January 2020

Parental Leave Policies: Implications For Higher Education Policy

Muneka Nwoko

PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES: IMPLICATIONS FOR HIGHER
EDUCATION POLICY

by

Muneka Townes-Nwoko
Bachelor of Arts, University of Michigan, 1995
Master of Science, Oklahoma State University, 2006
Master of Science, Eastern Michigan University, 2017

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Grand Forks, North Dakota

May
2020

This dissertation, submitted by Muneka Ann Townes-Nwoko in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

Cheryl A. Hunter, Chair

C. Casey Ozaki

Deborah Worley

William Siders

This dissertation is being submitted by the appointed advisory committee as having met all of the requirements of the School of Graduate Studies at the University of North Dakota and is hereby approved.

Chris Nelson
Associate Dean of the School of Graduate Studies

4/9/2020

Date

PERMISSION

Title   Parental Leave Policies: Implications for Higher Education Policy

Department Educational Research and Foundations

Degree   Doctor of Philosophy

   In presenting this dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a graduate degree from the University of North Dakota, I agree that the library of this University shall make it freely available for inspection. I further agree that permission for extensive copying for scholarly purposes may be granted by the professor who supervised my dissertation work or, in her absence, by the Chairperson of the department or the dean of the School of Graduate Studies. It is understood that any copying or publication or other use of this dissertation or part thereof for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission. It is also understood that due recognition shall be given to me and to the University of North Dakota in any scholarly use which may be made of any material in my dissertation.

                Muneka Ann Townes-Nwoko
                April 6, 2020

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

To my heavenly Father, you continue to amaze me with your goodness and love.

To my husband, Onyewuchi F. Nwoko, my commitment and love for you is without boundaries and limitations. You are the expression of God's love, kindness, and patience towards me. Thank you for your faith, love, and encouragement! To my three children – Kelechi, Ossinachi, and Chiedozie. I saw you in my heart before you entered this earths' atmosphere. You are an extension of God's love, laughter and joy. You are children in whom there is no blemish, well favored, full of wisdom, power, and faith. You will stand before kings, leaders, and change your generation. My success is only a fragment of what you will accomplish. I pushed against adversity, inequity, conquered fear, and walked by faith so that you have an example of how to triumph and succeed. You are always in my heart; no time, distance, or space will keep me from loving, praying, guiding, and watching over you. To my sister and aunt, thank you for the tireless conversation, confidence, and expectation that I would finish this process. To Dr. Wong, thank you for the one on one meetings on focused writing and persistence to completion. To Dr. Endres, thank you for being a mentor who talked me through industry guidelines, expectations, and outcomes. To Dr. Vielhaber, thank you for your passion, academic rigor, and excellence, in teaching, service, and advising/mentoring.

ABSTRACT

A persistent disadvantage of individuals and couples navigating and negotiating parental leave policies is often embedded in biased assumptions. Oftentimes, as a result, individuals and couples inherently encounter vastly different parental leave experiences. However, recommendations from the literature and federal policy support the need for gender equity, family-focused initiatives, and workplace interventions related to individuals and couples navigating and negotiating parental leave processes. Yet because of a lack of policy standardization, policy protocols related to these recommendations have proved unsuccessful in addressing the complexities individuals and couples experience when navigating and negotiating parental leave processes. Thus, this study applies a discourse analysis framework to examine the implications of the lack of standardization of parental leave policies. Data collection consisted of interviews conducted during the summer and fall semester of 2016 involving staff, faculty, and administrators. The emergent interview data revealed that participants across the institutional community navigated and negotiated leave amid anxiety, pressure, and uncertainty of institutional processes, protocols, and communications. My findings suggest that discourses surrounding navigated and negotiated parental leave policies remain stigmatized because of a lack of policy standardization and the understanding of policy processes, as well as workplace productivity pressures. Recommendations to improve these discourses include creating standardized communication initiatives related to parental leave protocols and implementing parameters to address the needs of academic mothers and fathers.

Outline of the Study

Chapter I explores the purpose, significance, and guiding principles that informed the study, exploring parental leave policies at the institutional level. Chapter II provides an overview of the current literature – exploring institutional parental leave practices in higher education institutions across gender, academic discipline, role identity, and workplace productivity and family initiatives. Chapter III moves the reader through the methodology of the study framed in discourse analysis. Chapter IV describes the research findings based on the data collected from the analysis and interviews. Chapter V summarizes the literature and offers recommendations for institutional practices related to navigating and negotiating parental leave policies in higher education institutions. Recognizing the importance of supporting the family due to the birth of a child, this study attempts to understand the implications of a lack of standardized policies on the lived experiences of individuals and couples who navigated and negotiated leave.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Generally, federal and institutional policy can be viewed as the manifestation of ethics, appropriate behaviors, and proper protocols – particularly if we consider institutional policy as an extension of federal law, a written set of principles often socially constructed to inform practices, actions, and parameters that are often socially acceptable in the world, workplace, and family (College and University Work and Family Association, 2011; Fairclough, 2009, 2015; van Dijk, 2008). However, oftentimes in institutions of higher education, there is a disconnect between the written discourse of federal laws such as the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and how institutions articulate that discourse into parental leave policies that are consistently understood, produced, disbursed, and implemented across the institutional community. Seemingly, to the point, the language used to structure and codify parental leave policies is often inconsistent from how its discourse is implemented, enacted, and understood by the institutional community.

Using critical discourse analysis (CDA), informed by Fairclough (2015), this study explores the complexities of parental leave policies across gender, workplace productivity, family initiatives, and academic discipline, where a lack of institutional policy standardization exists. Specifically, examining higher education institutions experiences of faculty, staff, and administrators at a midsized public four-year high research serving institution navigating and negotiating parental leave policies.

Parameters of the Study

Higher education institutions as employers adopt, interpret, and administer state and federal parental leave policies based on the needs of the FMLA of 1993. In fact, the FMLA of

1993, as federal law mandated in higher education, articulates the family and workplace demands for eligible families employed by institutions. We know the FMLA of 1993 as federal law in higher education articulates formal policy accessible to recipients employed by higher education institutions. In this study, the lack of standardized across policies, protocols, and initiatives for faculty, staff, and administrators inform their experiences, discourses, and preparedness when navigating and negotiating parental leave policies.

Background of the Problem

The FMLA of 1993 sets forth the guiding principle articulated for higher education recipients at the institutional level (FMLA, 1993). However, navigating and negotiating parental leave policies based on these guidelines is often complex at best. In fact, this complexity may present ambiguity for members of the institution navigating and negotiating alongside the lack of standardized institutional policies. Specifically, this is a major problem in the areas of academic discipline, role identity (Eddy & Ward, 2015; Salle et al., 2016), gender (Reddick, 2011; Sallee & Harris, 2011); workplace productivity (Ward & Wolfe-Wendel, 2016).

Consequently, understanding the institutional complexities surrounding the lack of standardization of parental leave policies might inform best practices, organizational communications, discourses, and supportive interventions strategies for members navigating and negotiating parental leave policies. Thus, perhaps reducing the lack of awareness, knowledge, and communication failures surrounding faculty, staff, and administrators navigating and negotiating leave (Family and Medical Leave Act, 2007). Moreover, improving the standardization protocols surrounding navigating and negotiating leave theoretically has the potential to increase the number of individuals and couples accessing parental leave policies with limited complexities.

Thus, understanding the complexities of navigating and negotiating parental leave processes potentially helps in making recommendations to minimize the complexities of parental leave policies. Consequently, understanding those difficulties might potentially increase the number of individuals and couples who access leave policies, thereby improving the overall stability of the family and creating sustained work-life balance at the institutional level.

Statement of the Problem

Navigating and negotiating parental leave policies is complex because of antiquated federal and institutional policy discourses (van Dijk, 2008) seemingly situated in sociocultural biases related to gender, workplace productivity, and family equity. In fact, the uncertainty of federal and institutional language is often implemented into higher education systems – thereby perpetuating a lack of awareness of policies, the understanding of an individual's rights and responsibilities, and application to individual circumstances (Family and Medical Leave Act, 2007). As a result, institutions may find themselves grappling at articulating, interpreting, and implementing the various discourses in processes that individuals can understand and access.

In fact, it is this lack of standardized processes across policy discourses that seemingly inhibits people (individuals and couples) from understanding the parameters, processes, and protocols needed to make informed decisions related to accessing parental leave. This gap persists because recommendations supported in the current literature focus primarily on five major elements surrounding parental leave policies and practices – specifically related to role identity (Eddy & Ward, 2015), gender (Reddick, 2011; Sallee & Harris, 2011; Sandberg, 2013), productivity (Ward & Wolfe-Wendel, 2012); workplace norms (Sallee et al., 2016), and family (i.e., balance, demands, initiatives, nonwork priorities, and policies) (Solomon, 2011; Berheide & Anderson-Hanley, 2012; Sallee, 2013; Sallee et al., 2016). As a result, such

recommendations are insufficient because they do not address the institutional implications of the lack of standardization of parental leave policies.

In sum, the existing literature has failed to capture the need for standardization across institutional policies, practices, and initiatives – which could potentially inform best practices, future needs analysis, and supportive initiatives. Therefore, further exploration is needed to understand the implications of no standardization, as people seemingly find themselves in the process of negotiating policies they are not necessarily prepared for because there is no standardization.

Purpose of the Study

This qualitative study used individuals and couples' discourses, conversations, language, and spoken words to examine their experiences navigating and negotiating parental leave policies – specifically across institutional roles of staff (full time), faculty (nontenure and tenure lines), and administrators (departmental and administrative supervisors) at a midsized public four-year high research serving institution in the Midwest. Subsequently, interviews provided insights into staff's, faculty's, and administrators' experiences navigating and negotiating parental leave across areas related to workplace productivity, role identity, gender, and academic discipline. In sum, this study's results informed recommendations for institutional guidelines to guide the parental leave process.

Exploration of the Research Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the discourse surrounding the experiences of faculty, staff, and administrators when navigating and negotiating the complexities of parental leave policies, as a lack of standardization exists in the associated processes across higher education institutions. The goal of the research study was to contribute to

the existing literature on the navigation and negotiation of parental leave policies amid various institutional complexities. The research findings depicted the discourses, conversations, and experiences of the participants, thus adding to the existing literature related to institutional systems and parental leave policy standards for individuals/couples.

Goals

The goals of the study are

(1) to examine how individuals and/or couples navigate and negotiate parental leave policies in higher education institutions;

(2) to explore whether there is a need for informal and formal supportive mechanisms for individuals and/or couples who have taken parental leave in higher education institutions;

(3) to analyze the role of communication between department leaders, staff, faculty, and administrators in negotiating parental leave policies in higher education environments;

(4) to discover whether individuals and/or couples receive gender-neutral treatment when applying for parental leave policies; and

(5) to consider the implicit and explicit language used when discussing, interpreting, implementing, and communicating parental leave policies to individuals and/or couples in higher education institutions.

Overarching Research Questions

To further understand individuals' and/or couples' discourses and examine their experiences navigating and negotiating parental leave policies, three overarching research questions were explored. The research questions below offered a thick rich inquiry into understanding the implicit and explicit discourses, meanings, and social practices surrounding navigating and negotiating parental leave policy departmentally and individually. The three

research questions analyzed were

1. How do individuals and/or couples across different types of university positions navigate and negotiate institutional policies around parental leave policies?

2. What supportive mechanisms are needed to support individuals and/or couples who navigate, negotiate, and interpret parental leave policies?

3. How does gender influence how parental leave policies are appropriated and interpreted as policy in a university structure? Specifically, are there biases and/or gaps that exist in the execution of parental leave policies across the university structure?

Definitions

Academic discipline: Disciplines are the lifeblood of an institution (Clark, 1983). Academic discipline may include the humanities, the social sciences, science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields (Ward & Wolfe-Wendel, 2012).

Discourse: Language in use "to refer to particular contexts of language use. For example, political discourse, language used in political contexts" (Baker & Ellece, 2011, p. 30).

Documents: Documents, as text, are routinely written, produced, read, consumed, stored, circulated and used in everyday social life and practice (Coffey, 2014; Fairclough, 2015). Documents – used "as data or evidence of the ways in which individuals, groups, social settings, institutions and organizations represent and account for themselves. Documents provide a mechanism and vehicle for understanding and making sense of social and organization practices" and "have the potential to inform and structure the decisions which people make on a daily and longer-term basis" (Coffey, 2014, pp. 367–368).

Faculty: An individual with a regular instructional appointment or anyone with regular faculty

    research appointments (Hollenshead et al., 2005).

Flexibility: used to refer "to policies allowing employees greater agility in the way they use their

    sick time, schedule their work hours, fulfill their duties, and interweave pregnancy,

    childbirth, and parenting with careers" (Hollenshead et al., 2005, p. 41).

Federal Register: Published every federal working day, the Federal Register is the official journal

    of the United States government. It provides legal notice of administrative rules and

    notices and presidential documents in a comprehensive, uniform manner. The FR

    contains

- Federal agency regulations

- Proposed rules and public notices

- Executive orders

- Proclamations

- Other presidential documents

    FR – The Employment Standards Administration/Wage and Hour Division of the

    Department of Labor undertook a review of the FMLA (the "Act") and its regulations and

    published a request for information ("RFI") in the FR on December 1, 2006 (Family and

    Medical Leave Act, 2007). The RFI asked the public to assist the department by

    furnishing information about their experiences with the Act and comments on the

    effectiveness of the FMLA regulations.

FMLA: This entitles an eligible employee to take up to 12 workweeks of job-protected leave, in

    relevant part, "[b]ecause of the birth of a son or daughter of the employee" (Family and

    Medical Leave Act of 1993). "The law that provides eligible workers with important

rights to job protection for absences due to the birth or adoption of a child or for a serious health condition of the worker or a qualifying family member" (Family and Medical Leave Act, 2007). The FMLA used 29 U.S.C. §2612(a)(1)(A) - (B) and § 2601(a) - (b).

§ 2601 Finding and Purpose

(a) Findings

Congress finds that—

(1) the number of single-parent households and two-parent households in which the single parent or both parents work is increasing significantly;

(2) it is important for the development of children and the family unit that fathers and mothers be able to participate in early childrearing and the care of family members who have serious health conditions;

(3) the lack of employment policies to accommodate working parents can force individuals to choose between job security and parenting;

(4) there is inadequate job security for employees who have serious health conditions that prevent them from working for temporary periods;

(5) due to the nature of the roles of men and women in our society, the primary responsibility for family caretaking often falls on women, and such responsibility affects the working lives of women more than it affects the working lives of men; and

(6) employment standards that apply to one gender only have serious potential for encouraging employers to discriminate against employees and applicants for employment who are of that gender.

(b) Purposes

It is the purpose of this Act—

(1) to balance the demands of the workplace with the needs of families, to promote the stability and economic security of families, and to promote national interests in preserving family integrity;

(2) to entitle employees to take reasonable leave for medical reasons, for the birth or adoption of a child, and for the care of a child, spouse, or parent who has a serious health condition;

(3) to accomplish the purposes described in paragraphs (1) and (2) in a manner that accommodates the legitimate interests of employers;

(4) to accomplish the purposes described in paragraphs (1) and (2) in a manner that, consistent with the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment, minimizes the potential for employment discrimination on the basis of sex by ensuring generally that leave is available for eligible medical reasons (including maternity-related disability) and for compelling family reasons, on a gender-neutral basis; and

(5) to promote the goal of equal employment opportunity for women and men, pursuant to such clause. (29 U.S.C. § 2601(A) - (B))

Gender: "A set of agreed-upon differences that are used to denote male and female behavior[s] in particular societies perceived as binary masculine/feminine distinction" (Baker & Ellece, 2011, p. 50) and "which is socially constructed" (p. 13). Gender often intersects with sexuality, age, social class, position, and geographical location (Lazar, 2009).

