers, and entrepreneurs bring to the workplace.
The few organizational studies thus far that have utilized family communication patterns theory
suggest that this theory has potential to help fill an important gap.

Among regular employees, those from high conformity and low conversation original
families might, for example, perform better as followers while those from high conversation and
low conformity original families might be effective leaders. The latter were nurtured and
encouraged to think creatively from a very young age and thus might also perform well in jobs
requiring creativity and/or critical thinking (Fitzpatrick, Marshall, Leutwiler, & Krcmar, 1996). In
contrast, employees raised in low conversation and high conformity families who become
supervisors might be more likely to become abusive by passing their expectations for obedience to
their direct reports through ineffective communication patterns such as belittling them or
correcting their behavior in front of others.

Higher up in organizations, because the communication style that leaders bring to boards of
directors and top management teams were imprinted from their families during youth (Schoar &
Zuo, 2011), it might be fruitful to investigate how leaders’ adopted communication pattern effects
the amount of input and debate in top management teams and boards, and how this input shapes
important decisions, such as the quality of acquisition targets. Family communication patterns
might also affect the development of an individual’s entrepreneurial skills. For instance, high
conversation families that encourage open dialogue about different topics are consistent with
research showing that exposure to and comfort with a wide variety of information sources relates
positively to opportunity recognition (Dyer, Gregersen, & Christensen, 2008). Entrepreneurs from
high conformity families might, in contrast, prematurely dismiss potentially viable opportunities.
In addition to more obvious main effects, it seems likely that the communications patterns adopted from a family of origin might interact with other variables in complex ways. Take for example, the relationship between impression management and performance. Sincerely executed ingratiation tactics such as opinion conformity increases supervisors' performance ratings (Wayne & Kacmar, 1991). The strength of the ingratiation-performance relationship, however, could vary based on the family communication pattern in which the ingratiator grew up. Employees from high conformity families were taught to avoid conflict and to display conformity in all conversations (Fitzpatrick, 2004). Thus, these individuals are extremely practiced in opinion conformity and, because of this, their ingratiation tactics might appear sincere and strengthen the positive ingratiation-performance relationship. Employees who grew up in conversation-orientated families were taught to openly exchange ideas and question others' positions. Thus, these individuals are far less practiced in opinion conformity and their ingratiation tactics may not appear sincere, which would weaken the positive ingratiation-performance relationship. To offer an example in another context, corporate governance researchers have been puzzled by the lack of demonstrated impact of structurally independent boards (Dalton, Daily, Ellstrand, & Johnson, 1998), but it seems possible that the impact of such board members is influenced by the communication orientation that was imprinted upon the CEO. That is, the influence of independent directors might only shine through in contexts where the CEO encourages dialogue and does not force conformity.

While most family science research has linked communications patterns in the original family to family members’ subsequent behaviors, management scholars might find it particularly fruitful to investigate how the current family’s communication (e.g., between spouses) both impacts and is impacted by the workplace. For example, are spouses raised in high conversation families of origin able to establish open and positive communication patterns with their partners that then spill over into the workplace? Are spouses raised in high conversation families of origin
able to apply the negotiation skills learned at work to defuse the arguments they have with their spouse? Can spouses raised in high conformity families, but who have learned to share control with their spouse at home, transfer this learned behavior to the workplace?

Finally, we note that family science research has so far neglected how communication patterns at work might impact communication patterns at home (for an exception see Ritchie, 1997). Workplace communication might not only impact family communication, but this impact could feed back to the organization. Employees and managers who are accustomed to setting high standards and demanding compliance might, for example, carry this pressure for (too) high conformity communication into the home, which could lead to negative outcomes (e.g., divorce) that, in turn, create problems in the workplace (e.g., deviance, burnout). In another context, entrepreneurs are well known for integrating family into their venture activities (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003; Rogoff & Heck, 2003), so it seems likely that new venture attributes (e.g., growth rates, resource shortages, employee morale) might impact communication in entrepreneurs’ current families. Peak periods of stress, for example, might drive down conversation and increase conformity oriented communication, whereas a spirit of hopefulness among founders might yield more conversation and less conformity communication patterns in the founders’ families, and these effects might circle back to affect how the entrepreneur communicates with other members of the start-up team.

5 The Family Niche Model of Birth Order and Personality

5.1 Overview of the Family Niche Model of Birth Order and Personality

The question of whether birth order influences personality has led to more than 2,000 studies since the 1930s, mainly in the field of psychology (Beer & Horn, 2000; Healey & Ellis, 2007). However, in their 1983 review of the previous 40 years of research on the topic, Ernst and
Angst, came to the conclusion that many studies supporting a birth order-personality relationship suffered from critical methodological artifacts. In particular, the authors pointed out that controls for family size and socioeconomic status were regularly absent and that once these controls were included, results in favor of a birth order-personality relationship disappeared. Following this sobering conclusion, it took 15 years before a new theory on the role of birth order-personality link was able to successfully counter these claims.

In his groundbreaking book, “Born to rebel: Birth order, family dynamics, and creative lives,” Frank Sulloway (1996) dismissed the criticism of Ernst and Angst (1983) and provided support for his revised theory. Whereas prior theory had assumed that parents treat children differently according to birth order (e.g., coddling the lastborn and/or placing higher expectations on the firstborn), Sulloway (1996) theorized that differences among siblings were a result of children’s competition for a niche within the family. According to him, firstborn children can choose their niche freely because they lack competition. Firstborns, therefore, tend to satisfy parental demands by ensuring achievement at school and displaying responsible, conservative, and more individualistic behaviors. Sulloway’s meta-analysis (1996) showed that firstborns were less open to experience and less agreeable, but more conscientious than laterborn children. Laterborn children, in contrast, had to find ways to distinguish themselves from firstborns in order to gain status within the family. According to Sulloway (1996), laterborn children, therefore, looked for an unoccupied niche within the family. As a result of bullying by older siblings, laterborn children identified less with their parents, shared more egalitarian and anti-authoritarian views, and were more empathetic and open to new experiences (Healey & Ellis, 2007).

Although results from studies that have tested Sulloway’s theory have been generally supportive, there is also converging agreement that methodological artifacts lower effects of birth order on personality traits, attitudes, and behaviors. Ignored differences in social class, parental
personality, ethnicity, and age differences between siblings across families (e.g., Behrman & Taubman, 1986; Healey & Ellis, 2007; Paulhus, Trapnell, & Chen, 1999) generated heterogeneity in the results from studies that use between-family designs. Accordingly, within-family study designs that control for such family differences have showed more powerful and valid results. Indeed, within-family studies have quite consistently shown that firstborns are more achieving and conscientious, while laterborn children are more liberal, agreeable, and rebellious (e.g., Healey & Ellis, 2007; Paulhus et al., 1999). Although management research has already acknowledged the influence of personality in organizations (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Judge & Ilies, 2002), the family niche model has the potential to reach beyond personality because it also predicts attitudes and behaviors (Eckstein, Aycock, Sperber, McDonald, Van Wiesner, Watts, & Ginsburg, 2010; Schierbeek & Newion, 1990; Salmon, 2003). It also might serve as an important moderator in that person-environment fit effects are likely to be strengthened by birth order effects (e.g., extroverted first- and second-born children might have different levels of fit with specific jobs that lend themselves to extroversion).

5.2 Family Niche Model of Birth Order and Personality Research in the Context of Organizations

There are only a few studies that have addressed birth order in organizational contexts. In particular, birth order appears to matter for career choice and achievement. Entrepreneurship research has used the higher achievement orientation of firstborns to help explain why the majority of entrepreneurs are firstborns (Lee, 1996). Brush (1992) further found that firstborn daughters, like firstborn sons, were most likely to become business owners. In an employment context, Leong, Hartung, Goy, and Gaylor (2001) explained that career counselors and advisors need to pay attention to birth order effects. Despite the correlation between vocational interests and career
preferences with birth order, however, economists have not found significant birth order effects on wages (Behrman & Taubman, 1986; Kessler, 1991). Together, these studies suggest that the predictive power of birth order rises when applied to specific contexts. Birth order has been found to be more important in particular cultures (e.g., Asian; Bloom & van Reenen, 2007), life cycle stages (e.g., early adulthood; Sulloway, 1997), and situations (e.g., competitive work environments; Sulloway, 1997), and when combined with other variables, such as gender (e.g., firstborn sons; Bennedsen et al., 2007; Lansberg, 1991). Management researchers should, therefore, consider birth order in contexts where it is likely to apply but not expect broad birth order effects on individual outcomes (e.g., birth order effect on wages – Kessler, 1991) (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983).