Modified duties: "Policies allow a faculty member to reduce her or his teaching, research, or

service load for a temporary period (usually a term or two) without a commensurate

reduction in pay and caring for infants, elders, or critically ill spouses or partners"

(Hollenshead et al., 2005, p. 44).

Navigated: to reach an agreement or compromise by discussing with others.

Navigate – used to describe challenges regarding work-life balance and

the types of programs, services, and/or other support (Lundquist et al., 2012, p. 343). It is

used as follows: navigate, navigated, and navigating.

Negotiated: "The organization's rules and policies, along with whatever agreements,

understandings, pacts, contracts, and other working arrangements currently obtained.

These include agreements at every level of the organization, of every clique and coalition,

and include covert as well as overt agreements, temporal limits reviewed, reevaluated,

revised, revoked or renewed (Whalen, 2018) used in this study as negotiated, negotiation,

and negotiating.

Paid dependent care leave: It is "designed to allow care for another individual" and "examples of

dependent care leave for infant care include parental leave, maternity or paternity leave,

and adoptive parent leave" (Hollenshead et al., 2005 p. 44).

Paid leave to recover from childbirth: "Leaves for women recovering from childbirth can fall

under many different names" and "faculty women who are pregnant or recuperating from

childbirth" (Hollenshead et al., 2005 p. 44).

Parental leave: Parental leave is defined by the International Labour Organization as follows:

Leave granted to fathers and mothers during a period after the termination of

maternity leave to enable parents in employment to look after their newborn child

for a certain time, whilst giving them some degree of security in respect of employment, social security and remuneration. Parental leave is also granted to adoptive parents. (Bakirci, 2011, p. 2)

Parental leave policy: "to new parents" and "unpaid maternity leave; others offer paid leave to mothers; still, others offer paid leave to parents of both genders" and "parental leave policy is responsive to faculty needs and works to change gender roles" and "can transform existing structures to encourage the active involvement of parents of both genders in their children's lives" (Sallee, 2008, p. 181). "Parental leave is available to parents of either gender" (Sallee, 2008, p. 185). Parental leave policy – used as parental leave policy or family and medical leave policies.

Policy: It defines how we act and by what rules we must abide (Fairclough, 2003).

Policy is "as an agenda or set of objectives that legitimizes the values, beliefs, and attitudes of its authors" (Rogers, 2011, p. 155).

Productivity: To "meet the norms of the profession along with the norms of their particular campuses" (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2015, p. 31).

Standardization: The only standardization for leave policies in the United States is the FMLA of governmental mandate for job-protected family leave. (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2013, p. 38).

Standardized: "Clear policies and options" (Rowan University Senate Parental Leave Taskforce Report, 2017, p. 2).

Tenure clock stop: "Tenure clock stop policies allow a tenure-track faculty member to have a temporary pause in the tenure clock to accommodate special circumstances. At the end of such a pause, the clock resumes ticking with the same number of years left to tenure

review as when it paused," and "the use of this policy include[s] birth or adoption of a child, serious medical illness of the faculty member, or extensive care needs by a dependent of the faculty member" (Hollenshead et al., 2005, p. 44).

Unpaid dependent care leave: "The FMLA establishes that employers with fifty or more employees must allow up to twelve weeks of unpaid leave in order to care for a newly born, adopted, or fostered child" (Hollenshead et al., 2005, p. 44).

Significance of the Study

Understanding the institutional complexities surrounding the lack of standardization of parental leave policies potentially informs the need for consistent practices, protocols, and standards related to navigating and negotiating leave. In fact, according to the literature, parental leave practices typically are not standardized across academic disciplines (Wolf- Wendel & Ward, 2014), enacted policies (DOL, 2009; Hollensworth et al., 2005), and gender (Sallee, et al., 2016). Thus, improving the standards by which policy discourses are enacted and executed has the potential to increase individual preparedness to access, navigate, and negotiate options related to parental leave policies – minimizing federal challenges related to the unawareness of policy, ambiguous communication, and leave notification errors (Family and Medical Leave Act, 2007), which was seemingly found in the Department of Education's request for administrative effectiveness of the FMLA.

Utilizing participants' discourses, the study set out to examine the experiences of individuals and/or couples across higher education institutions who navigated parental leave policies – specifically faculty, staff, and administrators using parental leave policies and practices. Demonstrated through a thematic discourse and expressions emerging from the data, recommendation guidelines for participants are shared for staff (full time or part time), faculty

(tenure line), and administrators (departmental and administrative supervisors) to aid in

navigating leave policies. Subsequently, in chapter II, I summarize the literature that informed

this study. In chapter III, I describe the data collection and analysis process.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

The purpose of this section is to explore the literature on parental leave policies informed by federal law, gender, academic discipline, workplace productivity, and family initiatives negotiated and navigated in institutions of higher education. Thus, this section summarizes the literature that guided the study. Subsequently, this study builds upon the previous literature, acknowledging gaps where appropriate, and then concludes with implications and parting comments.

The research problem establishes the need for the study based on the overarching literature related to processes, trends, and themes between parental leave policy and its elements: gender, academic discipline, role identity, workplace productivity, and family initiatives (Coffey, 2014; Sallee & Harris, 2011; Sallee et al., 2016; Ward & Wolfe-Wendel, 2012). The structure of the literature review is explained in subsequent sections.

Section one reviewed the literature and policies related to family and medical leave, sequentially examining the (a) federal and institutional policy and (b) parental leave policy complexities. Essentially, this provided justification for the research question and set the parameters for the research problem. Therefore, I considered the relationship between federal policy and institutional policy as the foundation for seemingly all parental leave policies in higher education. This may inform understanding of the larger context related to how individuals and couples in higher education institutions seemingly interact, interpret, and negotiate university policies structured around parental leave as explored in research question one.

Consequently, section two moved into the related literature on types of accommodations and elements of parental leave policies informed by the literature. These are discussed in the following order: (a) gender, (b) workplace productivity and family initiatives, (c) family-friendly policies and (d) academic discipline, including (1) academic mother and (2) academic fathers. Seemingly, I considered the connections between these elements because of the related literature, which may guide understanding of the need for the supportive mechanism explored in research question two.

Section three considers the literature on (a) negotiated and navigated meaning and its connection to (b) negotiated and parental leave policy, (c) negotiated and higher education policy, (d) policy formation, negotiation, and appropriation, as well as (e) the role of the negotiation process and, concluding this section, the (f) duality of navigating and negotiating parental leave.

Lastly, the literature review closes with the implications and summary section. Therefore, I consider the literature and summarize the gaps informed by the literature review. Subsequently, I moved to chapter III, the methodology, and then chapter IV, the presentation of the data – followed by chapter V, the discussion, offering closing remarks and recommendations.

Federal and Institutional Policy

Over the past two decades, university systems have implemented numerous federal and institutional policies designed to balance the demands of the family and workplace responsibilities due to the birth of a child (American Association of University Women [AAUW], 2004; College and University Work and Family Association, 2011; FMLA, 1993; Hollenshead et al., 2005). In fact, the fundamental written discourse of the FMLA (1993)

stipulates the guidelines related to balancing needs of the family and workplace below:

"It is the purpose of this Act— (1) to balance the demands of the workplace with the needs of families, to promote the stability and economic security of families, and to promote national interests in preserving family integrity" (29 U.S.C § 2601 (b)(1) (1993)). In the United States, the FMLA of 1993 was enacted as a labor law to provide employees with job-protected leave if an employee met leave qualifications (e.g., medical leave, pregnancy, adoption, foster care, and military purposes). Typically, an employee is eligible for leave under the FMLA if the employee has worked 12 months leading to the request, unless the organization has reason to deem an employee ineligible (29 U.S.C § 2601).

Yet only 60 percent of employees meet the eligibility standards to take leave under the FMLA (2007), which informs on gaps in services offered for the remaining 40 percent. Furthermore, this implies 40 percent of employees are not eligible, which may be linked to the document analysis findings on the DOL's findings on FMLA administrative effectiveness since 1993. The report concluded that "many individuals [were] seeking FML lacked knowledge of policy guidelines or were seemingly unaware how policies apply to their individual circumstances" (Family and Medical Leave Act, 2007), which informs the complexities institutions may face when navigating and negotiating parental leave policies. Further exploration is needed to understand these complexities and how parental leave policies might meet the needs of its constituents. Subsequently, the below sections of the literature review are informed by the complexities related to parental leave literature that has guided the discussion on parental leave policy in the United States.

Parental Leave Complexities

For more than a decade, the complexities of parental leave policies has continued to be a

topic of political, social, and institutional debate (AAUW, 2004; American Association of University Professors [AAUP], 2001; FMLA, 1993). Although, higher education institutions have progressively acknowledged the need for gender-oriented and family-friendly policies as a recruitment and retention strategy (Hollenshead et al., 2005; Sallee, 2008; Sallee et al., 2016). Some researchers contended that one size does not fit all (Eddy & Ward, 2015), arguing for flexibility in parental leave policies and programs.

Other researchers, however, have suggested that parental leave policies are often complex and inconsistent and vary across institutions (Hollenshead et al., 2005; Levinson et al., 2009; Sallee, 2008, 2012). The use of the term "standardization" implies the lack of consistency across guidelines. For example, Salle (2012) stated, "Faculty shared that while they might have great flexibility in where they perform their work, they felt as if the institution expected them to put in work weeks that far exceeded the standard of 40 hours" (p. 792), implying that flexible structures are becoming a tool to exceed the best practices. However, the flexibility literature fails to acknowledge the need for some forms of standardization across the elements of parental leave policies. These inconsistencies may inform of the types of accommodations needed at the institutional level for individuals navigating and negotiating parental leave policies in U.S. higher education institutions.

Types of Accommodations

Although many institutions across the country adopt parental leave policies, the "types of accommodations" provided to families informs on the institutions values related to gender, workplace productivity, flexibility, academic discipline and family initiatives (Sallee, 2008, p. 181; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2016). Thus, understanding the types of parental leave accommodations may inform research question three: Who are policies written for and how are

they implemented in the university structure?

Colleges and universities have introduced numerous program policies for new parents; thus, research has indicated that recent policies which promote permitting faculty to stop the tenure clock (AAUP, 2001; Sallee, 2011), work part time (Donavan, 2012), or negotiate with department chairs to modify job duties (Eddy & Ward, 2015; Reddick et al., 2011), which informs best practices on policy initiatives. However, many studies have indicated that although institutions are adopting parental policies, the types of accommodations implemented at institutions vary and are not straightforward, specifically for faculty (Hollenshead et al., 2005; Sallee et al., 2016; Tremblay & Genin, 2011). Furthermore, an institution's policy accommodations for faculty vary based on the types funding resources the institution holds, which may inform the faculty members' level of negotiating power and care based on the available options. Thus, for the purposes of this study, I considered how parental policies interact with the elements of paid and unpaid leave, tenure stop-the-clock initiatives, scheduled leave, unscheduled leave, and modified leave (Hollenshead et al., 2005; Family and Medical Leave Act, 2007) and are reflected in policy and initiatives related to the following areas:

- Gender and parental leave policies

- Workplace productivity and family initiatives

- Family-friendly policies

- Academic discipline

- Academic mothers and fathers

Gender and Parental Leave Policies

Studies have showed that few institutional policies encourage men to take parental leave

to balance professional and family responsibilities (Sallee & Harris, 2011, Sallee, 2014). In fact, studies have suggested that even if father-friendly initiatives exist, the institutional culture is not supportive to encourage men to balance family priorities and professional responsibilities (Lundquist et al., 2012; Sallee, 2013; Sallee et al., 2016). Studies have repeatedly claimed parental leave policies fail to make sustainable policy provisions that support women as they navigate and negotiate leave at higher-level leadership positions (AAUW, 2004; Eddy & Ward, 2015; Sallee & Harris, 2011). Conversely, academic fathers also persistently face challenges navigating the complexities of parental leave policy (Reddick et al., 2011; Sallee, 2014). In fact, many studies have shown that parents must choose between the workplace/career and family (Eddy & Ward, 2015; Wolfe-Wendel & Ward, 2016), with parents often opting out of the workplace and their careers to preserve the integrity of their families. This informs the discussion on workplace productivity in the next section.

Workplace Productivity and Family Initiatives

The AAUP (2001) has stressed the need for more development and implementation of institutional policies that enable the healthy integration of work and family initiatives. Many studies have drawn a direct connection between stability in the family and productivity in the workplace (29 U.S.C. § 825.101 I (1993); Wolfe – Wendel & Ward, 2016). The FMLA states that when workers can count on durable links to their workplace, they are able to make stronger long-term commitments to their jobs (29 U.S.C. § 825.101 (c) (1993)). These connections may explain the need for clear standards related to parental leave options especially related to the workplace and the support of family initiatives, which informs overarching research question three.

Family-Friendly Policies

According to the federal policy and literature, a direct correlation exists between stability in the family and productivity in the workplace (29 U.S.C. § 825.101 (c) (1993); Wolfe et al., 2014). Yet another body of researchers argued gaps exist in the stability of workplace productivity because of the lack of family-friendly policies for men and women (Eddy & Ward, 2015; Sallee, 2012; 29 U.S.C. § 2601(a)(3)). In fact, these limitations reportedly force parents to choose the family over the workplace (Lester & Sallee, 2009; Ward &Wolfe-Wendel, 2012). This position is further segmented in the FMLA discourse – which states the lack of employment policies to accommodate working parents can force individuals to choose between job security and parenting (29 U.S.C. § 2601(a)(3)), informing the literature on family-friendly policies.

In addition, Eddy and Ward (2015) argued that many policies are generally ascribed to women even if they choose not to have children. Thus, they are to some degree forced by policies on tenure and promotion or the lack of structural supports for working families, including childcare and other family-friendly policies and practices. However, numerous studies have informed the need to integrate family-focused work-life balance policies (AAUP, 2001; Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015; Solomon, 2010). Yet other studies agree that job pressures and role blurring influence faculty family leave priorities (Galvin & Schieman, 2012).

Other studies related to work-life balance demands found that these struggles, oftentimes, worsened because of the actual demands of academic schedules and tenure track (Salle, 2011). However, O'Laughlin and Bischoff (2005) found that male and female professors described experiencing work-life and family stressors at comparable levels when balancing work and academia. Similarly, Solomon (2015) found that participants' knowledge of universities' policies varied because of a lack of knowledge of what policies existed and translated to individual situations when navigating parental leave.

Academic Discipline

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015), data released in 2013 and 2014 57 percent of women participated in the labor force. Of those 57 percent of women, 69.9 percent were also mothers which implies that women continue to need employment just as much as their occupation needs them. In addition, according to many faculty members and educational researchers, parental leave policies inform of the institutions' commitment to policies related to academic discipline (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2014); motherhood, academic mothers, and academic fathers (Sallee, 2008, 2011); workplace responsibilities (Eddy & Ward, 2015); and leadership and productivity. Lastly, studies have shown that across academic disciplines, challenges persist because individuals are seemingly attempting to understand and navigate parental leave policies (Hollenshead et al., 2005; Reddick et al., 2011; Sallee & Harris, 2011). The next sections explore the role of academic mothers and academic fathers navigating leave policies.

Academic Mothers and Fathers

Although women have made continuous advancements in academia careers, women continuously face challenges in academia, having a tenured position as faculty, and the attainment of higher-level leadership positions (AAUW, 2004; Eddy & Ward, 2015; Sallee & Harris, 2011). Studies have reported women feel forced to have to choose between their families and their careers (Ward & Wolfe-Wendel, 2017), often opting out of the workplace and their career to preserve the integrity of the family. The U.S.C. of federal policy on FMLA states, "The lack of employment policies to accommodate working parents can force individuals to choose between job security and parenting" (29 U.S.C. § 2601 (a)(3)). The literature has historically documented that women precedentially carry more responsibility in the home than men (Gerstel

& Gallagher 2001; Sayer et al., 2004). Yet an increasing amount of recent literature chronologically supports the need for institutional structures to implement policy initiatives that reduces the gap between men and women sharing family responsibilities (Reddick et al., 2011; Salle, 2014).

On the contrary, studies confirm academic fathers persistently face challenges when navigating the complexities of parental leave policy (Reddick et al., 2011; Salle, 2014), and an increasing amount of literature encourages the need to remove stigmas related to men's desire to share family responsibilities (Colbert, 2014; Sallee, 2012).

Studies have shown that only a few academic cultures encourage men to take leave when parental leave policies designed to encourage them to take leave to balance their professional and family responsibilities exist (Sallee & Harris, 2011, 2013) – which may inform why men fail to take leave, choose to remain at the workplace over taking leave options to be with their families, or avoid the complex situation as a parent to leave all together. In fact, studies have suggested that even if parental leave policies exist or father-friendly initiatives exist within an institution or an environment, the culture present is usually not supportive and does not encourage man to balance family priorities and professional responsibilities (Reddick et al., 2011; Sallee & Harris, 2011, 2013). Yet navigating and negotiating parental leave policies at the institutional level continues to be a challenge that higher education policies face, which may inform the need to increase contextual knowledge related to negotiated and navigated meaning.

Negotiated and Navigated Meaning

In this study, the literature is used to inform of the context by which the word negotiated is used. Thus, negotiated informed of the participants' exchanges with institutional rules and policies – along with whatever agreements, understandings, pacts, contracts, and other working

arrangements currently obtained to navigate (interact with) parental leave policies. These potentially included agreements at every level of the department that are agreements, whether restructured, revised or renewed" (Whalen, 2018).

Conversely, navigated implied to reach an agreement or compromise by discussing with others. In this study, navigated was used to describe conversations, interactions, concerns, challenges, frustrations regarding parental leave processes and policy structures, and programs, and services (Lundquist et al., 2012).

Negotiated Meaning and Parental Leave Policies

In this study, parental leave policies are examined in connection with federal policy that is created, (re)produced, and distributed as talk and text because textual construction is often negotiated based on meaning, structure, and appropriation (Fairclough, 2015; van Dijk, 2008). Similarly, negotiated meaning is often situated and contextually based on conversations, discourses, and experiences constructed or reconstructed based on ascribed meanings to words, phrases, policies, interactions, and agreements (Fairclough, 2009; Gee, 2011). In fact, policy is often full of negotiated meaning because of the individuals who routinely develop and assign meaning to it (Coffey, 2014; Levinson et al., 2009). Policy is then reproduced, distributed, and consumed based on negotiated meaning (Fairclough, 2003). Policy interpretations are typically appropriated as standards of practice (Levinson et al., 2009). However, the standards of practice are often complex, inconsistent, and framed in sociocultural biases and power dilemmas (Allan, 2011; Carspecken, 1996; Fairclough, 2015).

Negotiation and Higher Education Policy

Overall, higher education policy is frequently multilayered and unclear. Gee (2014) argued that policy is the result of complex negotiations that take place to a significant extent

within language and discourse. As the discussion on policy in higher education continues, it is important to establish the following position for this study:

(a) Parental leave policy is negotiated to the practice of higher education as an institution

(b) Meaning is interpreted based on social interaction (discourse) and ideological assumptions

(c) The framework for how policy is negotiated often heavily depends on the actors who are navigating policy

(d) The practice of policy in higher education is often created, reproduced, and distributed as talk and text based on the appropriation of meaning (van Dijk, 2008).

In sum, the complexity of policy formation is seemingly contingent on the authors' negotiated meaning.

Policy Formation, Negotiation, and Appropriation

Levinson et al. (2009) argued that policy most often takes the form of language, text, and critical sociocultural practice. Policy, thus, involves formation, negotiation, and appropriation. The formation of policy incorporates purposeful knowledge and meaning by commonly situated actors (Levinson et al., 2009). Meaning is then situated in the actor's ascribed meaning to patterns of thought, context, and associated meaning (Gee, 1999, 2011). Subsequently, negotiation of meaning refers to an ongoing process of making sense of self, experiences, and an inherited or created social world (Gee, 2011; Levinson et al., 2009). Appropriation then refers to the ways authors interpret, consume, and enact the elements of policy (Fairclough, 2009; Levinson et al., 2009). Thus, appropriation in higher education policy is, at best, perhaps fragmented (Dye, 1998) and then negotiated by the meaning assigned and distributed (Fairclough, 2003).

An example occurs when leaders within state, legislation, and higher education systems determine the actions of actors who navigate and negotiate policies and practices (van Dijk, 2008). Thus, the practice of policy occurs through the course of actions that are negotiated through historical premises, written policies, and decisions made in the moment (Daniel et al., 2012; Fairclough, 2009; Levinson et al., 2009). This form of negotiation, consequently, becomes the building blocks for how policy is formed in practice and situated in federally constructed laws and higher education environments.

This process influences how higher education systems disburse, consume, and integrate policy within higher education. However, this compliance does not explain how policies reflect the needs or responses to problems of its constituents within the institution (Levinson et al., 2009). Thus, to closely examine how policies reflect the needs of the institution, an analytical framework known as CDA is applied. CDA identifies a critical perspective across genders, society, and sociocultural groups (Fairclough, 2009, 2015; Gee, 2011) – specifically in texts, discourses, and documentation.

The Role of the Negotiation Process

Miller et al. (1996) identified four stages considered as influencers of the negotiation process: (1) perceived bias against leave takers, (2) the nature of the leave taker's relationship with his or her boss, (3) the leave taker's criticality to the work unit's success, and (4) the leave taker's career ambition. Although an employee must come to terms with the conditions of leave, the literature indicates that the supervisor greatly influences the employee's status and can advocate for or against the terms (beyond the legal requirement) of leave (Miller et al., 1996). This relational association between the leave taker and supervisor guides this process.

van Dijk (1985) implied that the power struggles executed over the employee, potentially

becomes the concern for power inequities. However, little is known about (1) how the terms of parental leave is navigated and negotiated, (2) if there are points of concession or compromise regarding this process, and (3) whether awareness of an individual's gender, workplace productivity, academic discipline, or family status influence this process (Coffey, 2014; Eddy & Ward, 2015; Litosseliti & Sunderland, 2002; Sallee & Harris, 2011). Subsequent sections discuss this duality of navigating and negotiating parental leave policies, processes, protocols, and discourse experiences.

The Duality of Navigating and Negotiating Leave

The duality of navigating and negotiating leave was informed by the literature review, research questions, document analysis, and interview data analysis related to federal policies, parental concerns, and parental leave choices. Upon researching the literature, themes, gaps, and questions continuously arose related to policy guidelines, parental choices, documented complaints, and employee advocate challenges for individuals and/or partners navigating and negotiating parental leave (FMLA Regulations, 2007; RFI on the FMLA of 1993, 2006; 29 U.S.C. § 2601; Lundquist et al., 2012). Typically, this signals a need for further investigation (Creswell, 2014) on account of potential gaps or inconsistencies in the literature – unless there is no connection between gaps and further investigative analysis, which informs the premise of this study.

Implications and Summary

The literature review was informed by prior research connections between institutional and federal policies amid ever-evolving policy shifts related to family-friendly initiatives, workplace productivity, academic discipline, and gender. Subsequently, I explored the shifts from federal and institutional policy requirements in higher education, specifically introducing

the research purpose and the need for the institutional analysis of policy in higher education and the literature gaps related to the need for standardization or flexibility. This led to a review of the literature on elemental shifts related to parental leave policies in the areas of gender, workplace productivity, family-friendly policies and initiatives, and academic discipline, which highlighted academic mothers and fathers.

Although the literature concerning parental elements related to faculty reviewed was abundant, the literature was less developed in the area of staff, administrators, and graduate students facing similar struggles when navigating parental leave and negotiating polices related to leave. This highlighted a significant gap in the literature in this area.

Methods

This section outlines the methodological framework for this multimethod study using document analysis and a CDA of federal, institutional, and parental leave policies. A specific consideration is used to explore how participants' awareness, knowledge, and interpretation of policies influence preparedness to navigate and negotiate parental leave policies. Subsequently, I describe the method, assumptions, propositions, participants, data collection, and data analysis. Lastly, a summary and conclusion closed chapter III prior to beginning chapter IV.

Document Analysis

Document analysis served as a multistep methodological analysis designed to understand contextual meanings of institutional, state, and federal policy documents and policy oversight committee conversations, discourses, words, and public records related to family and medical leave policies (Bowen, 2009; Gee, 2011). Coffey (2014) argued that documents should be considered as texts routinely written, produced, read, consumed, stored, circulated and used in everyday social life and practice.

Similarly, Fairclough (2015) drew an association to documents as textual discourses written, produced, (re)produced, and distributed to examine social practices and events. Documents, as evidence, represent individuals, groups, institutional actions, and interactions surrounding policy, practices, and discourses (Coffey, 2014).

On the other hand, Prior (2012) argued that although documents serve as evidence, social researchers focus on "asking questions about what documents contain than with what people do with documents and how they manipulate them in organizational contexts" (p. 147). Consequently, regarding assumptions for document analysis, the next section frames the context

that informed the methodology of this study.

Document Analysis Assumptions

Although many assumptions for document analysis exist, the focal point of this study included the following assumptions for document analysis:

- Explored the relationship between texts routinely written, produced, read, consumed, stored, circulated for use in everyday social life and practice Coffey, 2014; Fairclough, 2015).

- Used data or evidence of the ways in which individuals, groups, social settings, institutions and organizations represent and account for themselves.

- Applied as a mechanism to understand and make sense of social and institutional policy practices.

- Informed how decisions are structured for use in institutions and by those who navigate and negotiate parental leave policy (Coffey, 2014).

In conclusion, these four assumptions guided the use of document analysis. First, documents offer historical facts on parental and family medical leave policies – typically informing meanings, language uses, public discourses, and social practices (Bowen, 2009; Fairclough, 2003, 2015; Gee, 2011; Halliday, 1974). This may inform the study's overarching research question one, which is related to how policies are interpreted and navigated. Second, texts as evidence usually contain beliefs, values, and attitudes that affect social worlds (i.e., actions, practices, ideology, and power relations; Fairclough, 2015).

Third, document analysis is a systematic process to examine the production of a text, the text itself, and reception of the text (Bowen, 2009; Fairclough, 2003; Willig, 2014). This is important because textual production shapes social structures and institutions and, therefore,

contributes to social practices (van Dijk, 2003; Fairclough, 2009). This may inform the study's overarching research question two, which is related to overarching research question: What supportive mechanisms are needed for individuals/couples navigating and negotiating leave?

Fourth, documents often contain textual assumptions (meanings), so interpreting texts involves implicit and explicit assumptions using CDA. Interpretation includes understanding words, sentences, and phrases: "What is said in [a] text always rests upon unsaid assumptions" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 11) – which this study posits as one of the driving factors of how people understand, access, and implement federal and parental leave policies. This may inform overarching research question three, which is related to bias assumptions related to gender influences in the construction of family and medical leave policies implemented within a university structure.

Consequently, document analysis was considered as a mechanism of triangulation of multiple data sources to corroborate, converge, and/or refute documents reviewed, participants' interviews, institutional policy, social practices, and experiences of individuals/couples who navigated federal and parental leave (Bowen, 2009; Padgett, 1998). In addition, triangulation was used as a tool to corroborate the participants' findings regarding policy and literature review sources (Creswell, 2013).

Document Analysis Methodology

The document analysis is framed around family and medical leave policies and interview data inter(actions), corroborations, or refute of the interview data. For example, I considered the use of words, phrases, quotes, and significant statements related to the participants' use of language in use and discourses, as well as their understanding of policy practices (Fairclough, 2015). Therefore, I examined the meanings associated with federal and family and medical leave

policy documents. Subsequently, the documental analysis policy components served to triangulate the findings from the interview data analysis.

In sum, the document analysis used the five key elements of federal and parental leave policies: academic discipline, workplace productivity, family initiatives, gender, and family-friendly policies to frame and inform the interview data analysis. Subsequently, these policy components served to triangulate the findings from the interview data analysis.

Document Sources

The document analysis examined federal, institutional, and family and medical leave policies documents from the United States Code of Federal Regulations (29 U.S.C. § 2601), FMLA policy and updates, manuscripts from the DOL's public "requests for information" and "notices of proposed rulemaking," and subsequently, the institutional family and medical leave policies and practices enacted at the university of interest. Lastly, the parental leave policy literature related to academic discipline, gender, workplace productivity and family initiatives and family-friendly policies were examined. Unless a specific document is identified, hereinafter, I refer to these sources collectively as "the documents." From here I discuss my approach to the document analysis and methods before moving into the interaction of CDA.

CDA identified the discourse situated in talk, text, speech, and documentation, thereby influencing societal and cultural groups (Carspecken, 1996; van Dijk, 2008). van Dijk (2008) argued that within CDA, the group that holds the most political and societal power (known as the dominant group) has access to influence policy discourse (text and talk) based on knowledge, behavior, and ideological ethics. Although, some may fail to consider inequalities latent in text, this study used CDA to examine assumptions, inferences, and meanings often hidden in discourse, policy, and documentation – as it may inform social practices, events, and interactions

(Fairclough, 2015).

Other federal policies related to family and medical leave explicitly reiterate women have more responsibility to care for children than men because of their social position in society (29 U.S.C. § 2601 (a)(6) (1993)). Likewise, the language infers that men hold less responsibility in the family and, seemingly, cannot be primary caretakers because of their societal position (Colbert, 2014; Sallee & Harris, 2011, 2014; Reddick et al., 2011).

Theorists have argued that CDA, as a form of investigative research, exposes inequalities within institutional, political, and social structures (Brown, 2009; Fairclough, 2015; van Dijk, 1993; Ward & Wolfe-Wendel, 2016). Similarly, the construction of federal and family leave policies offers a set of socially acceptable behavior typically contained in ideologies that could reflect the bias assumptions against a group's position on social standards. Yet the overall premise of family and medical leave policies is "(1) to balance the demands of the workplace with the needs of families, to promote the stability and economic security of families, and to promote national interests in preserving family integrity" (20 U.S.C § 2601 (b)(1) (1993)).

Theorists have posed CDA as a discipline influenced by humanity, anthropology, psychology, classical languages, and the social sciences (Gee, 1993; van Dijk, 1985). This influence has challenged the instrumentation on language. As a new discipline, discourse has included the study of semiotics, pragmatics, psycho- and sociolinguistics, the ethnography of speaking, conversation analysis, and discourse studies (Gee, 1993; van Dijk, 1985).

Consequently, as a methodological approach, CDA includes the study of social, cultural, and cognitive contexts in language use. Moreover, as a methodological approach, discourse analysis is a phenomenon that includes language use: coherence, anaphora, topics, macrostructures, speech acts, interactions, turn taking, signs, politeness, mental models, and

many other aspects of discourse (Gee, 1993). I argue that CDA is the best approach for studying federal policy and institutional structures using the lens of critical and social theory to depict how discourse (written and spoken) and social practices influence decision-making and behavior. Carspecken (1996) proposed that critical qualitative research, one of several genres, is an inquiry into nonquantifiable features of social life concerned about social inequalities and positive social change.

Bourdieu (1977), however, viewed discourse (i.e., talk, text, and written) as principles of practice for comprehending the rules of discourse as language. The utilization of discourse as talk and text established a framework for the application of discourse analysis. For example, meaning is often articulated during conversations spoken or written and thereby establishes the parameters for daily discourse interactions.