5.3 Implications of the Family Niche Model of Birth Order and Personality for Management Research

While family science research on birth order effects bounced back following Sulloway’s (1996) seminal work, as our brief review demonstrates, management research has not yet drawn much on Sulloway’s birth order theory. This is surprising because birth order is an important predictor of individual attitudes and behaviors such as achievement orientation (Herrera, Zajonc, Wieczorkowska, & Cichomski, 2003), leadership (Newman & Taylor, 1994), or openness to change (Gates, Lineberger, Crockett, Hubbard, 1998) that are relevant for organizations. What makes birth order theory particularly appealing to management research is that while the competition among siblings for scarce resources occurs before they reach college – and, thus, while they grow up in their family of origin – it has implications for later on when they compete for scarce resources “in corporate board rooms, politics and military life” (Sulloway, 1996, p. 70).
Birth order might not only help explain who in the family of origin is most likely to pursue a particular career, but birth order also might influence how different siblings go about it. For instance, in the entrepreneurship context, younger siblings have more freedom to choose careers and be creative, suggesting that they might be more likely to “create” opportunities (Alvarez & Barney, 2007) through “effectuation” behaviors in new ventures (Sarasvathy, 2001). Firstborn children, in contrast, might be more likely to pursue “discovered” opportunities (Alvarez & Barney, 2007) through meticulous planning and causation-linked behaviors (Sarasvathy, 2001). Birth order also might help explain important differences among CEOs in terms of their strategic preferences. For instance, firstborn children might offer a more conservative risk-taking profile (Dubno, Bedrosian, & Freedman, 1969; Dubno & Freedman, 1971). Laterborn children, in contrast, might take more aggressive risks and develop more creative strategies (Berger & Ivancevich, 1973). Accordingly, birth order differences might help explain who among potential successors, are most likely to become CEOs in different contexts and, once there, the level of “fit” between the CEO and the strategic challenges confronting the organization.

More generally, the family niche model also could be used to explain and predict job performance and satisfaction based on an individual’s person-environment fit (e.g., Caplan, 1987). Firstborns, for example, are more achievement-oriented and conscientious (Sulloway, 1996), which are characteristics that predict effective job performance among employees and managers (e.g., Barrick & Mount, 1991; Steers, 1975). However, because they also strive to satisfy parental demands, firstborns might suffer from burnout and have relatively lower job satisfaction.

Laterborn siblings, on the other hand, had to work to find a way to distinguish themselves from their older siblings, making them more open to new experiences (Sulloway, 1996) and allowing them to excel in jobs that require being receptive to constant change, such as consulting or positions that require continuous learning.
Research also might advance by investigating the extent to which birth order effects interact with other known factors that impact person-environment fit, such as personality. Birth order affects personality (Eckstein et al., 2010; Sulloway, 1996), but personality is also strongly influenced by genetic tendencies and elements in the environment that extend far beyond birth order (e.g., exposure to role models). Thus, it seems that when birth order and personality are in alignment – i.e., conscientious children who are born first – the extent to which a person fits or does not fit with certain jobs and careers might be much stronger. What happens, in contrast, to laterborn children who naturally possess tendencies toward firstborn traits such as extroversion and conscientiousness? Do their natural tendencies interact with birth order to develop an openness to experience that allows them to be generalists, or to play important boundary spanning roles in organizations? What about first-born siblings who are naturally open and curious, but not particularly conscientious? Perhaps the high expectations in terms of leadership and achievement with which firstborns are mantled might prompt the imposter phenomenon wherein highly successful individuals fail to internalize their success and fear being viewed as imposters by their colleagues (Clance & Imes, 1978), resulting in negative outcomes such as work-family conflict and burnout (Crawford, Shanine, Whitman, & Kacmar, 2016; Whitman & Shanine, 2012).

If birth order does impact employee-person fit, then it also should help explain other important relationships. The mix of first- and laterborn children might, for example, impact team effectiveness. Teams composed of all laterborn siblings should thrive because they possess higher levels of openness-to-experience that allows them to effectively manage ambiguity (Healey & Ellis, 2007). Teams composed of all firstborn siblings, in contrast, might not fare as well because their higher levels of conscientiousness seek orderliness, not ambiguity, and all would maneuver to be the leader. Mixed teams also might struggle as firstborn siblings attempt to create order that laterborn siblings resist.
The family niche model also might be used to study family outcome variables that are of relevance to management scholars. The model is grounded in the idea that siblings must vie for a niche wherein they can garner their parents’ attention. Accordingly, being successful at work might change the relationship among adult siblings in the way that they compete for their parents’ emotional and physical resources. One child's success as an entrepreneur, employee, or manager might draw parents’ attention, and perhaps resources (e.g., parents as investors), making the other siblings work harder to gain parental approval and support and, thereby, increasing overall sibling rivalry, as well as individual success. Research examining how “spillover” from one family member affects others has focused almost exclusively on spouses (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005; Ferguson, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2015), but the family niche model of birth order suggests that spillover could occur across households via sibling rivalry.

6 Parental Control Theory

6.1 Overview of Parental Control Theory

Baumrind’s (1971) theory of parental control (also known as the theory of parenting styles) predicts how parenting style in the family of origin affects individuals’ (i.e., adult, adolescent, and child) behavior and personality. The main styles are: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Maccoby and Martin (1983) subsequently divided permissive parenting into two different types: indulgent and negligent. Parental control theory predicts that children from authoritative parents – who provide a balance between parental demandingness and responsiveness – have the best outcomes in terms of mental health, independence, self-esteem, and achievement orientation. Authoritarian parents’ restrictive control (i.e., highly demanding, but not responsive), in contrast, retards children’s autonomous decision-making skills, lowers self-esteem, and fosters anxiety and a lost sense of identity (Baumrind, 1971). Finally, the lack of control in indulgent permissive (i.e.,
not demanding, very responsive) and negligent permissive (i.e., not demanding, not responsive) homes results in less mature and less achievement-oriented children.

Research has offered support for Baumrind’s theory and described consequences of parenting styles (Brown & Iyengar, 2008). Adolescents from authoritative parents had higher grades (Dornbusch, Ritter, Leiderman, Roberts, & Fraleigh, 1987), greater psychosocial competence (Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991), and adopted healthier diets and lifestyles (Pearson, Atkin, Biddle, Gorely, & Edwardson, 2010). Steinberg, Elmen, and Mounts (1989) confirmed that authoritativeness facilitated children’s school success. They found that children’s sense of autonomy and a healthy psychological orientation toward school (i.e., positive attitude and belief about school work) mediated the effect of authoritative parenting on school success. Authoritarian parents, in contrast, produced children who were obedient and conformed to rules, but had low self-esteem (DeHart, Pelham, & Tennen, 2006), reported more anxiety, and had less sense of identity (Wolfradt, Hempel, & Miles, 2003). Children from indulgent permissive homes had high self-esteem (Lamborn et al., 1991), which is unwarranted because both types of permissive parents produced children with low grades (Dornbusch et al., 1987) who were less engaged in school and reported greater substance abuse (Lamborn et al., 1991). They also attributed their successes and failures to external causes (Glasgow, Dornbusch, Troyer, Steinberg, & Ritter, 1997).

Despite support for parental control theory, Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, and Darling (1992) showed that its predictive power differed across ethnicities. Specifically, authoritative parenting predicted school achievement for African-, European-, and Hispanic-American adolescents, but not for Asian-American adolescents. Chao (1994) explained that common Chinese approaches to parenting were not properly summarized by parental control theory. McBride-Chang and Chang (1998) similarly found that the four parenting styles were not ideal for classifying
parenting styles among Hong-Kong families. An extension of the number of parenting styles might therefore be needed to ensure that parental control theory also can be applied to non-Western ethnicities (see Watabe & Hibbard, 2014).