Phillips and Hardy (2002) proposed that recognizing the role of talk and text in everyday living is the beginning of describing individual characteristics. Talk and text, thus, become a mechanism for language used to transform and influence individual identity. Gee and Handford (2012) viewed discourse analysis, however, in the context of meanings attached to actions when utilized in various contexts, interactions, or structures. For example, critical researchers have considered power and discourse in social systems as a mechanism to interpret meanings and actions of power enforcement. However, Rogers (2011) challenged the impartiality systematic meanings in discourse to propose that meaning is connected to socially defined practices found in sociocultural, racial, and religious structures. In sum, assumptions related to discourse analysis informed the discussion of CDA as a theoretical framework and methodology for this study.

Critical Discourse Analysis Assumptions

Although many assumptions for CDA exist, the focal point of this study included the following assumptions of CDA:

- examined the relationship between "discourse as text, interactions and context" (Fairclough, 2015, p. 58) in federal and institutional policy;

- applied three-dimension modeling for discourse analysis;

- explored discourses – ideologies, social condition, and relationship;

- challenged textual inequalities enacted, resisted, reproduced, and consumed in the social and political context and consequences of talk and text (Fairclough, 1995, 2003, 2015; Gee, 2014; Rogers, 2011; van Dijk, 1993, 2008).

In sum, these assumptions established the premise for this study applying CDA. Fairclough (1995) proposed that a framework for critical discourse includes theory and method for studying forms of language influenced by power and ideology within linguistics. Similarly, CDA, as a method in this study, examined social inequities to perhaps interpret social struggles in power, role, and gender (Fairclough, 1989, 1995). Seemingly, this framework, for example, provided a systematic process for examining power dilemmas in language, interactions, and ideologies.

van Dijk (2008), however, argued for CDA to be changed to critical discourse studies. Although differences in perspectives existed, the first assumption applied in this study analyzed CDA as if connected to relationships between power and discourse(s) related to language use (van Dijk, 2008). For the purposes of this study, the term CDA reflected the analysis of discursive language used from a critical perspective.

The second assumption of CDA in this study applied Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model for CDA. This critical approach systematically identified

(i)   language in use, as text is often spoken or written;

(ii)   discourse practices because text is often interpreted, reproduced, and distributed using institutional constructs; and

(iii) social practices because implications are drawn from language, ideology, struggles, and political elements that often inform components used to negotiate and navigate leave.

A third assumption of CDA provided a critical lens regarding social inequities by examining language in use, ideologies, social practices, and policy implications. For example, in this study, CDA was frequently used to examine implications of policy on social practices, situated meanings, political ideologies, and institutional constructs that typically perpetuate differences based on gender (Fairclough, 2015; Gee, 2011).

A fourth assumption of CDA is the commitment to challenge inequities in policy, spoken, and textual format. van Dijk (1993) proposed that CDA, as a form of discourse analytical research, studies inequalities within political and social powers often enacted, resisted and reproduced within talk and text. Similarly, in this study, participants' discourse often challenged inequities in policy practices and implementation of policies.

Likewise, federal and family and medical policy typically reinforce standards of inequity because delineated family roles seemingly favor men in the household, workplace, and family structure. Gee (2011), however, considered CDA as a framework constructed to understand the role of discourse, struggle, dominance, gender, and inequity constructs in social systems and political structures. Fairclough (1989) argued that language is a social process, having a larger impact on society. Similarly, I examined how the participants' discourse influenced social practices, interactions, and institutional environment amid struggle and gender inequities.

The Foundation of Critical Discourse Analysis

Fairclough (2015) framed CDA as socially constructed text (language written or spoken), discourse, and social practices representative of discursive ideologies and struggles (Fairclough 1993, 2015). Figure 1 below captures the application of Fairclough's three-dimensional model for CDA in this study.

Figure 1.

A Three-Dimensional Model Adapted from Fairclough (2015)
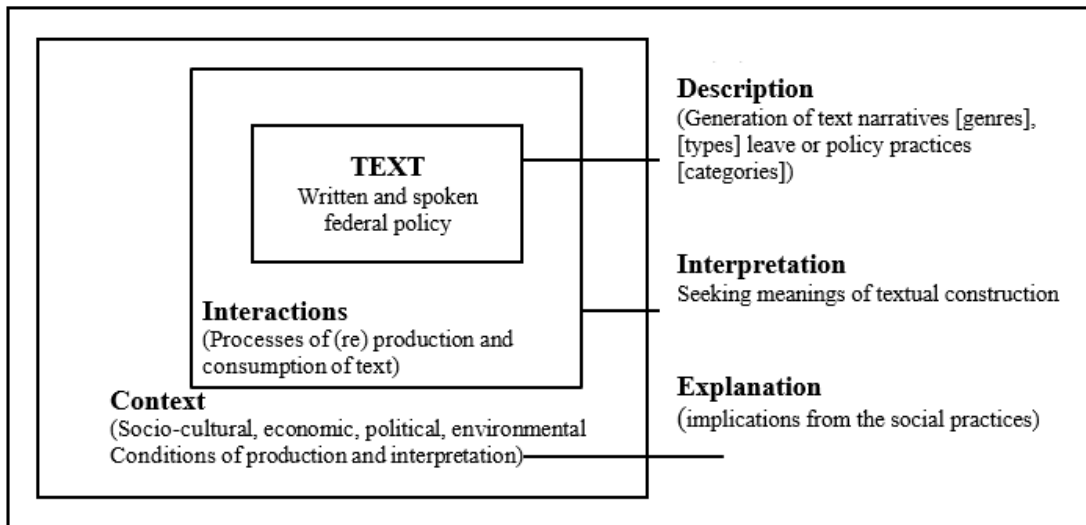
The first level of the three-dimensional model for CDA, in this study, examined written texts and spoken federal and parental leave policies because it often informed the participants' role identity, family and social life, types of leave accommodations, and best practices (Fairclough, 2015). The second level analyzed interpretation. Therefore, I explored participants' discourse alongside cues, phrases, word choices, and descriptive interviews. The third level applied explanation; therefore, I considered the participants' implications from sociocultural, environmental, and departmental struggles.

CDA, in this study, further typically focused directly on leave policies implemented, navigated, and negotiated using spoken and written words that reflected the voices of those navigating these policies. The lens of critical analysis and theory development were utilized to analyze power, role delineation, gender, and sociocultural practices in words, spoken and written, textual construction, interactions, and context meanings (Fairclough, 2003; Gee, 1999; van Dijk, 2008). In closing, succeeding sections identified the assumptions, propositions, and theories that informed CDA – such as gender, equity, culture, and power. The second section provides an example of federal policy interpreted and enacted at the individual and institutional levels to explain how using the methodological framework of CDA is an appropriate exploration for federal and institutional policies and why it would be chosen over other methods.

Critical Discourse Analysis Propositions

CDA, in this study, explored power, authority, struggles, and inequities reflected in participants' discourse (spoken and written) and the contextual interpretations utilized by administrators, staff, and faculty to navigate and negotiate leave policies in higher education. Using Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model for CDA, I examined the experiences, claims, and assumptions of individuals and couples navigating and negotiating leave policies. Specifically, I drew upon implications situated in connections across institutional structures, relationships, and interactions – which typically informed the analysis of contextual meanings, phrases, and words (Fairclough, 2003). Subsequently, the CDA propositions I applied for the purpose of this study focused on

- language analyzed across various departments, interactions, and systems;
- discourse, struggle, and ideology; and
- the interconnectedness of critical analysis in policy and legislative processes.

37

In this study, for instance, proposition one, language analysis, considered "what was said and the context in which it was said," "what needs to be filled in" and "what is not said overtly, but is still assumed" (Gee, 2014, p. 10) – subsequently leading to the study's CDA proposition two, power and discourse and ideology, which is discussed in succeeding sections.

Fairclough (2015) suggested that power in discourse or behind the discourse is asserted by those who struggle to maintain power or seek power because of ideological differences. Proposition two then examined discourse and power – which is often asserted, exercised, and contested because of ideological struggles and assumptions by power seekers and power holders (Fairclough, 2015). Consequently, CDA proposition three examined the interconnectedness of policy and the legislative process.

van Dijk (2008) typically drew attention to individuals who accessed, constructed, and contributed to political or legal enactments that exploited recipients. In fact, these enactments often imposed economic, structural, and social constraints on policies. Yet federal documentation, laws, and policies often reflected agenda objectives, interests, and viewpoints that seemingly validate the attitudes, behaviors, and tenets of its authors (Bowen, 2009) perhaps imposing ideological constraints.

For example, federal and economic policies written from a dominant class perspective often incurred economic or social constraints on members of a specific group. Consequently, in this study, I considered the constraints of administrators, staff, and faculty who seemingly negotiated the terms of leave due to the birth of a child.

For instance, federal family leave policies encouraged families to take medical leave for the birth or adoption of a child. However, a possible constraint for families was that leave was unpaid and often required extensive time off work to access this type of leave. Yet many times,

this was not a plausible option for every two-parent and/or single-parent home – seemingly because of economic constraints, such as biweekly to monthly income allocations to sustain their lifestyle and everyday responsibilities. Furthermore, almost certainly, the law does not support all economic demands and responsibilities for most families. Thus, I suspected, this law perpetuated a certain class and ideological bias related to access and economic advantage.

Critical Discourse Analysis as a Method

Carspecken (1996) viewed critical qualitative research as concerned about social structural influences, power, culture, human agency, inequality, positive change, and social theory. In fact, several theorists have routinely acknowledged CDA as the best-chosen method for examining how critical discourse practices influence written and spoken text (Fairclough, 2015; Gee, 2014; Jorgensen & Phillips, 2002). Thus, CDA, as a method in this study, was utilized to reflect language use, power, and social practices across institutional lines, interactions, and conversations (Gee, 2014). In sum, CDA served as a method to understand the assumptions, attitudes, behaviors, and discursive patterns of individuals and couples who negotiate leave in higher education institutions.

Method

CDA as a study method utilized a critical lens to answer questions surrounding policies, social practices, relationships, discourse, power and gender inequities within a university system (Creswell, 2014; Fairclough, 2003). I analyzed participants cues, significant statements, and audio recorded interviews (Gee, 2014; Roulston, 2010) to determine grammatical contexts, themes, patterns, assertions, and significant statements.

Participant Selection

Participants were selected using snowball sampling, specifically involving established

contacts and then asking participants to recommend subsequent contacts for participation in this study (Patton, 1990). In fact, contacts were recommended as individuals and couples who previously utilized federal and parental leave policies. In sum, the participants included four staff, five faculty, and six administrators.

Site Description

The residential graduate and undergrad population for this study is considered a midsized public four-year high research serving tenure/tenure-track institution offering 200 residential and online degrees was approximately 14,400. A total of 15 individuals and couples from three major colleges expressed interest in the study to be interviewed for 45 minutes up to three times. This study involved education, engineering, arts and sciences, and business administration faculty, administrators, and staff members because I wanted to obtain a holistic representation of potential leave participants across institutional roles of staff (full time or part time), faculty (tenure line), and administrators (departmental and administrative supervisors). Lastly, I used existing contacts, recommendations, personal invitations, email, campus newsletters, and department flyers to recruit participants for this research study.

The research institution for this study had implemented family medical leave policies that meets disability, federal, and state laws. This policy is seemingly navigated broadly by administrators, staff, faculty, and students to balance personal life and professional life. Essentially, the parental leave policies appeared to be negotiated at the federal, state, and college levels, where policy appears to be negotiated. An eligible employee was considered faculty or staff if employed for at least 52 weeks and worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12 months of hire.

The institution under review appears to accrue leave based on employee type: staff or faculty. Faculty and staff seemingly hold two different forms of leave stipulations for use: staff

who accrue leave based on the rate of pay as full-time benefited staff and faculty, who do not appear to accrue leave as contracted employees. Employees' use of accrual during parental leave includes the use all available paid leave, inclusive of compensatory time prior to taking leave.

Data Confidentiality

Confidentiality is being maintained by storing the anonymous audio transcripts from recorded interviews, verbatim transcripts, written memos, and consent forms in a locked drawer in the principal investigator's home for three years following the study. Any information obtained in this study that might identify study participants remains confidential. Upon the completion of three years, the data, along with the corresponding documents, will be destroyed. Any quotes used from individual interviews do not include identifying information to maintain the anonymity of the participants and the data collected.

Data Collection

Primarily, data collection consisted of document analysis and semi-structured interviews. Specifically, five faculty, six administrators, and four staff were interviewed up to three times in the summer and fall of 2016. Using Fairclough's discourse analysis as a framework, I drew links between participants' words, cues, significant statements, and quotes to amplify participants' experiences. Pseudonyms are used to preserve interviewees' anonymity.

Seemingly, I selected rich and thick descriptions from interviews and field notes. For that reason, participants' experiences typically gave voice to their lived experiences. Fairclough (2015) posed that participants arrive at interpretations because of situational context related to what has been said partly due to their commonsense beliefs, knowledge, and assumptions. Given the limited sample of faculty, staff, and administrators interviewed, I do not claim to make

empirical generalizations. My goal as a researcher is to provide a discourse analysis that represents the integrity and depth of the interviews conducted.

Interview Analysis Overview

The data collected included written and spoken audio transcripts from interviews, federal legislative policies, and parental leave policies. The audio transcripts were recorded using a handheld Olympus recorder. Consequently, all telephone interviews were conducted using ACR, utilized only for transcription and analysis. Upon completion, interviews were then transcribed one by one and assigned an alphanumeric code representing institutional role and interview order. Subsequently, interviews were audio recorded and stored on an external drive and kept with written transcripts in a locked drawer in the principal investigators' office. However, transcripts may be kept indefinitely. Lastly, audio files will be deleted after three years.

Data collection further provided contextual knowledge for the current discourse of family and medical leave policies, federal mandates, policy changes, and institutional updates. However, there were times in the data collection process where I experienced intense reflection and perplexity. Fairclough (1995) documented the importance of a systematic process of data accountability. Consequently, I often recorded many interactions from interviews as field notes in my personal journal (Denzin & Lincoln, 2013), which I reflected upon and used for analysis and decision-making (see Appendix D). Interview questions are reflected in Table 1 below.

Table 1.

Interview Questions

Utilization of Policy
1. Have you or a member of your family utilized parental leave during the past 10 years?
2. What is/was your experience accessing the policy within your department?
3. What is/was your experience when applying for parental leave policy?
4. In your opinion, is parental leave policy process equitable across your department?
5. How are parental leave policies negotiated across the department?
Awareness of Federal Law and Policy
1. As an (administrator, faculty or staff member]), tell me your understanding of the parental leave policies?
2. Having read the policy are there any questions you have regarding who has access to leave policy?
3. In your opinion, what considerations should be made for individuals who access parental leave policy?
Interpretation/Implementation
1. How did you interpret parental leave policy within the University?
2. Were there any roadblocks or challenges that you faced in taking leave parental leave policy?
3. Who helped you most in the process? Least? And How/Why was this helpful or not?
4. In your opinion, does parental leave policy impact how leave is negotiated?
Supportive Mechanisms
1. When considering parental leave policy what familial priorities come to mind?
2. What would you like to see implemented?
3. What would or would have help support you most in taking leave?
4. Is there a need for supportive mechanisms for individuals accessing parental leave?
5. When consider parental leave policies what employment priorities come to mind?
Navigating and Negotiating
1. In your opinion, how did your departmental relationships influence negotiations of parental leave?
2. Did departmental relationships influence the amount of parental leave provided?
3. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Interviews

Primarily, the data were informed by 15 interviews among administrators, faculty, and staff interviewed up to three times. Interviews were conducted for 45 minutes in length to gain individuals' lived experiences related to

(1) individuals' and/or couples' interpreted, navigated, and negotiated institutional policies around parental leave policies,

(2) supportive mechanisms needed to support individuals and/or couples who navigated and interpreted family and medical leave policies, and

(3) gender stigmas in interpreting federal laws appropriated and interpreted into policy within a university structure.