6.2 Parental Control Theory Research in the Context of Organizations

Entrepreneurship scholars were first among management researchers to adopt parental control theory. In her study of 320 tenth grade students and 139 small business founders in East Germany, Schmitt-Rodermund (2004) found that authoritative parenting in the family of origin predicted entrepreneurial competence (i.e., leadership, curiosity, entrepreneurial skills) in both samples, which then predicted entrepreneurial interests and entrepreneurial career prospects in the student sample, and early plans for starting an entrepreneurial career, earlier start-up, and greater length of business existence in the founder sample. Similarly, in a sample of Nigerian youth, Tenibiaje (2010) found that authoritative parenting was significantly related to entrepreneurial interest. In a recent study of women entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs in Turkey, Boz, and Ergeneli (2014) found that both samples perceived their mothers as indulgent permissive. However, the women entrepreneurs viewed their fathers as indulgent while the non-entrepreneurs viewed their fathers as authoritarian. In the family business context, Kidwell, Eddleston, Cater, and Kellermanns (2013) predicted that a permissive parenting style might lead to entrepreneurial incompetence, or the Fredo effect (i.e., an incompetent family member employee). They argued that permissiveness (e.g., parental altruism) led to dysfunctional behavior because it reinforced the child’s sense of entitlement (Kidwell et al., 2013). Collectively, these studies showed that parenting style influences the attractiveness of entrepreneurial careers and suggested that perhaps it can also impact an individual’s effectiveness as an entrepreneur.
Outside of entrepreneurship, Murphy and Johnson (2011) predicted in their theoretical model that, due to parental modeling, authoritative parenting in an employee’s family of origin has the most positive influence on an individual’s capacity to become an effective leader. Authoritative parents encourage independence within limits and their disciplinary methods are supportive (Baumrind, 1971), which should help prepare their children to replicate the same behaviors when they assumed leadership roles (Murphy & Johnson, 2011).

Two additional studies showed effects that ran in the other direction; the workplace influenced parenting style in the current family. Greenberger and Goldberg (1989) presented evidence that a mother’s dual high commitment to both work and parenting related to authoritative parenting styles. Stewart and Barling (1996) found that a father’s decision latitude at work was positively related to authoritative parenting, while job demands, job insecurity, and inter-role conflict were all negatively related to authoritative parenting.

6.3 Implications of Parental Control Theory for Management Research

While existing research predicted a theoretical relationship between authoritative parenting and effective leadership (Murphy & Johnson, 2011), future research would benefit from empirically testing this idea. Also, Murphy and Johnson’s model could be expanded to explain and predict how the other parenting styles outlined in the theory might align with different leadership styles. For example, do authoritarian parents, who are highly demanding and nonresponsive to their children, create micro-managing offspring who constantly look over the shoulders of their employees, usurping their creativity and self-esteem? When does a person consciously reject how he or she was parented and work hard to enact a different style as a leader? OB researchers also might use this theory to explain and predict which employees feel entitled (i.e., employees raised by indulgent parents) or to identify those who are destined to become abusive supervisors (i.e., 
employees raised by authoritarian parents who fostered anxiety and retarded their sense of self-worth. Another way OB research might advance is by leveraging parenting style to explain why the same organizational practices have varying degrees of effectiveness for different employees. For example, employees, who were raised by authoritative parents might embrace job autonomy and produce at a high level. Employees raised by authoritarian parents, in contrast, might flounder in jobs that stress autonomy because freedom is a foreign construct with which they have little experience. Rather, these individuals should thrive in highly structured environments.

Entrepreneurship research has moved the farthest in applying parental control theory by showing that parenting is related to interest in and actions toward entrepreneurship (Boz & Ergeneli, 2014; Kidwell et al., 2013; Schmitt-Rodermund, 2004; Tenibiaje, 2010). A logical next step might be to investigate how parenting style from the original family impacts entrepreneurs’ effectiveness during different stages of the entrepreneurial process. It seems likely that while authoritative parenting might help individuals develop skills that are related to entrepreneurship, such as self-efficacy, hard work, and setting challenging goals, success might prove difficult for those from other parenting styles. Entrepreneurs from authoritarian parents might, as rule followers, follow all of the guidelines for starting a new venture but develop timid and uncreative strategies. Children from permissive parents tend to have high self-esteem that is not justified by performance outcomes, so they might jump into entrepreneurial endeavors without realistic expectations.

Finally, whereas the attention to date has been on how one’s family of origin impacts adult behavior, there is some evidence that the workplace can influence parenting style in the current home. For example, successful leaders in top-down organizations might be more likely to raise their children with an authoritarian parenting style. Abusive supervision has harmful consequences for organizations (e.g., Tepper, 2000), thus, scholars also could investigate whether employees,
who work for an abusive supervisor will come home too mentally and emotionally exhausted to effectively parent their children. Rather than providing the structure and guidance their children need, abused employees might be permissive and non-responsive to their children’s needs. Alternatively, do abused employees come home and pass the abuse on to their children as authoritarian parents? There is evidence that work-family and family-work conflict have a positive reciprocal relationship and harmful consequences for organizations in terms of individual stress and depression (e.g., Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992). Thus, OB scholars might analyze whether new organizational practices designed to improve employees’ work-family balance also influence parenting style. Do work-family balance initiatives that provide flex time and the ability to work from home provide employees the ability to shift sufficient resources toward the family and enable them to embrace authoritative parenting? Entrepreneurship scholars also could investigate whether their entrepreneurial experiences influence parenting style. On one hand, entrepreneurs are used to people responding to their demands, which might push them toward a more authoritarian parenting style. On the other hand, the demands of building a new venture might drain their ability to be responsible parents, resulting in more permissive parenting.

7 Family Development Theory

7.1 Overview of Family Development Theory

According to family development theory (Rodgers, 1964) (also known as the family life cycle perspective), family norms and expectations shift in systematic ways across the family’s life cycle (Duvall, 1957; Rodgers, 1964). For example, there are spousal role expectations for individuals following a marriage, but these change with the addition of children, and as children grow and mature. Overall, there are eight stages in the family’s life cycle, which include: (1) establishment, (2) first Parenthood, (3) family with preschool child, (4) family with school-age
child, (5) family with adolescents, (6) family as launching center, (7) family in middle years (i.e., empty nest), and (8) family in retirement (Duvall, 1957; Mederer & Hill, 1983).

By the mid-1970s, there was a growing discomfort with the fact that these linear stages did not properly reflect modern lifestyles. For example, Etzkowitz and Stein (1978) identified alternative living patterns and trends that have since become prevalent today (e.g., divorce, divorced single parenthood, remarriage, voluntary singlehood, voluntary single parenthood, voluntary childlessness, same sex couples, and blended families). Also, McGregor and Ellison (2003) proposed an additional stage of the family life cycle, called the “crowded nest” stage, that accounts for when children delay leaving, return, or never leave, and also when dependent parents come into the home for care.

Overall, depending on the phase in the family’s life cycle, there are certain characteristics and outcomes associated with the family. The majority of the empirical studies in this area have collapsed these stages and focused more broadly on characteristics of families with or without children (e.g., Anderson, Russell, & Schumm, 1983; Chaulk, Johnson, & Bulcroft, 2003; Spanier, Lewis, & Cole, 1975; Stolzenberg, Blair-Loy, & Waite, 1995).

Studied showed that newly married couples without children had high marriage quality (Anderson et al., 1983; Spanier et al., 1975) and traveled more (Wells & Gubar, 1996). Women also spent less time doing household chores at this stage (Rexroat & Shehan, 1987) and these couples adopted household technology for personal and work-related use (Brown & Venkatesh, 2005). Once a couple had children, they were less likely to make risky financial investments, especially in regards to their employment, as they began to save for their child’s college and other anticipated needs (Chaulk et al., 2003). Parents with children were found to be more likely to have marital conflict (Montemayor, 1983), and to have increased conflict between parents and their adolescent children, which contributed to decreased marital satisfaction at this stage (Steinberg &
Silverberg, 1987). Studies also showed that once children left home, men spent more time doing housework (Rexroat & Shehan, 1987), which is one reason why couples again experienced high marriage quality (Anderson et al., 1983; Spanier et al., 1975). Perhaps more importantly, though, these couples no longer had the stress of raising children to negatively influence their relationship. Finally, although marriage quality increased when children leave home, greater distance reduced parent-child relationship quality (Mudrazija, 2014).

One important limitation to family development theory is that it has not fully grappled with the many of today’s alternative family types and living arrangements. Because the predictions of family development theory are derived from the life cycle of traditional families, researchers need to be cautious when applying its predictions to the growing number of novel family types and living arrangements (Walsh, 2012).

7.2 Family Development Theory Research in the Context of Organizations

A number of studies have already leveraged insights from family development theory and applied them to management research. The one family stage that arguably has the most impact on the workplace, and women in particular, is when a couple has children. Once a couple has children, fewer women work (Waite, 1980), although this trend has been steadily declining (Fetterolf & Rudman, 2014). The decision that is made at this stage regarding whether to work or stay home with children has very important consequences for a woman’s career in later stages. For example, studies showed that those who elected to stay at home during this stage were much less likely to work outside the home during later stages and those who did reenter the workforce earned less than those who remained (Fetterolf & Rudman, 2014; Waite, 1980). There are a few factors that greatly influence the postpartum employment decision for women. A woman’s work
commitment and her own mother’s work status have been significantly and positively related to her full-time work status following the birth of a child (Amstey & Whitbourne, 1988).

In dual-earner professional couples with children living at home, women restructured their work (e.g., limit evening work, travel, and weekend work, allow the family schedule to dictate work schedule, etc.) significantly more than did men (Brett & Yogev, 1988), but the difference was less when both spouses worked continuously full-time (Weingarten, 1978). Moreover, when women earned relatively more than their spouses, they felt entitled to contribute less to household chores and childcare (Fetterolf & Rudman, 2014). Compared to when only one spouse made work sacrifices, spouses who cooperated and shared the burden experienced less marital conflict, greater marital satisfaction, and were both more likely to reach their career aspirations (e.g., Brett & Yogev, 1988; Weingarten, 1978). Women coped better, however, when both restructured work, most likely because of social role stereotypes and their social support at work (Brett & Yogev, 1988). Women who worked demanding jobs and took care of children were viewed as “superwomen,” whereas men who do this were not perceived in the same way and did not receive the same kind of social support at work (Brett & Yogev, 1988). Fortunately, this issue has partially improved in many Western countries. For instance, evidence suggests that the rising percentage of fathers taking paternity leave helps women retain their jobs (Ray, Gornick, & Schmidt, 2010).

Another area of research that has applied the family life cycle stages is the family business literature. This makes sense because of the close connection between the family and the firm, and, thus, the close parallel between the firm’s life cycle and the family’s life cycle (Lansberg, 1988; Peiser & Wooten, 1983). For example, succession planning often has not begun until the founders are in the last stage of the family life cycle (Lansberg, 1988). There are typically many challenges at this stage, such as adjusting to an empty nest and more difficult parent-child interactions (Mudrazija, 2014). Moreover, it is difficult to engage in an open discussion of succession issues,
which often has led to a “life cycle crisis” at this juncture in a family business life cycle (Lansberg, 1988; Peiser & Wooten, 1983, p.59).

7.3 Implications of Family Development Theory for Management Research

Advances thus far from family development theory show that children disrupt career progress and create stress at home, but that some couples are better than others at managing parental demands. With the exception of family business research, however, researchers have not drawn implications for how family development stages impact behavior at work. It seems likely that different stages of family development that individuals pass through facilitate or hinder work effectiveness. For instance, OB researchers might seek to determine how family development impacts leader effectiveness. A central leadership task is to secure the most effort possible from employees. Successful leaders are surrounded by subordinates who are willing to go above and beyond job requirements and engage in OCBs. However, when family demands grow, discretionary work behaviors, such as OCB, might decline even when the employees work for a supportive leader. For strategy researchers, it seems that reaching the CEO’s office is unlikely prior to the launching stage when children leave the home, in part because of the time it takes to reach this level, but also because parents at this stage can devote more time and effort to their careers (Gersick, Davis, McCollom, & Lansberg, 1997).

Also, family development research to date only explains outcomes from the introduction of children and largely ignores other stages. Thus, management research might advance by leveraging insights across multiple stages. In the entrepreneurship context, for example, evidence from family development theory showed that financial risk-taking in parents declined when children were young and increased as they reached adolescence (Chaulk et al., 2003), which is consistent with research showing that most entrepreneurs switched from paid employment in their 30s and 40s.
when kids were most likely reaching adolescence (Åstebro & Thompson, 2011). Thus, it seems likely that the presence and age of children also affect entrepreneurs’ actions at other stages of the entrepreneurial process. For example, given the effect of children on financial risk-taking (Chaulk et al., 2003), there might be an increase in risk-taking (e.g., launching a new product or opening an additional outlet) when entrepreneurs reach the empty nest stage. The link between family development stage and financial risk-taking (Chaulk et al., 2003) also might be pertinent for top managers in that whether they still have children at home might interact with other factors that influence risk-taking, such as aspects of CEO compensation (Sanders, 2001) or firm governance (Wiseman & Gomez-Mejia, 1998). For example, the impact of stock options on aggressive risk-taking might be less when top managers still have young children at home.

Management research also might benefit from investigating how non-traditional stages, such as divorced single parenthood and crowded nest, and/or non-traditional types, such as same-sex families or voluntary childlessness, shape work behavior. Researchers might find, for example, that certain types of flexible work policies (e.g., flexible commute times) that increase organizational commitment for employees in certain traditional stages (e.g., parents with school-age children) are demotivating for those in non-traditional families or family stages (e.g., voluntary childless) who want a different kind of flexibility (e.g., flexible or work/play vacation options).

Future research also could investigate how the non-traditional crowded-nest stage (McGregor & Ellison, 2003) impacts entrepreneurial business performance. Does having more adults living at home help the entrepreneur in the form of family-to-business support, or does it become more of a drain and hindrance?

Finally, management research might advance by investigating how organizational actions and policies impact family development. For example, couples with children who historically worked full-time were more likely to develop an equitable distribution of family work (Brett &
Yogev, 1988; Weingarten, 1978). However, mothers regularly assume the majority of child-caring tasks when children are born, limiting their contributions to their job. Recent research suggests that because Western societies remained gendered, the one-and-a-half-earner couple with children has become the new normal (de Henau & Himmelweit, 2013). Perhaps organizational policies that encourage young childless couples to develop more equitable career and family orientations will help them find balance once children arrive. Some types of work and/or organizations also might influence employees’ family development stages. The stereotype of young high-tech entrepreneurs working long hours, for example, suggests that these entrepreneurs might be slow to marry and start families. For those who do start ventures after starting families, success or failure in the venture might precipitate disruption in family development by, for example, contributing to divorce. The stress and time demands of a CEO’s job might similarly increase divorce rates and set them on a different family development trajectory.

8 The ABCX Model of Family Stress

8.1 Overview of the ABCX Model of Family Stress

To conceptualize how families adapt to stressful events, Hill (1949, 1958) developed the ABCX Model of Family Stress. In this model, A stands for the stressor event, B defines the family’s physical and emotional resources for dealing with the stressor event, and C reflects how the family defines the stressor event in terms of expected hardship. The interactions among A, B, and C lead to X, which defines the degree to which the stressor event (A) becomes a family crisis. A review of research by McCubbin, Joy, Cauble, Comeau, Patterson, and Needle (1980) classified stressor events into those independent of the family life cycle and, therefore, less common and predictable (e.g., war, tornado, illness), and those associated with the family life cycle and, therefore, more common and predictable (e.g., parenthood, retirement, and widowhood). Their
review found considerable support for the original model, but also highlighted the need to
incorporate new variables and find appropriate methods to test a revised and enlarged model.