Finally, as the researcher, I sifted through the data in preparation for the analysis. Furthermore, I analyzed the interview data using the Set-up, Quote, and Comment model – which patterned data using a set-up, quotation, proceeding actual quotation or data, and ending commentary (Weaver-Hightower, 2018). Consequently, I applied Gee's (2005, 2013) language in use tools to examine discourse analysis specifically related to participants' actions, interactions, artifacts, and systems of thinking, valuing, feeling, and believing of participants in this study.

Data Analysis

In this study, semi-structured interviews applied the discourse analysis framework to examine three areas: descriptions, interpretations, and explanations of participants' language in use when navigating and negotiating leave (Fairclough, 2015), specifically participants' discourse conversations collected from the interview data of the fall and summer of 2016

utilizing pseudonames to protect participants' identities. Tables 3–6 illustrate the areas used below.

First, I analyzed participants' descriptions of interview transcripts. Therefore, I used participants' own words to describe codes because they often reflected formal and informal features in texts – such as vocabulary, grammar, rewording, rephrasing, the use of similar words or phrases (Fairclough, 2015). Take, for instance, Table 2, which highlights Jillian's (a staff member) interview transcript data on navigating leave.

Table 2.

Participant's Interview Transcript and Initial Coding

Interview transcript response	Initial coding
"I didn't know what I was doing"	didn't know
"I feel like there was no understanding"	no understanding
"I felt like I wasted a lot of time"	wasted time
"Going back and forth"	back and forth
"I don't think anybody was knowledgeable of anything"	anybody knowledgeable
"No one in my department has gone on maternity leave in such a long time"	departmental unfamiliar

Note: Adapted from *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Saldana, 2013).

In Table 2, I moved from Jillian's transcript responses to initial codes. Thus, I drew on formal features in text. Specifically, I dissected Jillian's interview transcript data line by line. I then used the participants' own words to create initial codes, which possibly informed her feelings navigating and negotiating leave (Fairclough, 2015). For example, consider Jillian's clauses "I

didn't know what I was doing" and "I feel like there was no understanding." Each phrase, although similar, perhaps delineated her assertions toward navigating the parental leave process because of claims related to limited knowledge.

Furthermore, I moved from initial codes to second-level coding, where I reanalyzed initial level codes for interpretations, examining the relationships between text and interactions (Charmaz, 2006; Fairclough, 2015). Table 3 illustrates this process.

Table 3.

Initial Coding and Second Coding

Interview response	Initial coding	Second coding
"I didn't know what I was doing"	didn't know	
"I felt like I wasted a lot of time"	wasted time	uncertainty
"Going back and forth"	back and forth	
"I feel like there was no understanding"	no understanding	
"I don't think anybody was knowledgeable anything"	not knowledgeable	lacked knowledge
"No one in my department has gone through this in such a long time"	departmental unfamiliar	

Table 3 demonstrates how I moved from interview responses and initial codes to second-level codes. In creating the second-level codes, I reexamined the initial codes to establish categorical patterns or themes related to the participants' correlations between the language used (words), context, and implicit or explicit assumptions (Fairclough, 2015; Saldana, 2013). Seemingly, Jillian's interview transcript reemphasized a lack of knowledge and departmental uncertainty. Take, for instance, phrases such as "wasted time" and "going back and forth," which perhaps drew links between the participant's explicit claims of uncertainty and a lack of knowledge.

Lastly, I considered the participants' explanations – which often used the participants' discourse as a part of their social practices, processes, and struggles and power relations (Fairclough, 2015). Take, for instance, Table 4, which depicts part 1 of the interview transcript. Richard's (faculty member) explanation asserted, amid departmental practices, navigating parental leave. This study's explanations then considered how participants' discourse informed their social experiences, practices, values, beliefs, and knowledge language expressed words or phrases.

Table 4.

Participants' Explanations

Interview transcript part 1
Muneka: You mentioned that parental leave was never an option even though individuals in your department knew that your family was expecting.
Richard: Yes, they did, and it was never brought up to say, "Hey this is an option you can consider."

Richard seemingly explained departmental assumptions related to the lack of departmental support explicitly, expressing "maternity leave was never an option" yet claimed his department was aware of his wife's pregnancy. Now, take, for instance, Table 5, which illustrates part 2 of the interview transcript. Next, Richard explicitly used discourse to communicate social struggles (Fairclough, 2015).

Table 5.

Explanations, Discourses, and Struggles

Interview transcripts part 2

Muneka: How does it make you feel?

Richard: I'm not taking it personally. I think that there were some other kinds of bigger issues we were dealing with. I also think it was because I was a male. I think if they would have mentioned something it would have just made it kind of a plus, not mentioning is not a negative.

Richard's discourse seemingly expressed social struggles occurring because of being male – which may inform social realities, practices, and structures departmentally.

Lastly, at certain points in the analysis, I applied Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological systems (macrosystem, microsystem, exosystem, and chronosystem) to analyze connections between participants' discourses and environmental influences, social roles, interactions, patterns of activities, and transitions in time. Subsequently, I examined how ecological systems potentially collided and collaborated around participants' discourse because of an event, common interaction, power, or positionality. For example, at the macrosystem level, federal policy, such as FMLA, often collided with discourses in the institutional environment, workplace setting, family structure, and peer group because it represented how participants navigated and negotiated leave.

In sum, CDA, in this study, examined participants' discourse, conversational language, and power to analyze authorship, reproduction, and distribution of discourses, institutional environment, workplace setting, family structure, and peer group. I further examined discourse, language, and power shifts to author, reproduce, and distribute discourse in the institutional environment, workplace settings, family structure, and peer group – as, almost certainly, an understanding related to who had discursive power to shift, control, and collide discourses collide stimulated around common driver, interactions, and positionality.

Researcher Reflexivity

Horsburgh (2003) posed reflexivity as a researcher's intentional recognition of their individual actions and decisions that impact the contextual meaning of the research under investigation. Reflexivity, in this study, is acknowledged by analyzing the various ways my personal beliefs, experiences, and identity intersect with the textual analysis of family and medical leave policies, participants' experiences, and viewpoints (MacBeth, 2001). As a researcher, it was important to acknowledge my personal beliefs around the use of gender-specific language within federal and family and medical leave policies, as this language seemingly perpetuated bias and discrimination based on gender.

Thus, as a researcher, it was important to reflect on my own personal schematics to locate myself as a researcher (Gee, 2005). Applying my own research reflexivity meant being honest with myself regarding my personal positionality. When I started researching this topic of family and medical leave negotiations in higher education institutions, I had no foresight or awareness that 13 months later, I would be newly married and expecting. At the time of the initial collection of this data, I was an expectant mother; therefore, I had not started the negotiating process for family and medical leave in my personal workplace. In fact, as a staff member, in a new role, I was unfamiliar with the future process of negotiation.

Consequently, I appreciated, honored, respected, and valued the participants and the interview process with my interviewees. Seemingly, because they were the experts in the field, I gleaned from their vast experience – carefully representing their voices and recounting their experiences, as these were symbolisms of strength and perseverance I could draw upon in future negotiations.

In retrospect, with my first son, I had worked for an organization outside of higher education, which was new for me in some way. However, my process to navigate leave was clear; I had to rely on the eligibility guidelines for federal family and medical leave policy. I did not qualify for family medical leave because I had not worked at the organization for 12 months. However, because of the type of birth, I was granted 12 weeks, as it was classified as a medical condition (short-term disability). This experience informed my interpretations of the types of leave accommodation experiences.

However, it was not until my third child that I had to deal with the complexities and frustrations of navigating leave. Therefore, I had the opportunity to view documented experiences reported in data analysis from participants on and public documentation on timely designations and approvals that aligned with my experiences.

For instance, for my third birth, I qualified for family medical leave based on eligibility, working at an institution for 12 months and 1,250 hours. In retrospect, according to the time frame of this study, my data collection was completed, and I was writing the data analysis. However, I did renegotiate the original time off based on the timeline offered by human resources, yet the department failed to acknowledge receipt of the update. As a result, under increased stress, I recall I thought of the schedule for the delivery of the baby and wondered if my leave would be approved.

In addition, I recall the frustrations involved with navigating the back conversations with human resources and a third-party vendor–related leave approval and designation. Although, I had notified my department months in advance of my intent to utilize family medical leave, my claim was denied because human resources failed to designate and approval my leave in a

timely manner for the third -party approval. Thus, I could understand the frustrations the participants might have experienced navigating and negotiating the parental leave process.

I, therefore, believe one of the strengths of looking into my own constructs and locating myself as a researcher was to affirm my belief in accurately reporting the voices of participants' experiences (Gee, 2005). Reflexivity was acknowledged by analyzing various ways my personal beliefs, experiences, and identity intersected with the textual analysis of leave policies.

Validity and Trustworthiness Techniques

To ensure the validity of the data collected and analysis, I used various "tools of inquiry" – including triangulation, transcripts, interactions, field notes, and interviews, to produce a trustworthy analysis (Gee, 2014). In addition, for trustworthiness, I covered the utilization of the data measured using critical lens of interpretative commentary, reflexivity, and peer debriefing applied to offer multiple meanings throughout the discussion and findings (Creswell, 2014). Reflection shaped the interpretative meanings of social, cultural, and historical indicators (Fairclough, 2015). Lastly, I applied the process of triangulation as a systematic process of sorting through the data to find common themes and categories (Denzin, 2012) from the interviews, journals, and documents.

Consequently, as interviews were conducted, special attention was taken to assure the transcripts were recorded with accuracy and verbatim. The transcripts depicted the participants' accounts word for word. Intentionality was exerted to reflect the accuracy of audio recorded conversations and transcription of their words. There were times in the data collection process where I experienced intense reflection and perplexity. These interactions were recorded as field notes in a personal journal, which I reflected upon and used for analysis and decision-

51

making. Fairclough (1995) documented the importance of a systematic process of data accountability.

Audit Trail

In this study, I applied audit trail as a form of rigor in qualitative inquiry to document and explain steps made from raw data to the interpretation of data analysis (Creswell, 2014; Padgett, 1998). This section reflects two audit trails from the interview data. First, Table 6 below provides a sample audit trail from the interview session with Jax (an administrator).

Table 6.

Audit Trail Sample #1

Significant Statement	Code	Category	Category Reduction	Themes	Exploration Items
I told people this is what is going on	C131 I told people c132 this is what is going on	Supervisor and Staff Communication	Employee Communication	Staff and Administrator Communication	Protocols for administrator to subordinate communication
So you may not get a response for a couple days	C133 so you may not c134 get a response c135 for a couple days	Communication Protocols Responses time	Communication Protocols	Communication and Protocols	Paternity leave and balance of work demands
But I didn't just disconnect completely	C136 but I didn't just disconnect completely	Employee Communication and Engagement	Communication Protocols	Communication Protocols	Paternity leave and balance of work demands
I don't know if that's really a benefit that we have here	c137 don't know; c138 if it's a benefit we have here	Lack of knowledge Benefits Awareness	Employee Benefits	Employee Awareness of Benefits	Policies surrounding paternity leave
I think you can take so much time	C139 I think you can c140 take so much time	Awareness of policy – Time off limitations	leave and time off	Staff leave policy guidelines	Paternity policy departmentally

In Table 6, audit trail examples moved from significant statements, codes, category, and category reduction and themes to possible exploratory themes (Creswell, 2014). Significant statements from Jax's responses were coded, placed into categories, and then reduced for additional clarification. Themes were drawn and the potential exploration of the themes included. The second audit trail, illustrated in Table 7, represents the final stages of shared codes, categories, and themes drawn from administrators, staff, and faculty interviewed during the summer and fall of 2016.

Table 7.

Audit Trail Sample #2

Codes	Categories	Themes
Apprehension	HR, Staff, Deans,	Faculty uncertainty and competing demands
Department support	Dept Chairs	
Ambiguity		
Unawareness		
Unclear		
Lack of assurance		
Timeline	Processes	Administrator and staff uncertainty
Application	Procedures	
Wait time	Forms	
Notifications		
Deadlines		
Approvals		

In Table 7's audit trail, I used the raw data codes to examine patterns across participants' data. Next, I determined if the patterns were categorizable based on participants responses. The categories above included common reoccurring areas I noticed across participants when interviewed. Finally, I looked for themes among these categories. I found three recurring areas: uncertainty, pressure, and anxiety challenges navigating and negotiating leave among faculty, administrators, and staff. These themes became the premise of the data analysis in chapter IV.

Peer Debriefing

The purpose of peer debriefing in this research is for accountability and affirmation and to challenge biases and assumptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I applied peer debriefing, utilizing peers and colleagues as reviewers of recorded interviews and transcripts. Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined peer debriefing as the process of talking through, exploring, and interpreting qualitative inquiries implied by the reviewer or researcher. Four peers and colleagues were identified to examine interviews and transcripts. Three of the four agreed to take on the challenge of reviewing transcripts and interviews. Two peers were considered experienced qualitative researchers within the academic community used as impartial insiders possessing working knowledge of the topic (Spillett, 2003). The other colleague served as an outsider holding limited to no knowledge of parental leave policies and practices. Although, there was an increase in the amount of questions and explanations, I welcomed the diversity of questions.

In addition, peer debriefing served as an accurate reflection of multiple points of views in attempts to minimize vague descriptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Questions arose regarding transcripts reported from two spouses as participants, specifically regarding what appeared as

discrepancies in the depiction of the birthing transition process stories. I examined the transcripts and concluded that the data transcripts thought to be discrepancies by the peer reviewer were minor alterations from the viewpoint of the interviewer.

Member Checking

Creswell (2014) proposed member checking as a tool of rigor within qualitative inquiry, which allows for participants to review findings of data analysis for accuracy. Member checking, in this research, was employed by sending all participants an emailed copy of the data transcripts. Participants were provided 10 days to review transcripts. I used feedback to adjust the data transcripts. The data transcripts were then re-sent to participants for follow-up and final revisions. The technique is used as a method of establishing trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Inaccuracies, suggestions, and assumptions were modified to reflect accuracy of participants' reported interpretations.

Parting Comments and Conclusion

The current discourse of federal and family leave policies reflects historical, political, and sociocultural language regarding assumptions of gender, productivity, and family responsibility delineation in the home and workplace, which may inform the need for family and medical leave policies explored in research question one. Although amendments in the literature incorporated the inclusion of the term "spouse" (FMLA. 2013), in the U.S. Code remains written in gender-specific idiomatic expressions depicting the expectations based on gender. This is problematic because although the current discourse of most family and medical policies is seemingly divided, depicting the experiences for mothers and fathers but failing to incorporate into policy as practice the original premise of federal family and medical leave, the U.S. Code promotes the stability of the family by recognizing that "it is important for the development of children and the family

unit that fathers and mothers be able to participate in early childrearing and the care of family members who have serious health conditions" (29 U.S.C. § 2601(a) Findings (2)). In fact, the literature indicates that most institutions do not have standardized parental leave policies for fathers in the United States (Reddick et al., 2011; Sallee, 2012). Consequently, the literature has reported that where parental leave policies exists, the institutional structure may fully support or understand the fathers' needs – thus inhibiting fathers to take advantage of the policies (Hollenshead et al., 2005; Reddick et al., 2011), which may inform research questions two and three (how policies are interpreted, navigated and negotiated and what supportive mechanisms are needed).

Subsequently, Fairclough's (1999, 2003, 2015) CDA model seemingly focused on how language, power, and struggle is enacted in interactions, social practices, and institutional policies. Furthermore, CDA is processed through participants' interpretations of text (spoken and written), interactions of text, and the contextual meaning and structure at the institutional level. Seemingly, the language used often expresses identified participants' beliefs, values, identities and relationships that frame their social world (Gee, 2014). Consequently, social realities almost certainly inform how discourse and ecological systems often collide and collaborate when a triggered stimulus, such as the birth of a child, is involved.