Based on the original model by Hill (1949, 1958), McCubbin and Patterson (1980, 1983)
developed the double ABCX model of family stress and adaptation. The revised model adds four
post-crisis variables that describe the family’s adaption to the crisis (X) over time (Xx).

Specifically, it adds the pile-up of demands (aA), which is the cumulative impact of other pre- and
post-crisis stressors that a family needs to address while having to deal with the focal stressor
event (A). The second addition to the original model is family adaptive resources (bB), which is
the sum of existing resources plus the resources that are added or developed in response to a
stressor event. Family adaptive resources include individual (e.g., self-efficacy, knowledge, and
skills), family system (e.g., cohesion and communication), and social support resources (e.g.,
social and community capital). The third addition to the original model is perception and
coherence (cC), which is defined by a family’s general confidence in predicting and understanding
its internal and external environment (Antonovsky, 1979). Coherence reflects the accumulated
experiences of all family members that influence their collective perception, evaluation, and
acceptance of the current situation – including the stressor event (A), other pre- and post-crisis
stressors (aA), and family resources (bB).

Together, the interactions between the pile-up of demands (aA), adaptive family resources
(bB), and perception and coherence (cC) lead to family adaptation (xX). Family adaptation results
when families process the original stressor event. It ranges on a continuum from maladaptation to
bonadaptation. Maladaptation is the worst-case scenario, representing the family’s inability to
tolerate, deal with, and adapt to the stressor event. It signifies a permanent imbalance that deteriorates
family members’ physical and psychological health, strains family member relationships, and
prevents well-being and satisfaction. Bonadaptation represents family adaptation that minimizes
the imbalance that was caused by the stressor event and the subsequent pile-up of demands. As a result of bonadaptation, families are strengthened and are more cohesive, with more post-crisis resources. Individual family members experienced greater well-being and satisfaction.

Empirical tests of the double ABCX model of family stress and adaptation have overall shown strong support for the model and only minor modifications (Lavee, McCubbin, & Patterson, 1985; Bristol, 1987; Saloviita, Itälinna, & Leinonen, 2003). For example, Carroll (2012) showed that whether work-family conflict (i.e., the stressor) led to marital dissatisfaction (i.e., maladaptation) depended on a couple’s communication (i.e., family resources). Although work-life conflicts reduced constructive communication, constructive communication is important to attenuate marital dissatisfaction and thus enable bonadaptation following a stressor event. In the absence of constructive communication, however, work-life conflicts fostered destructive communication, which, in turn, fueled marital dissatisfaction. Other studies suggested that the model extends to non-traditional families (e.g., cohabitating couples, single moms, military families) experiencing stressor events (Oshri, Lucier-Greer, O’Neal, Arnold, Mancini, & Ford, 2015).

Despite these strengths of the model, however, management researchers should apply the model with caution. One problem in theoretical and empirical ABCX research is the implicit assumption that stress is always negative (Hamilton, Sussman, & Patterson, 2014). This unidirectional view is problematic because stress can also lead to positive outcomes, such as higher individual resilience and faster adaptation (Del Giudice, Ellis, & Shirtcliff, 2011).

8.2 ABCX Model Research in the Context of Organizations

Several studies have applied the ABCX model in organizational contexts. Based on research describing how work and family can be mutually supportive through “facilitation” (e.g.,
Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), Hill (2005) showed how work-family facilitation influenced the perception of a stressor event’s influence on family adaptation. He found that facilitation improved job, family, and life satisfaction but reduced organizational commitment. Facilitation is, therefore, one resource that can help individuals deal with family and/or work stressors, but organizations need to be aware of the negative effect on commitment.

According to Fukuda and Chu (1994), the spouse and children of an expatriate regularly had problems adapting to a new location, and family problems were the main reason for expatriates’ decisions to end assignments prematurely. In line with these findings, Caligiuri et al. (1998) showed that family adjustment to a host country mediated the effect of family characteristics on expatriates’ work adjustment. Lavee et al. (1985) similarly highlighted the importance of family resources for the adjustment of expatriates’ families. They found that internal family resources (e.g., family cohesion) directly enabled family adaptation (i.e., relocation of U.S. army families to Western Germany in 1983), while external family resources (e.g., social capital) influenced family adaptation indirectly via the family’s perception and meaning (cC).

Given that resources appear so important for adaptation, it seems logical that organizations might be able to offer resources that help employees’ families adapt to stressor events. Garman, Leech, and Grable (1996) suggested as much; they pointed out that poor financial decisions were a major source of stressor events that increased the likelihood of job absenteeism, work accidents, substance abuse, and lowered employee productivity. The authors, therefore, concluded that organizations could reduce costly stressor events among employees by offering workshops about financial management. Leiter (1990) investigated both family and organizational resources, and showed that family coping resources were independent of and complementary to organizational coping resources that helped employees deal with organizational stressor events. Without
sufficient family coping resources, employees who faced a stressor event reached emotional
exhaustion and burnout more rapidly regardless of organizational resources (Leiter, 1990).

8.3 Implications of the ABCX Model of Family Stress for Management Research

The ABCX model of family stress anticipates how a stressor event interacts with a family’s
adaptive resources and family members’ perceptions (about the event) to predict family adaptation
after the event (Hill, 1949, 1958; McCubbin & Patterson, 1983). Management research using
ABCX acknowledges that organizational activities (i.e., expatriate assignments) can be stressor
events (A) and suggests that organizations can provide resources (B) that impact family adaptation.
It seems likely, however, that organizations furnish stressors (Aa) other than expatriate
assignments that warrant future study. For instance, long working hours might hamper parents’
ability to recognize a crisis in their children’s schooling and removes the main resource (the
parent) for solving the problem. This scenario positions the workplace as a source for stressor
events, and as a factor that diminishes the family’s resources for dealing with it, which likely leads
to maladaptation.

Existing studies also suggest that organizational resources can affect employees’ families’
adaptation, but much could be done to investigate which kinds of resources matter and how they
interact with family resources. Organizational actions such as providing flexible work practices
(Huselid, 1995), employee counseling, and training and education might amplify family resources
and give employees the resources needed to adapt in a way that strengthens the family (i.e.,
bonadaptation). Indeed, it might be possible to investigate whether providing these kinds of
resources strengthens employees’ adaptive family resources enough so that when a stressor event
occurs, the impact of the event on employees’ productivity and turnover is significantly reduced.
One area where researchers might focus is on organizational actions and/or resources that shape
how employees perceive and attach meaning (cC) to stressor events, given that this element of the ABCX model has not received attention from management researchers.

The interaction between work and family appears particularly germane to small business entrepreneurs where it is common for the business and the entrepreneur’s family to exchange physical resources and emotional support (Aldrich & Cliff, 2003). Thus, it would seem likely that some of the resources (B) that an entrepreneur’s family might use to adapt to a crisis might be drawn from the business, such as an IT employee who is asked to fix the home desktop or a mechanic who repairs the family car. Accordingly, it might be interesting to investigate the extent to which family stressor events draw resources from these entrepreneurs’ businesses.

While it is important to understand how organizations can lead to family crises and affect family’s adaptive capabilities, management research might advance most by understanding how family adaptation (or maladaptation) impacts work productivity. Do organizational interventions designed to augment family resources lead to, for example, less abusive supervision? Are employees whose families have adapted to stressor events using the organizations’ resources more motivated and committed? Adapting to crises makes some families stronger (i.e., bonadaptation), which raises questions in the small business context about whether adapting to a family crisis has implications regarding how entrepreneurs learn to adapt their businesses to market changes.

9 Intergenerational Solidarity Theory

9.1 Overview of Intergenerational Solidarity Theory

Based on earlier research in social psychology and family psychology, Bengtson and Roberts (1991) and Silverstein and Bengtson (1997) developed intergenerational solidarity theory. The theory details six dimensions of intergenerational solidarity that indicate the level of cohesion between parents and their adult children. Early studies identified affect (i.e., feelings of emotional closeness), association (i.e., frequency of social interaction) and consensus (i.e., agreement in
values and views) as the first three dimensions of intergenerational solidarity (e.g., Bengtson, Olander, & Haddad, 1976; Roberts, Richards & Bengtson, 1991). Bengtson and Roberts (1991) and Silverstein and Bengtson (1997) added function (i.e., resource sharing), norms (i.e., felt obligation), and structure (i.e., geographic proximity) as additional dimensions. Although the six dimensions are widely accepted, they are not additive and, therefore, do not form a meta-construct (Roberts & Bengtson, 1990). Instead the dimensions reflect the “complexity and contradictions of family life” (Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997, p. 432). Most studies have investigated antecedents to one dimension or interactions among several dimensions. Bengtson and Roberts (1991), for instance, demonstrated that the strength of a parent’s and a child’s family norms (dimension: norms) shaped a child’s affection for a parent and a parent’s affection for a child (dimension: affect), and combined with parent-child opportunities for interaction (dimension: structure), parent and child norms and mutual affection predicted the level of parent-child association (dimension: association).

Although levels of intergenerational solidarity have been relatively stable over time, societal changes have increased the heterogeneity of intergenerational solidarity across families. To capture this heterogeneity, Silverstein and Bengtson (1997) defined classes of intergenerational solidarity. While children in the tight-knit class engage with their parents based on all six dimensions of intergenerational solidarity, those in the detached class do not engage with parents on any dimension. In between these two extremes, sociable (association, affect, consensus, and structure, but not resource sharing), obligatory (association and structure, but not affect and consensus), and intimate, but distant (affect, consensus, but not association, resource sharing, and structure) classes represent common combinations in U.S. families.

A number of subsequent studies identified contingencies that nurture or undermine particular dimensions of intergenerational solidarity and help explain observed heterogeneity in
intergenerational solidarity in the U.S. For instance, parents’ divorce, parents and children living at a geographic distance, and having step-grandparents (rather than biological grandparents) undermined opportunities for interaction (dimension: structure) and, therefore, hurt intergenerational solidarity (Daatland, 2007; Silverstein, Parrott, & Bengtson, 1995; Sanders & Trygstad, 1989; Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997). However, differences in intergenerational solidarity also prevailed within families. The parents’ generation showed, on average, higher intergenerational solidarity than the children’s generation, which is called generational altruism (Bengtson & Oyama, 2007; Giarrusso, Stallings, & Bengtson, 1995). The financial wealth of the older generation supported parental interactions with (dimension: association) and financial transfers to children (dimension: resource sharing) (Parrot & Bengtson, 1999; Soldo, Wolf, & Agree, 1990). However, parents’ divorce and subsequent custody decisions tended “to distance children physically from their divorced fathers” (Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997, p. 434) and increased the likelihood of detached relationships (i.e., no interaction between children and parents on any dimension) (Silverstein & Bengtson, 1997).

Earlier studies focused on family-based drivers of intergenerational solidarity, but neglected societal factors, which suggests caution when applying the theory’s insights to novel contexts. Timonen, Conlon, Scharf, and Carney (2013), for instance, provided evidence that in societies with relatively weak welfare states and in those that experience economic crisis, intergenerational solidarity in families was higher than in countries with strong welfare states or those that experienced an economic boom. Moving forward, accounting for family and societal factors will thus be indispensable when using intergenerational solidarity theory.


9.2 Intergenerational Solidarity Theory Research in the Context of Organizations

Results from a few pioneering studies that apply intergenerational solidarity theory provide initial insights that are relevant for management researchers. For U.S. immigrants, Kim (2006) found that intergenerational solidarity can be both an opportunity and a trap. On one hand, the intergenerational solidarity of Korean immigrants motivated them to become business owners so they could afford a good education for their children. On the other hand, intergenerational solidarity also entailed parental demands to help out in the business, which distracted immigrant children from pursuing their education and careers.

One important finding for organizational research has been that intergenerational solidarity strengthens children’s – especially daughters’ – felt obligation to care for elderly parents (Miller & Cafasso, 1992; Starrels, Ingersoll-Dayton, Neal, & Yamada, 1995). Intergenerational solidarity also strengthened traditional family gender roles (Minguez, 2004). The result was that women with strong intergenerational solidarity with their parents were more likely to arrive late to work, reduce work hours, and take more time off (Neal, Chapman, Ingersoll-Dayton, & Emlen, 1993; Stone & Short, 1990). These negative effects appeared particularly strong for blue-collar workers who must take unpaid leave to care for parents (Archbold, 1983).

One study investigated how family-friendly policies at work impact how employees managed obligations derived from intergenerational solidarity (Starrels et al., 1995). The authors were surprised to find that employees from organizations with family-friendly work policies provided significantly less health care, fewer hours of help, and less social support to their parents. They speculated that this was the case because employees with flexible work schedules and employer training were able to care for parents more efficiently than those who lacked such support.
9.3 Implications of Intergenerational Solidarity Theory for Future Research

Overall, the few studies that leverage interorganizational solidarity research in organizational contexts suggested that solidarity can influence career choices (i.e., to start a business to support children – Kim, 2006), obligations to care for elderly parents, and that organizations might influence the way children offer elder care while working. With respect to the latter, it seems that there is merit in further efforts to understand how HR policies interact with intergenerational solidarity. The one study to date offers counter-intuitive findings in that these policies were linked to employees’ offering less time and support to parents (Starrels et al., 1995). Is this because HR policies are so effective that they reduce employees’ time commitments? Alternatively, are families with solidarity healthier and thus making fewer demands on employees’ time, or do family members perceive their investments in parent care differently?

Another obvious avenue for future inquiry is to investigate how organizational actors’ intergenerational solidarity experiences affect career choices and work behaviors. Childhood exposure to family role models who are entrepreneurs, for example, is one of the most important predictors of entrepreneurial intention (e.g., Schmitt-Rodermund, 2004). Because higher intergenerational solidarity increases children’s self-efficacy (Giarrusso, Mabry, & Bengtson, 2001), and self-efficacy is an important predictor of entrepreneurship, intergenerational solidarity might explain why some families produce entrepreneurs for generations (Jaskiewicz et al., 2015a). High intergenerational wealth transfers, on the other hand, might undermine individuals’ confidence (Silverstein, Chen, & Heller, 1996) and, thereby, reduce entrepreneurial motivation.

Employees’ intergenerational solidarity experiences also might carry over into work. Employees whose relationships with parents and children are characterized by strong intergenerational solidarity might, for example, develop higher-quality relationships with senior and junior colleagues at work. Thus, for example, intergenerational solidarity might be an
important antecedent to effective teamwork (Collins & Smith, 2006; Priem, 1990). Higher levels of intergenerational solidarity – especially when the affection dimension of solidarity is present – led to better physical and mental health (Ajrouch, 2007), so it might also be an important predictor of resilience at work. Finally, these effects might be different for older and younger generations. For example, while strong intergenerational solidarity with children might be related to older employees’ willingness to adopt mentors, solidarity with parents might have an even stronger effect on younger employees’ willingness to accept mentorship.

Finally, research to date has not taken advantage of the different intergenerational solidarity dimensions to discover how different configurations of solidarity might impact employees and their behavior at work. For example, employees who experience strong intergenerational affect and association might be more likely to commit emotionally to coworkers, while those who experience solidarity based on structure and resource sharing might view work as transactional, perhaps leading to transactional leadership styles. Among entrepreneurs, the different dimensions of intergenerational solidarity theory might help explain when entrepreneurs can access family resources and what kind of resources are available – e.g., financial, emotional, labor, advice. Among top managers, while the demandingness of the CEO’s job might make it difficult to maintain intergenerational solidarity with children, it might be interesting to see if their high incomes allow CEOs to use resources (e.g., flying children/parents on the company plane) to increase proximity and overcome some of the structural dimensions of their jobs.