CHAPTER IV

Results

Chapter IV begins by presenting a brief overview of the study objectives. Subsequently, I move to emergent themes captured from the interview data analysis, where I used document analysis as a multistep to triangulate, corroborate, or refute participants' experiences and discourses surrounding navigating and negotiating parental leave policies. Lastly, I conclude this section with a summary prior to beginning chapter V, "Discussion and Recommendations."

Chapter Overview

Chapter IV reports key findings from 15 semi-structured interviews – primarily five faculty interviewed three times, six administrators interviewed two times, and four staff interviewed three times the summer and fall of 2016. To illustrate, I examined individuals' and/or couples' discourses navigating and negotiating parental leave policies at a Midwest public institution – specifically across inter(actions), social practices, delineated roles, and genders (Fairclough, 2015). Thus, I used Fairclough's CDA model and document analysis as a framework to examine meanings surrounding policy and corroborate or refute participants' experiences. Subsequently, I drew links between policies, participants' words, cues, significant statements, and quotes to amplify participants' experiences utilizing pseudonyms to preserve the interviewees' anonymity. Occasionally, this analysis incorporated Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological system to amplify how participants' discourse interactions could collide and collaborate around a triggering event – the birth of a child. Data collection and analysis were guided by four questions addressing the following points:

(1) to examine how individuals and/or couples navigate and negotiate parental leave policies within higher education,

58

(2) to explore the employer-to-employee relationship between department leaders, staff, faculty, and administrators in negotiating parental leave policies in higher education environments,

(3) to discover whether individuals and/or couples receive gender-neutral treatment when applying for parental leave policies, and

(4) to analyze the implicit and explicit language used when discussing, interpreting, implementing, and communicating parental leave policies to individuals and/or couples in higher education environments.

Depicted through individuals' and/or couples' spoken texts and voices, this qualitative study explored participants' experiences when they navigated and negotiated paternal leave policies across higher education institutions. Levinson and Sutton (2001) argued that policy appropriation highlights textual processes circulated across institutional contexts when applied, interpreted, and contested by a multiplicity of local actors. My findings suggest the participants experienced uncertainty, pressure, and anxiety when navigating and negotiating leave because of variations in parental leave discourses, departmental practices, and family and medical leave policies. Subsequent sections informed participants' duality in navigating and negotiating leave across genders, workplace productivity, family responsibilities, and academic disciplines.

Emergent Themes

Five major themes emerged from the document analysis and interview data collection gathered in fall and summer of 2016 (see Table 8).

(1) Faculty uncertainty and workplace demands, which is informed by two subthemes: competing workplace demands and departmental support. This theme addressed faculty uncertainties navigating parental leave polices and then is triangulated around

59

the document analysis data on work-life balance.

(2) Faculty pressures and gendered organizations, which is informed by four subthemes: male and female predecessors, power struggles between predecessor, predecessor and gendered power relations, and faculty autonomy and flexibility. This theme addressed faculty negotiating leave and triangulated with the policy data related to gender and academic discipline;

(3) Faculty pressures and workplace productivity, which is informed by three subthemes: productivity and institutional status, faculty pressures and stigma, and planning and timing responsibilities. This theme addressed the complexities involved in navigating leave and is informed by the document analysis excerpts on workplace productivity.

(4) Types of leave accommodations, which is linked to administrators and staff as requestors of parental leave who navigated and negotiated leave and administrative and staff requestors of leave, which is informed from the document analysis data on policy related to family planning initiatives.

(5) Administrators as leave approvers and staff uncertainty, which is consolidated with policy and standardization.

Table 8.

Themes and Subthemes

Faculty Uncertainty and Workplace Demands

Competing workplace demands

Departmental support

Faculty Pressures and Gendered Organizations

Male and female predecessors struggle

Predecessors and power struggles

Predecessors and gendered power relations

Faculty autonomy and flexibility

Faculty Pressures and Workplace Productivity

Productivity and institutional status

Faculty pressures and stigma

Planning and timing responsibilities

Types of Leave Accommodation and Family-Friendly Policies

Flexibility and departmental relationship.

Leave and time-off requests.

Family-friendly policies.

Administrators and Staff Uncertainty

Staff uncertainty

Ambiguity process and procedures

Communications and interactions

Administrator as approvers uncertainty

Administrators' communications and interactions

Faculty Uncertainty and Workplace Demands

The first major overarching theme of the interview data reported faculty uncertainty navigating parental leave policies because of uncertainty related to the following subthemes: competing workplace demands and departmental support. The findings suggest the level of support among department leaders, deans, and department chairs informed faculty uncertainty navigating parental leave policies. In fact, these uncertainties are corroborated by the document analysis data on workplace responsibilities discussed in subsequent sections.

Competing Workplace and Family Demands

According to the data, faculty decisions to take leave were often influenced by competing workplace priorities. The document analysis and interview data suggest that workplace, family, and career productivity conflicts most often resulted from competing workplace demands (Eddy & Ward, 2015; Reddick et al., 2011). Initially, the policy discourses surrounding faculty uncertainty because of competing workplace demands reportedly informed the premise of workplace family responsibilities at the federal level, which supported the parents' rights to choose between being productive in the workplace and balancing family and career options (Eddy & Ward, 2015; Wolfe-Wendel & Ward, 2016). Similarly, federal family and medical policies articulated "the purpose of this Act— (1) to balance the demands of the workplace with the needs of families, to promote the stability (29 U.S.C. § 2601 (b)(1)). Consequently, all faculty in the study were asked, Do you think you have to choose when it comes to balancing the needs of the family and the demands of the role of a faculty member? However, many faculty members seemingly acknowledged having to choose between family and work priorities. Jon described his experience of having to choose between the family and work priorities below:

Jon: No, I didn't take any leave at all because I was a first-year professor.

Muneka: You didn't feel like it was something that you should have access to?

Jon: I wanted to take leave. I didn't feel like it was a good time as a new faculty member in the department.

The document analysis confirms that some men often choose workplace responsibilities over the family because of pressure from the parental and family leave processes (Coffey, 2014; Sallee et al., 2016). In fact, a key assertion expressed during semi-structured interviews was that participants repeatedly navigated and negotiated leave amid "uncertainty" and "pressure." The participants used phrases and words such as "a lack of departmental support," "anxiety" and "apprehension" to explain their experiences related to uncertainty and pressure. In fact, many of the participants felt processes were often "unclear" because they lacked clear instructions from deans and department chairs.

Others, however, expressed feelings of fault, guilt, and lack of support surrounding competing departmental demand. For example, Sara (faculty member) explained responsibilities between students and department demands: "I did not want to leave my students. It's not their fault, and it's not the Department's fault." Richard (faculty member), however, seemingly described the lack of departmental support: "I didn't feel like it was a good time as a new faculty member in the department because of the lack of [a] department chair." Seemingly, what is missing from this analysis is why faculty believed they had to choose between family and work priorities – leading to further inquiry related to how job pressures and role blurring may influence faculty understanding of parental leave priorities (Galvin & Schieman, 2012), which is corroborated by the policy analysis review. Subsequent sections discuss the interview data related to uncertainty and departmental support.

Departmental Support

The second subtheme is related to how faculty members navigated leave negotiations because of a lack of departmental support, which informed the participants' social interactions. The interview data reported that faculty members' understanding of the meanings of and processes associated with navigating parental leave policies was often "unclear." In fact, many participants expressed rather consistently "a lack of certainty" navigating leave when interacting with deans, chairs, and their peers.

Consequently, some words – such as "ambiguous, doubtful, and unclear" – were used to express feelings of uncertainty. Jon, a faculty member, was asked what would have helped him most in navigating leave in his faculty. He said, "I think if they would have mentioned something it would have made it kind of a plus; not mentioning it is a negative because they knew what's going on but did not say anything." Jon's discourse perhaps constructed a certain dissonance around departmental support. Jon seemingly attempted to hide his feelings of disappointment because of a lack of departmental recognition. For instance, the word "mentioned" perhaps implied to hint at "speak to" or "bring up in a conversation." This seemingly asserted his concerns in relation to the unmet departmental expectations and possibly informed his ideological need for departmental support based on interactions. What is seemingly missing from the analysis is if faculty felt the need to compartmentalize their emotions to prioritize workplace and family responsibilities. The document analysis supported the need for many faculty to understand policies related to parental leave to ease conflicts related to workloads and navigating work and family responsibilities (Reddick et al., 2011), which seemingly might inform how they navigated supportive social interactions.

Supportive Social Interactions

In fact, some faculty believed departmental support was connected to a supportive social interaction with senior-level leaders. Beth, a faculty member, described her needs for supportive departmental connections: "I think there could be some support mechanisms in our department if we had senior-level faculty that says, 'Hey, you're expecting a child, then you should consider taking leave, we will have your back!'" So seemingly, the entire text structure and narrative hangs on departmental support as a premise that informed some faculty members reported assertions in relation to approval among department chairs. Since almost certainly, faculty phrases such as "we will have your back" and "the area you work" presumably informed their assumptions in relation to departmental interactions and support and seemingly equated it to acceptance or consent to take leave or withdraw from leave.

Similarly, other faculty members likened not taking parental leave to a lack of departmental support. Lizzy, a faculty member, expressed apprehension related to departmental support because of being the first departmental female: "I was one of the first female faculty members in that department. I was unsure of how my department would respond to being a female Professor with a male department chair," whereas Jon claimed, "I wanted to take leave, but I didn't feel like I had departmental support." However, generally, faculty members believed their options to take leave were somewhat predicated on departmental leadership support. In fact, most faculty members reported that "the area you worked determined your experience" navigating leave. Most often, faculty members reportedly negotiated and struggled to take leave because of "departmental uncertainty," acknowledged "pressures," and "peer and predecessor resistance," which is discussed in subsequent sections.

Faculty Pressures and Gendered Organizations

The second major overarching theme reported how faculty members negotiated leave amid pressures related to power struggles between predecessors and new faculty leave negotiations. The findings suggested that gender informed the challenges of faculty members in negotiating parental leave because of pressures from their male and female predecessors, gendered power relations, and faculty autonomy and flexibility (Eddy & Ward, 2015; Sallee & Harris, 2011; Sallee et al., 2016). Similarly, pressures related to negotiating parental leave were found in the document analysis on gender and academic discipline (Reddick et al., 2011), which is discussed in the subsequent sections.

Male and Female Predecessors Struggle

Some faculty believed this pressure was often expressed as resistance because of male and female peer struggles since predecessors held institutional status or power. However, other faculty reported pressures negotiating leave because of leave course schedules and parental leave planning and timing responsibilities. In fact, several participants felt pressures related to planning and timing appeared eased when provided autonomy to negotiate a plan based on flexibility in course schedules.

Predecessors and Power Struggles

Some faculty repeatedly described pressure as resistance or struggles from male and female predecessors who navigated leave historically, before new the faculty was formed. Faculty members were asked how leave policies were negotiated across the department. In fact, several faculty reportedly experienced pressures negotiating leave because of resistance and

struggles from peers and predecessors. Take, for instance, Lizzy's faculty struggles between

female faculty members across institutional boundaries below:

> Lizzy: I'm going to say, I think it was very easy because I was dealing with a man. I've
>
> seen some instances on campus where with female-to-female it's much more difficult.
>
> I've heard about it around campus that females call out other females. I don't think that's
>
> right.
>
> Muneka: What does that do for female-to-female relationships within the department as
>
> well as the family?
>
> Lizzy: I think females are the biggest detours of our relationships because of the way we
>
> do things. I look forward to working with a man because when you're in a faculty
>
> meeting, women can get mad about something trivial, but the guys get mad for like eight
>
> minutes and then you're like okay. Where some women are just like they're going to get
>
> you and it's forever.

Lizzy's view appeared deeply rooted in antagonistic female relationships because of assertions

related to dichotomies among women and men. Seemingly, Lizzy's words explicitly appeared to

amplify gender paradigms, negative claims related to "dealing with a man" as opposed to

"females calling out other females" since some females seemed to shift current female faculty

parental leave experiences. The data further supported peers' struggles seemingly because of

predecessor and power relations which is discussed in subsequent sections.

Predecessors and Gendered Power Relations

Even though some faculty members likened pressure to resistance from peers, other

faculty members, however, felt resistance resulted because the predecessors were executing

power in the relationship dynamic. Faculty members were asked, how did your departmental

relationships influence parental leave negotiations? Below is Beth's report on negotiating leave amid female faculty predecessors and power relations:

> As one of the many females in a predominately male department, at times negotiating leave is rough because of female predecessors before me who have determined that the road has to be hard for you because it was hard for them.

The assumption is since predecessor's road negotiating parental leave was difficult, peers too must have the same challenges and/or roadblocks. The assertion was that Beth perhaps perceived a discrepancy related to gender and departmental structure existed. Perhaps, differences in male and female classifications seemingly centered on power relations resulting from a systemic female-to-female faculty social struggle. This can be implied from Beth's clause "female predecessors before me determined the road has to be hard for you because it was hard for them." This claim possibly influenced "female predecessors" historical social experiences and power struggles regarding negotiating leave. However, what is missing from the data is why current departmental leaders tolerated these nuances in the leave planning processes, specifically because leave is considered a benefit based on eligibility not social affiliation.

Moreover, some female faculty members believed predecessors used authority in discourse to "challenge" the perspective that female-to-female parental planning processes often "delay communications or conversations" related to parental leave processes. These interactions seemingly informed faculty need for autonomy and flexibility in negotiating leave as discussed in subsequent sections.

Faculty Autonomy and Flexibility

Even though the faculty negotiated leave, they reportedly experienced pressure because of predecessors. Faculty members who experienced pressure because of pregnancy stressed the

68

need to have autonomy and flexibility in creating a parental leave plan. These faculty members developed a parental leave plan of action prior to negotiation with department leaders. Others stressed the need to have autonomy in creating flexible parental leave plans, using word choices such as "empowerment," "autonomy," and "flexibility" to inform administrators of their right to choose parental leave plans that supported their family needs. Likewise, the document analysis supported implementing parental leave policies inclusive of faculty flexibility and autonomy to encourage men and women to navigate family leave programs (Sallee, 2013; Sallee, Ward, & Wolfe-Wendel, 2012). Sara described approaching male counterparts with a plan of action prior to having parental leave discussions:

> In my experience, conception was difficult. I remember when I found out I was having a baby. I went to my male counterparts [dean chair and human resources] with a plan. I remember the anxiety around this birth, but I had a plan. Oftentimes it's the area you work in that determines the experience one has navigating leave.

The language here is clear regarding the departmental apprehensions. The claim present in the phrase "I had a plan" implies the need to present a cohesive plan to gain departmental support in navigating leave. Furthermore, there is an implication that field in which one works determines the experience one has navigating leave. This expectation created uncertainty and possible fear of the amount of leave time negotiated. This is evident in the use of the phrase "anxiety around this birth." The assumption is that if one does not have a good interaction with those overseeing the parental leave process, the outcomes of negotiating leave could vary. The existing social reality is that uncertainty navigating leave might contribute to higher levels of anxiety in the leave process. This anxiety reportedly contributed to faculty pressures amid navigated and negotiated leave, which informed faculty workplace productivity.

Faculty Pressures and Workplace Productivity

A third major theme is how faculty navigated and negotiated leave under pressure because of productivity and institutional status (i.e., tenured, pretenured, or nontenured), planning and timing responsibilities, and workplace stigmas discussed in subsequent sections. I discuss how navigated leave informs the parental leave process and protocols; the challenges faculty face when negotiating the leave process; and balancing the pressures of productivity, tenure, and stigma associated with having a family.

Faculty pressure and conflict typically occur when negotiating institutional policies informed by workplace and family balance (Reddick et al., 2011). Using document analysis, I triangulated the interview findings by corroborating the pressures faculty experience amid negotiated work and family responsibilities because of tenure and productivity concerns for men and women (Reddick et al., 2011; Sallee, 2013; Sallee et al., 2016), as discussed in subsequent sections.

Productivity and Institutional Status

Faculty participants described how they navigated and negotiated leave processes amid productivity responsibilities. In fact, several faculty participants stated they did not take leave because of these pressures and their institutional status (tenure status). For example, the interview data below illustrate a first-year nontenured faculty member who wanted to take leave, yet was conflicted about workplace priorities as a new parent.

> Richard: I think if I had taken leave and not worked at all, it would have probably impacted the family even worse then.
>
> Muneka: Why do you say that?
>
> Richard: Just for future professional reasons.

Muneka: So, talk to me more about that. How would it have influenced future advancement?

Richard: Let's just say for example, if I was to be back on the market and jump institutions. If I didn't have this portfolio of teaching, service, and research, there would be a huge gap. If I was on leave, I would probably still be working anyway, and who is going to be teaching my courses?

This faculty member's decision to not take leave was informed by professorate aspirations, providing for family stability, and demands for productivity. This is evident in the demands to account for productivity in his reference to a "gap" in areas of teaching, service, and research, which seemingly collide with taking parental leave. Similarly, the document analysis findings used the words "pressures" and "conflicts" to describe men's experiences negotiating parental leave amid workplace productivity demands and policies.

Hidden in this discourse is the notion of being on parental leave and working anyway, which is supported by the faculty literature as "overextending in work and family responsibilities" (Reddick et al., 2011, p. 1) and has appeared in other participants' statements such as, "I am willing to work while at home" or "I am available from this time until 6 PM." The question is why productivity demands are so high that individuals cannot disconnect from work. One participant indicated, "I took calls while off because I was the senior leader in my department." Why does the negotiation process include remaining connected to work or feeling as though faculty members must work while on leave?

In this study, male faculty members most often opted not to take leave because of workplace pressures. When asked about his experience negotiating parental leave, Jon said, "I wanted to take parental leave! We totally could have taken several months' leave for my

newborn son, but it would have put a strain on the department." Jon's use of "strain" is

synonymous with the words *demands*, *burdens*, and *pressures*. Faculty members face challenges

of work–life balance conflicts and workplace pressures (Berheide & Anderson-Hanley, 2012;

Coltrane, Miller, DeHaan, & Stewart, 2013; Reddick et al., 2011), which may inform faculty

explanations of workplace stigma.

Faculty Pressures and Stigma

Faculty participants explained negotiating leave amid pressures and stigmas. For some

faculty members, parental leave was an opportunity to support the early weeks and months, to

welcome and bond with a newborn child (Maume, 2016; O'Brien, 2009). For others, parental

leave had a negative stigma for organizational members (men and women) and among

institutional culture (Coltrane et al., 2013; Lerner, 1986). Richard explained why leave carries a

stigma from an American perspective:

> Richard: Paternity leave has had a negative status for some time when you're trying to
>
> address issues of stigma and not being passive-aggressive about it, as opposed to being
>
> upfront.
>
> Muneka: Why do you think parental leave has a negative stigma?
>
> Richard: Because I think it's an American perspective regarding work–life balance and
>
> being able to bounce back and work in the human condition. It's a pulling up your
>
> bootstraps kind of mentality.
>
> Muneka: Do you feel like that stigma is more toward paternity policy, maternity policy,
>
> or across the board?
>
> Richard: I think they [stigmatize] the whole situation. I would say it's stigmatized. It's
>
> probably more so for maternity leave, because the thing is happening to you, and maybe

72

nobody said it was because I was a dad.

Richard's view explicitly explains microsocial level language—conversational interactions possibly rooted in ideological beliefs. This type of language contrasts macrosocial level language—larger social practices that influence local institutional policy, culture, and practices. In fact, the language spoken, written, and practiced often represent established social models based on social group or cultural languages (Gee, 2014). For example, Richard's phrase, "American perspective," implied a certain ideological perspective of individuals from other countries who interacted with paternity leave under various conditions.

The word *stigma* paints a picture of shame, guilt, or remorse related to families taking parental leave. This symbolism (language) does not necessary explain interactions by which faculty navigate departmental support amid pressures related to parental leave options and time-off requests.

Planning and Timing Responsibilities

Most often, faculty members negotiating leave in Fall of 2016 experienced pressures due to the timing of leave and the need to plan responsibilities surrounding courses, students, and teaching. Faculty were asked whether departmental relationships influenced negotiations for the length of time parental leave was provided. In the next three examples, Sara describes the pressures she encountered related to planning and timing:

> I found out I was pregnant and would be missing in January. I went to him [department chair] and I said, "What we should do with the courses that I teach?" There was no backup. I'm the only faculty member that teaches my courses, so I felt a slight amount of pressure because I have three sections of the class required.

The need to devise a plan reveals this pressure related to perceived unpreparedness. This faculty

pressure, analogous with the need to devise a course plan of execution, is corroborated alongside departmental negotiations based on relationship influences. However, what is missing contextually from the data is whether this experience is standard for all faculty navigating leave. Take Beth:

> He said, "Sit down with a calendar and figure it out." I stated, "I'll just work on some projects, and unless you want me to do something else until I give birth," so this is what my plan was because I was 39 and high-risk.

What is unknown is what happens when other faculty members approach their department chairs without a plan.

> I scheduled my classes so that I would teach my classes in six weeks, so I would come back right after spring break and my class would start and go to the end of the semester. I knew it was doable because that's what I did in summer school, so I just took my summer school schedule and put it into my regular schedule and that's how it went in the catalog.

What is missing from the data is whether this type of negotiation occurs across all departments. In fact, some faculty and administrators believed the department one worked in determined the amount of time offered for leave. The assumption was that good interactions with departmental leaders often influenced the amount of time provided. Anna described the pressure of negotiating leave while planning courses:

> I went to talk to the HR manager. I told him I was pregnant. I felt that pressure. He was like, "Do whatever you have to do." He empowered me to figure out my schedule instead of telling me what I was going to do. That changed everything.

Anna's feelings connected to pressures of course planning conversations. The phrase "I felt that pressure" describes uncertainty about departmental interactions. However, the assumption is that

because Anna was empowered to "figure out" leave negotiations, the pressure was somewhat relieved. These conversations demonstrate the need to understand the types of leave accommodations and family-friendly policies experienced by administrator and staff.

Types of Leave Accommodation and Family-Friendly Policies

The fourth major theme administrators and staff as requestors of parental leave described was that participants navigated and negotiated leave. The findings indicate that understanding the four types of parental leave accommodations (flexibility and department relationships, leave options, time-off requests, and family-friendly policies) influences parental leave processes. Many administrators and staff as requestors of parental leave reportedly navigated and negotiated parental leave and believed flexibility was needed in time-off requests, leave options, and work-friendly policies. In sum, the document analysis informed the meaning associated with various types of leave accommodation and the importance of understanding family-friendly policy initiatives.

Flexibility and Departmental Relationships

Administrators and staff as requestors of leave believed flexibility and departmental relationships influenced the parental leave process. In fact, most often, administrators as requestors of parental leave felt that departmental relationships and interactions with deans, staff, and supervisors influenced the navigation and negotiation of leave. Administrators and staff as requestors who navigated and negotiated leave were asked, "Do you think departmental relationships influenced the leave process?" Jax alluded to the need for flexibility in the example below:

> Yes, I think certainly we have a professional relationship, which is a good thing. I feel
> like I'm very much treated as a professional. I mean, he is my supervisor. I don't feel

necessarily that I work like an employee or staff member. I lead an area, so I'm able to do

these things.

Several implications are reflected in Jax's comments that reflect flexibility and allude to

departmental relationships. Jax's association with leading a department justifies parental leave

interactions, which indicated his expectations in departmental relationships.

Even though some administrators as requestors felt flexibility aided in negotiating and

navigating leave, others believed departmental relationships influenced the negotiating and

navigating processes. For instance, Isaac, explaining departmental interactions, stated, "I feel that

our department is good; I don't feel as if anyone that took [requested] leave would be denied. I

don't think the dean would stand for not letting people take their leave." Amber, a staff member,

reported on staff interactions, indicating, "I still like having a flexible-based process with staff

members." However, James, an administrator, described departmental regulations, stating, "I will

say that 'I'm not a huge fan of over-regulation.' I sometimes feel like this is a process but

certainly I understand other departments' positions." In contrast, Jessica, a staff member, seemed

to scrutinize departmental inflexibility:

> It was a little bit challenging! I didn't feel like they [department supervisors] understood
>
> the complexities of being a young family, that not everything is going to be the same. I
>
> might have to take some liberties with, you know, being there right at 8 o'clock on the
>
> dot and leaving right at 4:30 with kids' appointments [and] follow-up appointments.
>
> [What's that] going to look like?

Jessica's language explicitly implied frustration, which seemingly collided amid claims related to

inflexibility, perhaps because of departmental relationships, structures, and policies, an

experience contrary to her peers. In fact, the phrase "it was a little bit challenging" perhaps

alludes to feelings of struggle, whereas "what's that going to look like" potentially suggests feelings related to intense departmental struggles and ambiguity. The birth of a child is perhaps considered the triggering event influencing all levels of interactions, decisions, and social practices because of potential ecological system and discourse collisions. For example, at the microsystem level, immediate environmental collisions might occur because of shifts, changes, or struggles related to the discourses surrounding Jessica's claims of inflexible parental processes and policies.

Leave and Time-Off Requests

Many administrators and staff participants expressed the need for flexibility in leave and time-off requests, specifically as it related to doctor appointments, sick children, and unexpected incidents. However, interestingly, this "flexibility" was described as having the ability within one's department to continue to be available for unexpected parental activities that arose even after parental leave, vacations, and time were exhausted. Administrators were asked what support mechanisms are needed when navigating negotiating leave. Daniel, an administrator, explained, "I just think if you have two kids, you must take time for doctors' appointments or sick kids you have no time off remaining." Several administrators spoke on leave and time-off requests in the context of supportive mechanisms because of the absence of additional family support. Take, for instance, James, an administrator, who, when asked what support mechanisms are needed when navigating and negotiating leave, stated,

> I think having flexibility for people [to do] what they want to do is important. I remember
> telling my boss, I'm thinking two weeks leave but I just want to see how things adjust, I
> just want to see how the childbirth goes, if there any complications. All of these things
> kind of influence how I get back into it, so I went into it with a lot of flexibility.

77

James' language explicitly acknowledges parental needs related to family support, time off, and flexibility. Consequently, the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA; 1995) policy seemingly offers families parental leave time to balance demands. Moreover, a few participants indicated that their departments had parental leave pools for families to access when leave was exhausted. Surprisingly, these claims are further supported in data assertions related to the need for family-friendly workplace policies, discussed in the following section.

Family-Friendly Policies

Although quite a few participants felt that flexibility in leave and time-off requests was needed, many administrators and staff as requestors supported family-friendly workplace policy demand, specifically in environments where pooled leave was not available. In fact, most often, administrators and staff as requestors felt that institutional policies and procedures needed to reflect family-friendly policies. Similarly, the document analysis corroborated the need for faculty to have family-friendly workplace policies to support parental leave policies when negotiating leave (Berheide & Anderson-Hanley, 2012; Reddick et al., 2011; Sallee et al., 2016). Administrators and staff as requestors were asked, "Having read the parental leave policy, in your opinion, what considerations should be made for individuals who access parental leave policies?" Take, for instance, the exposition of James, an administrator, on workplace policies:

> My main complaint about the policy is that if it is really important for you to be able to spend time with family, then let's actually grant people some additional time to spend with them. If my wife needs to go back to the hospital or follow-up stuff, all these things that just there's no vacation accumulated.

The conflict between supporting family and workplace needs was explicitly evident in James' response. The use of the words "policy," "family," and "additional time" seemingly portray

78

workplace policy needs to support families navigating and negotiating leave. In fact, Berheide and Anderson-Hanley (2012) implicitly believed in combating conflict between the family and workplace by lobbying for systems that support the family. Similarly, Hollenshead, Sullivan, Smith, August, and Hamilton (2005) further suggested incorporating flexible work-friendly policies, tenure stop-clock policies, and bias-aversion practices. In contrast, Berheide and Anderson-Hanley (2012) indicated that workplace and family conflicts caused employees to make difficult choices regarding work demands. Staff members reported a similar finding. Consider, for example, Isaac, a staff member:

> When you just start here at the institution and time must accrue, that's [a] very difficult position. I had to save all my time. So, having the flexibility with my department was very important so that I could have an opportunity to spend time with my family.

Isaac's assertions related to time accruals and flexibility may identify a collision between federal policy and institutional practices. This is typical because in most cases, federal family and medical leave eligibility is accessible based on eligibility after 12 months of full-time employment (FMLA, 1993). Moreover, a full-time university employee typically accrues variations of leave benefits such as paid time off (PTO) and sick time based on his or her institutional status. However, an employee's eligibility may collide amid institutional policies, thereby requiring an employee to exhaust all forms of sick leave and/or PTO prior to accessing FMLA benefits. Isaac, a staff person in this study, had similar experience related to time accruals:

> Our closest family in town was 3 hours away, so from the previous time up until the time I took FMLA, I had to save up every ounce of sick time and vacation time and then burn it up. I had to take all of my time, and if I needed to do something with the baby or

needed to help my wife out, I could not until I was able to build time back up.

Seemingly, newborn aftercare needs such as follow-up doctor appointments and office visits

offer support for institutional policies to consider language that supports family-friendly policies

for men (Reddick et al., 2011; Sallee, 2012). Similarly, the Department of Labor (DOL) Wage

and Employment Standards (FMLA Regulations, 2007) data suggested that different levels of

flexibility be granted in approval negotiations because of challenges related to workplace

policies.

Administrator and Staff Uncertainty

The fifth theme administrators as approvers of leave and staff expressed was uncertainty

in negotiating and navigating leave. Subsequently, two subthemes were used to examine staff

uncertainty and ambiguous processes and procedures. In addition, two main questions were

posed to analyze how participants interpreted leave policies:

1. How did you interpret university parental leave policies?

2. Were there any roadblocks or challenges faced in taking parental leave?

Interestingly, staff and administrators as approvers of leave reported similar experiences.

Staff Uncertainty

Most often, staff members explicitly described that uncertainty as a form of ambiguity in

interactions and communication with supervisors, human resources, and peers often inhibited

processes (i.e., approvals, denials, and wait times), procedures (i.e., timeline and notification),

and forms (i.e., applications, deadlines, and order of completion).

Ambiguity Processes and Procedures

Several staff members, however, also explicitly cited that ambiguity inhibited processes,

specifically staff approvals, denials, and wait times; timeline and notification procedures; and

forms such as applications, deadlines, and order of completion.

Lexi, a staff member, reported uncertainty related to the wait time process, stating, "My biggest fear was trying not to be too stressed out about waiting to hear a response because I was trying to focus on my health and my baby's health." Ryan, a staff member, however, described unclear procedures: "It was not very clear," "I think there should have been initial conversations that came directly from HR," "I tried to navigate procedures from an employment standpoint, but it was unclear what course of action to take." Lastly, Johnathan, a staff member, explained uncertainty related to forms and order of completion: "It was like me talking to another co-worker then talking to HR on what forms to complete who relayed messages to my supervisor. I still couldn't tell you what the process was." In sum, participants' word choices of "fear," "stressed," and "unclear" further support their claims in describing processes and procedures.