Differentiating among the dimensions also might help researchers better understand how employees respond to different organizational actions. For example, preferences for and the effectiveness of HR practices might vary with intergenerational solidarity dimensions. Employees from Silverstein and Bengtson’s (1997) sociable class (i.e., association, affect, consensus, and structure, but not resource sharing) might, for example, take maximum advantage of flexible work
and sacrifice work commitments (i.e., take leave) to deal personally with elder care, while employees from the intimate but distant class (i.e., affect, consensus, but not association, resource sharing, and structure) might need research and emotional support as they identify and monitor non-family elder care providers.

10 Discussion

We reviewed seven prominent family science theories and the pioneering studies that already used them in an organizational context, and offered research agendas describing how each theory might advance management research. Our review highlights ways families influence behavior in organizations and how organizations, in turn, influence families. In essence, people grow up in their family of origin, which influences the type of person they become and, thus, the way they behave as entrepreneurs, employees, and managers. The current family also directly influences how individuals behave in organizations. Further, both the family of origin and current family can have indirect effects on key organizational constructs. That is, family-member relationships, family structures, and family events can interact with organizational characteristics, such as team dynamics, HRM practices, and corporate governance to moderate relationships between antecedents, such as prior knowledge, leadership style, and governance structure and outcomes, such as, respectively, opportunity recognition, OCBs, and governance effectiveness. Finally, organizations can influence key family outcomes, such as divorce, conflict, or adaptation to stress, which feeds back into the organization through individuals’ actions in the workplace.

Beyond the potential of each family science theory to advance management research as we described in our review, we see at least three potential and valuable extensions: 1) Integrating multiple family science theories; 2) Using family science across countries, and 3) Integrating family science with existing management theory. We discuss each in turn.
10.1 Integrating Multiple Family Science Theories

Family science theories might be used in a complementary manner to shed light on management phenomena. For instance, the circumplex model describes how family cohesion, flexibility, and communication affect family functioning, while the ABCX model explains how family resources and family members’ perceptions of stressor events determine how a family adapts. Taken together, these theories might help explain and predict how quickly families can provide family-based resources to respond to a family member’s work-related stressor. This might be important for entrepreneurs, for instance, whose primary funding source is the family and whose primary reason for failure is the lack of sufficient and timely available (family) funding. Combining the circumplex and ABCX models might similarly be relevant for upper echelons research. The accumulation of work stress by executives as a result of organizational events, such as corporate restructuring or mergers, might put some executives on a downward spiral that causes workaholism, illness, and burnout (e.g., Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009), and precipitates a family crisis. Family functioning, as described by the circumplex model, and family resources and perceptions of stressor events, as described by the ABCX model, might jointly influence when executives overcome work-related stress and forestall a downward spiral. On the other hand, the circumplex model also might be used in combination with the ABCX model to understand when families not only lack resources needed to support a stressed family executive, but also when they actually burden her or him with family responsibilities that, ultimately, accelerate progression into a downward spiral.

To provide another example, the way in which children are brought up in the family effects their proclivity to become entrepreneurs (Schmitt-Rodermund, 2004; Schmitt-Rodermund & Vondracek, 1999) and enter business careers, more generally (Eddleston & Kidwell, 2012). In particular, children of entrepreneurs are more likely to develop entrepreneurial intentions (Chen,
Greene, & Crick, 1998; Zhao, Seibert, & Hills, 2005), which are an important antecedent to entrepreneurial careers (Bird, 1988). However, most entrepreneurs are male, and extant entrepreneurship studies have called for research that helps explain what facilitates and/or hinders female entrepreneurship (Acs, Bardasi, Estrin, & Svejnar, 2011). Combining intergenerational solidarity theory and family communication theory might help explain when women are more likely to start businesses. Family communication theory explains that individuals who grew up in pluralistic families (i.e., high conversation, low conformity) are more likely to become curious and innovative in their later work careers. Intergenerational solidarity theory shows that individuals who share strong relationships with their parents and live in their geographic proximity not only draw on their parents to help raise children, but also can count on financial resources, which they might need to start a business. In summary, family science theories can describe the family contingencies that produce the most motivation, the fewest hurdles, and the most family resources for women seeking to starting a business – or entering any traditionally male career path.

More generally, there is unanimous agreement that having more women in traditionally male gendered careers brings new insights and greater potential for meaningful contributions in those careers (e.g., Bear, Rahman, & Post, 2010; Farrell & Hersch, 2005), and family science research reveals factors that increase or challenge this objective. Quickly changing family development stages and decreased intergenerational solidarity in the Western world are contingencies that might actually undermine the very foundation that many women quote as critical support for career success and challenging gender norms. Similarly, more and more parents work full-time and outsource childcare, reducing the time that parents can effectively spend with offspring engaging in conversations that develop self-efficacy and curiosity, which, later on, are drivers of openness to career options. What is not known is whether the childcare institutions that replace traditional parenting are more or less effective at instilling self-efficacy and curiosity in
children. Other related future research questions are: How can organizations best leverage the
growing diversity of employees’ family backgrounds and upbringing? While the challenges of
managing racial and gender diversity in organizations have been described, what about potential
challenges resulting from incompatible parenting styles, family communication patterns, and
different attitudes towards senior colleagues or family members in need of help?

10.2 Using Family Science across Countries

Family science theories might also enhance our understanding of the different roles of
family across countries. While Weber’s (2001) seminal work depicted the family as an
organizational form that limited economic development, more recent studies point to the need to
disentangle family in order to understand which of its aspects fostered and which hurt
organizational growth and economic development (Fukuyama, 1995; Granovetter, 2005).
Researchers have agreed that family is the driving force behind most private business activities
around the globe, but have mostly analyzed how the rule of law and the development of
institutions across countries affect organizations (La Porta, Lopez de Silanes, Shleifer, & Vishny,
1997). It thus remains poorly understood how aspects of family that differ across countries impact
organizations.

A few studies point to the potential for family science to help unpack how differences
among families shape organizational practices, behaviors, and performance. For example, business
owning couples’ divorce has been associated with reduced firm performance (Galbraith, 2003),
and buying out family members who inherited a share in the business can push organizations and
their owners close to bankruptcy (Jaskiewicz et al., 2015a). In contrast, arranged marriages in India
increased firm performance (Mehrotra, Morck, Shim, & Wiwattanakantang, 2011). To provide
another example, Bennedsen et al. (2007) showed that while having more children improved the
chances that a family member would become the successor among private Danish businesses, these organizations underperformed after the succession. In contrast, the practice of formally adopting competent, non-family, male successors improved the performance and survivability of Japanese businesses (Mehrotra, Shim, & Wiwattanakantang, 2013). From such findings, it seems logical to suggest that family science might prove useful for better understanding how specific family practices and norms around the globe impact organizations. The ABCX model, for instance, might help explain how families differ across countries in their norms for 1) using intergenerational resources to help stressed employees (who are family members) and for 2) how overstressed/failed family members are perceived – e.g., as victims that require family help or as lazy failures who warrant no sympathy. More generally, future research might investigate which family structures and practices are most conducive in a particular culture for developing committed employees, stress-resistant managers, or innovative entrepreneurs. How do differing family development stages – and different stage lengths – influence the effectiveness of HR practices across societies? Answers to these kinds of questions might help explain variance among countries regarding how employees respond to different organizational actions and how those actions, in turn, impact employees and their families.

Family science also offers opportunities to enhance researchers’ understanding of how the rapidly evolving and heterogeneous family types within society challenge and/or benefit organizations. Researchers found that family-friendly policies influenced employees’ ability to manage their family-work boundary crossing activities (Allen, 2001; Baltes, Briggs, Huff, Wright, Neuman, 1999; Butts, Casper, & Yang, 2013; Ferguson et al., 2015; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). However, in light of growing heterogeneity of what family can be and the continuous decline of the traditional nuclear family (i.e., the share of households that were married couples with children under 18 was only 20 percent in the U.S.A. in 2012;
Vespa, Lewis, & Kreider, 2013), managers can ill afford to not understand emerging and evolving family types if they want to attract, retain, and succeed with productive employees. For instance, what family-work policies are appreciated by single individuals without children, same-sex couples, second-generation Chinese immigrants, and/or Syrian refugees? Which differences between an ethnic minority’s family of origin and the stereotypical family of the country of destination foster and which subdue work commitment or obedience to authority? How should organizations adopt their work rules and family-work policies as they face more diverse employees? At which family life cycle stages do immigrants’ family characteristics influence their commitment to and behavior at work? How can organizations fuel OCBs and control deviance while accounting for the wide variety of family dynamics that impact work?

These questions also extend into the context of entrepreneurship. Why have 52 percent of ventures in Silicon Valley between 1995 and 2005 been started by immigrants when this group is vastly underrepresented in the population (Bluestein, 2015)? What can policy-makers do to take advantage of the fact that immigrant entrepreneurs often start a business so they can work together and interact with fellow family members? Will declining intergenerational solidarity in Western countries undermine the potential for immigrant mompreneurs to create wealth and jobs or are immigrant families more immune to such societal trends? Kirkwood and Tootell (2008) explained that women, more often than men, engage in entrepreneurship to have flexible work and to successfully manage both work and family responsibilities. What are the reasons female immigrants from non-Western cultures might become entrepreneurial in the Western world? And how can organizations take advantage of a more diverse body of employees while protecting themselves from the rising variance in employees’ commitment to work that results from more diverse, less stable (e.g., divorce is most likely to occur two-four years after marriage in the
U.S.A.), and more fluid family systems (e.g., 40.2 percent of children are born outside of marriage in the U.S.A., Hamilton, Martin, Osterman, Curtin, & Matthews, 2015)?

10.3 Integrating Family Science with Existing Management Theory

Future research also might advance by building theoretical models that integrate ideas from family science into existing management theory. For instance, Ashforth et al. (2000) introduced boundary theory to explain and predict boundary-crossing activities that individuals engaged in when transitioning between work and family roles. Boundary theory posits that individuals can choose to segment their roles by keeping domains separate or integrate roles by blurring boundaries between work and family. One example of a potentially fruitful avenue for future inquiry might be to use the circumplex model in combination with boundary theory to identify what kind of boundary management strategies a particular employee will use. For instance, employees from detached families have very few, if any, familial interactions and thus might be better equipped to erect boundaries and avoid boundary-spanning behaviors between family and work. In contrast, employees from very cohesive family backgrounds might lack clear family-work boundaries and constantly blur family-work boundaries (e.g., regularly meet with family members in the office, invite family members to organizational events, etc.). Related questions are: how do unhealthy family boundaries influence employees’ boundary setting at work? How can organizations prevent employees from importing poor boundary setting practices from their families? What can organizations learn from employees who successfully manage their family-work boundaries? Can these behaviors be used to create work-family policies that support all employees? Which families erect strong (weak) boundaries between work and family that disable (enable) transfer of family resources to deal with work stress? These are a few of the questions that might be answered by efforts to integrate boundary theory with insights from family science.
There are several other theories that border the work-family interface and might benefit by integrating insights from family science theories. Conservation of Resources Theory (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999; Hobfoll, 2001), for example, describes how individuals strive to acquire and maintain resources, such as objects (e.g., car), individual characteristics (e.g., reputation), conditions (e.g., having a current family), and energies (e.g., money). Crossover Theory (Westman & Etzion, 2005) delineates how consequences of one’s work environment are transmitted to the partner at home. Finally, Person-Environment Fit (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999) focuses on the degree to which individuals, including their family backgrounds, match particular environmental (i.e., job) characteristics. Because these theories were cultivated by organizational scholars and draw, at least indirectly, on ideas from family science, they might offer a starting point for integrating family science with existing management theory.

11 Conclusion

Management researchers have much to gain from family science, and our paper offers a starting point for leveraging family science theories to advance management research. To do this we reviewed the basic constructs and predictions from seven prominent (i.e., frequently cited) theories from family science and the pioneering studies that already draw upon these theories to address research questions in organizational contexts. In addition, we offered a set of ideas about how each of these theories might be used to advance research in management. Our hope is that exposure to family science will help management researchers move beyond the simple acknowledgment that family and work domains are intertwined toward theories that embrace the rich complexity of families to explain how different elements of family influence how family members behave in organizations and why they respond differently to organizational stimuli. Further, management researchers can help family science researchers gain a deeper understanding of how organizations influence families, and how these influences can circle back to either
positively (e.g., commitment, added emotional resources) or negatively (e.g., burnout, deviance) impact organizations.

Families are indeed the “most important and enduring of all human social groupings” (Smith et al., 2009, p.5), and so it is important for management research to account for the many ways that families impact entrepreneurs, employees, managers, and their organizations. Overall, while management researchers have taken important steps toward incorporating aspects of family into management research, we believe that family science research promises to significantly advance these efforts. We hope that this review and research agenda are first steps toward exposing management researchers to the potential benefits of incorporating ideas from family science research to build novel theories that better explain management phenomena.
References


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<th>Theoretical Perspective that Evolved from General Systems Theory</th>
<th>Main Constructs and Predictions</th>
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<td><strong>Family Systems Theory</strong> (Broderick &amp; Smith, 1979; Bacallao &amp; Smokowski, 2007) (section 3)</td>
<td>Family is an open, complex, interactive, and hierarchical system wherein family members strive to maintain equilibrium. Family systems establish membership criteria, rules, and rituals. Families maintain boundaries by filtering out elements that are considered harmful to their rules, and behavior is determined by a feedback loop that is informed by the external environment.</td>
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<td><strong>Family Communication Patterns Theory</strong> (Fitzpatrick &amp; Ritchie, 1994; Ritchie &amp; Fitzpatrick, 1990) (section 4)</td>
<td>Conversation and conformity orientations in families describe how families communicate and have important implications for family outcomes. Conversation: family members are encouraged to discuss any topic. Conformity: emphasis on embracing the same attitudes, values, and beliefs among family members. The four patterns include: Consensual (high conformity, high conversation), Protective (high conformity, low conversation), Pluralistic (low conformity, high conversation), and Laissez-Faire (low conformity, low conversation). These patterns affect personality, information processing, behavioral, and psychosocial outcomes.</td>
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<td><strong>Family Niche Model of Birth Order and Personality</strong> (Sulloway, 1996; Paulhus et al., 1999) (section 5)</td>
<td>Personality is influenced by the specialized niches that siblings adopt to gain access to parental resources. Birth intervals, biological family composition, and personality differentiation within families are all factors that influence the relation between birth order and personality development.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Parental Control Theory</strong> (Baumrind, 1971; Steinberg et al., 1989) (section 6)</td>
<td>There are three dominant parenting styles: Authoritarian, Permissive, and Authoritative, and these have important implications for adolescent and adult behavior and personality. Authoritarian parents attempt to control and influence their children’s behavior according to a set of well-defined values and standards of conduct. Permissive parents are non-punitive, responsive, and accepting towards their children, but they also make few demands of them. Authoritative parents encourage expressiveness in their children and promote bidirectional communication.</td>
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Table 1 (cont.)
Prominent Family Science Theories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theoretical Perspective that Evolved from Life Cycle Models</th>
<th>Main Constructs and Predictions</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Development Theory</strong> (Duvall, 1957; Rodgers, 1964; Spanier et al., 1975) (section 7)</td>
<td>Considers seven different life cycle stages and transitions of families over time. Development is reciprocal in that the individual development of each family member impacts the overall development of the family. Families that can anticipate change from one stage to the next manage stage transitions better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ABCX Model of Family Stress</strong> (Hill, 1949; McCubbin &amp; Patterson, 1983) (section 8)</td>
<td>abcx: a-a stressor event b-existing resources that assist in addressing the event c-family’s perception of the event x-the crisis; the product of the interaction between a, b, and c.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intergenerational Solidarity Theory</strong> (e.g., Bengston &amp; Roberts, 1991) (section 9)</td>
<td>Intergenerational solidarity represents sentiments, attitudes, and behaviors that create bonds among family members across generations. The theory explains that solidarity between two family members can be measured with six dimensions, which have important implications for mutual support, transfers of money and time, and affection, among others.</td>
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