Communication and Interactions

A number of staff members reported that communication and interactions with institutional leaders were often "ambiguous or inappropriate," implicitly and/or explicitly influencing leave. For example, many staff members reported "a lot of back-and-forth conversations" and "no clue what was going on." Consider the conversational tensions between Jessica, a staff member, and the interview committee members. The interviewer began by asking staff questions on the leave negotiations.

Muneka: What was that negotiation process as far as for applying for leave and how it was communicated with you?

Jessica: It wasn't really communicated very well! I was told by the interview committee, "We know that you currently have children and that you are expecting; what are your childcare plans?" I was then asked, "Do you think it will interfere with your

responsibilities?" I wondered what that meant.

Seemingly, Jessica asserted that the discussion was an inappropriate employer-to-employee interaction. Jessica's interaction is significant because it potentially addresses implications related to who has conversational authority to limit, restrict, or allude to discourses. Specifically, the implications of what is said must be considered in connection to how committee members' spoken words elicit a certain staff reaction (Gee, 2014). Consequently, this interaction is noteworthy because it possibly affirms the discourse analysis findings related to supervisors' actions amid notification of employee leave obligation. Take, for instance, Jillian, a staff member, who was asked if there were any roadblocks or challenges, she faced in taking parental leave:

> I didn't know what I was doing. I felt like I wasted a lot of time going back and forth between my peers, supervisor, and human resources. I feel like there was no understanding because no one in my department has gone on maternity leave in such a long time. I don't think anybody was knowledgeable of anything.

Jillian's language seemingly identifies areas of ambiguity in processes and interactions. Several elements of the text—"I didn't know," "going back and forth," "no understanding"—asserted a lack of awareness situationally and departmentally. In fact, Jillian's assertions corroborate claims related to the DOL's administrative effectiveness, specifically employee groups' and representatives' assertions related to employees' and employers' lack knowledge of FMLA rights and responsibilities (FMLA Regulations, 2007; Request for Information on the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, 2006). Lastly, Jillian asserted the need for administrative effectiveness in leave processes and communications.

Uncertainty of Administrator as Approvers

Primarily, administrators as approvers expressed uncertainty related to lack of knowledge in three areas: first, the process to approve and deny leave; second, procedures related to notification and advocacy; and third, lack of knowledge of timelines and deadlines for form completion. On the other hand, administrators' communications and interactions indicated uncertainty related to communications and interactions between human resources, supervisors, and departmental liaisons. Participants were asked, "What would have helped you most in the process? Least?" and "How/why was this helpful or not?"

Lack of Knowledge

Several administrators believed uncertainty represented a lack of knowledge of processes to approve and deny parental leave. Consider Mathis, an administrator, who lacked knowledge related to approval and denial of leave processes, illustrated in a conversation interview transcript from fall 2016:

> I guess if it were getting to question should paternity leave differ from maternity leave which I know is more for traditional way of thinking. I'm really on the fence with that. I think that's a family decision. If you want to take 6 weeks and use your sick leave or take it without pay, yes, I would be okay with supporting that.

Mathis' discourse perhaps asserted a lack of knowledge related to his level of authority (power) over staff approval processes, specifically the phrase, "If you want to take 6 weeks and use your sick leave in this case or take it without pay, yes, I would be okay with supporting that." The premise of family and medical leave, however, is provisional based on eligibility, not a supervisor's plans of what is best for families. Mathis seemingly ostensibly reflected his personal ideology related to what is best for a family's parental decision-making, which potentially

perpetuated staff participants' assertions related to uncertainty, specifically, his authority to approve or deny requests initiated by staff.

Next, administrators expressed uncertainty related to employees' notification, designation, and timing delays, which supported the document analysis findings. The Department of Labor reported,

> In turn, this failure in understanding may be contributing to some of the problems identified with the medical certification process, and with employers' ability to properly designate and administer FMLA leave. It is clear the Department has more work to do to further educate employees and employers regarding their rights and responsibilities under the law (FMLA, 2007).

Employers are responsible for proper designation of family and medical leave benefits, which supports interview data assertions from administrators. Administrators indicated a lack of knowledge related to proper participant notifications, designation of parental leave, and timelines and deadlines, which informed administrator interactions and communication with employees.

Administrators' Communications and Interactions

A key assertion expressed by several administrators related to ambiguous interactions and inappropriate communications between supervisors, reflected as "tension," "stress," and "pressure." Some administrators also reported uncertainty related to communications and interactions between human resources, supervisors, and departmental liaisons. Take, for instance, Melissa's assertions related to communication: "I think communication with HR is really important because of additional steps that need to occur within the 1st month, which [is] why I think it is important to work directly with HR." Jax, however, focused on delineated roles, distinguishing between human resources and supervisor roles: "Someone from HR that says,

these are their rights and what you are able to do. Although, maybe a gray area when you're

working with your supervisor, I think it is important working directly through HR." Mathis

explained, "I think access to someone that can clearly explain what the [policy] guidelines are

and understanding what the policies are [is necessary] so if you wanted to have a conversation

with staff you [would be] equipped to do so." In sum, participants' descriptive interpretations

often informed their claims related to administrative communications and interactions.

Summary and Conclusion

Depicted through individuals' and/or couples' spoken and written words, in this

qualitative study, I explored participants' experiences across higher education institutions who

navigated and negotiated paternal leave policies. Levinson and Sutton (2009) argued that policy

appropriation highlighted textual processes circulated across institutional contexts then applied,

interpreted, and contested by a multiplicity of local actors. Consequently, in this study,

administrators, faculty, and staff's spoken and written discourses were then interpreted,

described, and explained using participants' transcripts, which reflected their social reality in

navigating and negotiating parental leave (Gee, 2014). Furthermore, at times, I considered

Bronfenbrenner's (1986) ecological systems model to examine how discourses collided or

collaborated amid a triggering event or tension (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Gee, 2014). In this study,

therefore, the birth of a child was a core mechanism often influencing how discourse interactions

either collided or collaborated amid ecological systems.

In closing, three key assertions informed participants' discourses on navigating and

negotiating parental leave.

First, participants often expressed a lack of preparedness to navigate and negotiate

parental leave policies, guidelines, and processes. This often resulted in uncertainty, pressure,

and lack of knowledge related to protocols, communications, timing, and notification errors related to type of parental submissions needed and the timing to request and approve parental leave.

Second, participants believed departmental support influenced parental leave conversations between human resources, supervisors, and department leaders, which ultimately resulted in uncertainty related to how parental leave was navigated and negotiated. As a result, ambiguity was often expressed in relationships between administrators, staff, and faculty, creating discourse tensions across the institution, interactions, and departments.

Third, pressures and ambiguity reportedly influenced public feedback and participants' discourses on navigating and negotiating leave because parental leave policies were not streamlined. Participants were often unclear on what steps to take to start navigating leave and who to contact to negotiate the types and terms of parental leave as staff, faculty, and administrators, unless the department had a parental leave designee.

Consequently, the data were seemingly relevant because they possibly informed how and why participants' discourses collided and collaborated amid federal and parental leave policies, the immediate environment, social cultural practices, and interactions. Thus, these experiences, synonymous to ecological systems, collide and collaborate around the triggering stimulus—the birth of a child—which might have elicited and informed participants' discourse, interpretations, social structures, and social cultural practices.

In sum, throughout this multistep analysis, I attempted to examine how participants used language to interpret lived experiences, institutional roles, power, gender bias, struggles, limitations, and access amid navigated and negotiated leave, specifically because it potentially informed how discourses were ordered in communication, social structures, practices, and social

cultures that possibly govern interactions, whether face-to-face, spoken, or written (Fairclough, 2015). Furthermore, I considered implications related to who had authority to author, approve, limit, restrict, and/or change discourses because this could have informed how policies were enacted and who held the advantage in discourses related to parental leave processes, procedures, and policies.

Overall, the document analysis and semistructured interviews addressed the following four areas:

(a) examined how individuals and/or couples navigated and negotiated parental leave policies within higher education;

(b) analyzed the role of the employer-to-employee relationship in negotiating parental leave policies in higher education environments;

(c) investigated whether individuals and/or couples receive gender-neutral treatment when navigating and negotiating parental leave policies; and

(d) explored participants' and institutional leaders' (i.e., human resources, supervisors, and department leaders) implicit and explicit language when interpreting, implementing, and communicating policies, processes, and practices to individuals and/or couples in higher education.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Chapter V contains the study findings, including discussion and research questions, and closes with limitations of the study, recommendations for future studies or practices, and a conclusion.

Findings

In the document and interview analysis, I provided contextual meaning related to individuals and/or couples who have navigated and negotiated leave experiences in three areas: uncertainty, pressures, and anxiety. This meaning connected to the study's larger context, offering implicit and explicit timelines, conversational discourse, and stories of how individuals and/or couples navigated and negotiated parental leave policies across higher education. Contextually this informed individuals and/or couples as well as historical sociocultural practices and situated meaning related to participants' forms of support, uncertainty, and pressures exhibited in Table 8.

First, uncertainty is related to participants' forms of support surrounding parental leave options, access, and encounters. Participants unambiguously reported that competing workplace demands, family priorities, and distance from family members contributed to pressure, isolation, and lack of clarity on parental leave. Similarly, Berheide and Anderson-Hanley (2012) indicated that workplace and family conflicts cause employees to make difficult choices regarding work demands. In conclusion, participants universally expressed some challenges related to departmental support because of institutional demands, differences, gender bias, peer interactions, or family dynamics.

Second, participants suggested pressures often influenced their overall parental leave experiences. In general, they claimed they were not provided the same (a) parameters to negotiate parental leave, (b) knowledge of parental leave guidelines from administration, or (c) support from peers or department leaders. For instance, staff reported experiencing more inflexibility navigating and negotiating parental leave policies compared to administrators, who did so with great flexibility, implying differences in positional power, privilege, and influence.

On the other hand, administrators approving parental leave often reported pressures in leave negotiations because of limited preparedness or knowledge and administrative guidelines. Faculty participants reportedly navigated leave based on uncertainty in departmental support, peer interactions, course plans of action, and tenure status. Thus, authors have indicated that faculty may not always take advantage of certain policies due to peer pressure (Eddy & Ward, 2015; Sallee & Harris, 2011). Many study authors, however, have affirmed the need to integrate faculty-focused work–life balance policies (American Association of University Professors, 2001; Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015).

Consequently, in this study, some faculty members were repeatedly resigned to not taking parental leave because of implicit pressures created by (a) peer recommendations, (b) tenure status, or (c) faculty priorities. However, other study authors agreed that job pressures and role-blurring influence faculty parental leave priorities (Glavin & Schieman, 2012). In closing, role delineation played a significant factor in parental leave negotiations because of the parameters of negotiation and length of time requested.

Third, participants acknowledged experiencing anxiety amid parental leave approval delays because employers repeatedly failed to designate leave based on their ignorance surrounding timing and designation guidelines. FMLA Regulations (2007) notably require

89

employer notification and designation to employees within two days; therefore, they should certify eligibility based on employer approvals. Of course, this should not minimize the role of the employee, rights, and responsibilities. Nevertheless, participants reportedly utilized human resources, designated representatives, and supervisors' feedback, perhaps because they felt unprepared to answer parental leave policy questions. Participants repeatedly described vagueness on what parental leave options they needed to exhaust before family and medical leave options could be appropriated. Individuals also expressed ambiguity regarding concurrent leave policy options available based on their institutional delineated roles.

Discussion

I begin the discussion by addressing the overarching research questions, literature, and findings. Utilizing existing literature, I identify points of comparison and contrast between the findings and the literature and whether sources in the latter acknowledge, refute, or corroborate the former. I conclude the chapter by discussing the implications of the study, limitations, future recommendations, researcher reflections, and a conclusion.

Research Questions

I based this study on the following research question: How do individuals and/or couples across different types of university positions interpret and navigate institutional parental leave policies?

The four subquestions guiding the data collection and analysis were as follows:

1. How do individuals and/or couples navigate and negotiate parental leave policies within higher education?

2. What role do employer–employee relationships (social, institutional, departmental) have in negotiating parental leave policies in higher education environments?

3. How does gender (i.e., neutral treatment) influence relationships between individuals and/or couples in applying for maternity leave policies?

4. What is the role of language (i.e., implicit and explicit) in constructing, implementing, and communicating parental leave policies to individuals and/or couples in higher education?

Under the first research question, I asked how administrators, faculty, and staff interpreted and navigated institutional parental leave policies across university positions and considering federal parental leave policies. A key assertion explaining how individuals and/or couples across university positions interpreted and navigated institutional policies on parental leave is expressed in Table 8.

Participants interviewed repeatedly claimed that apprehension, uncertainty, and pressure often hindered their understanding of navigating and negotiating parental leave policies, processes, and procedures. Fairclough (2015) posited that individuals arrive at interpretations because of situational context related to what has been said, partly due to their common-sense beliefs, knowledge, and assumptions. Consequently, in my study, faculty and staff members consistently recounted feelings of uncertainty and pressure because of possible ideological value assumptions projected from chairs and deans and within interactions with human resources representatives or supervisors. Faculty members, administrators as approvers of parental leave, and staff participants in this study used phrases and words such as "a lack of departmental support," "anxiety," and "apprehension" to explain their experiences related to interpreting and navigating parental leave policies. I expound upon these assertions in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 2.

*Faculty Uncertainty and Workplace Demands*
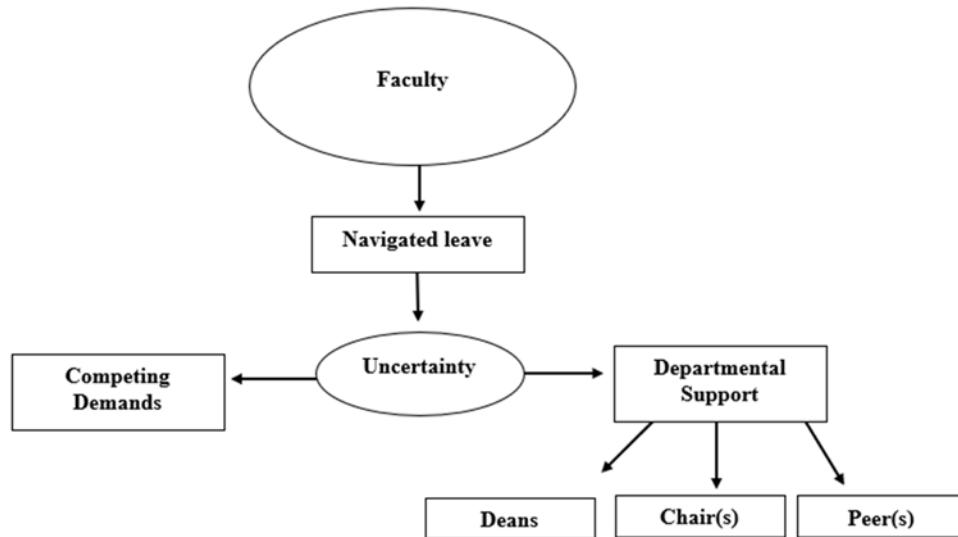
Faculty members who navigated leave and uncertainty reported experiences with and discourse

on interpreting and navigating leave amid competing workplace demands and departmental

support, which informed me of a subtheme. Faculty participants reported that parental leave

processes were often "unclear" because they lacked clear instructions from deans and department

chairs, and that competing workplace demands, family priorities, and a lack of support from

deans and department chairs contributed to uncertainty, pressure, isolation, and lack of clarity on

parental leave policies. Similarly, other authors indicated that faculty members often have to

choose between family life and workplace demands (Eddy & Ward, 2015; Wolfe-Wendel &

Ward, 2012).

Although faculty participants used phrases such as "a lack of departmental support,"

administrative approvers of leave and staff used words such as "anxiety" and "apprehension" to

explain their experiences with interpreting and navigating policy, as shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3.

Administrators as Approvers and Staff Uncertainty
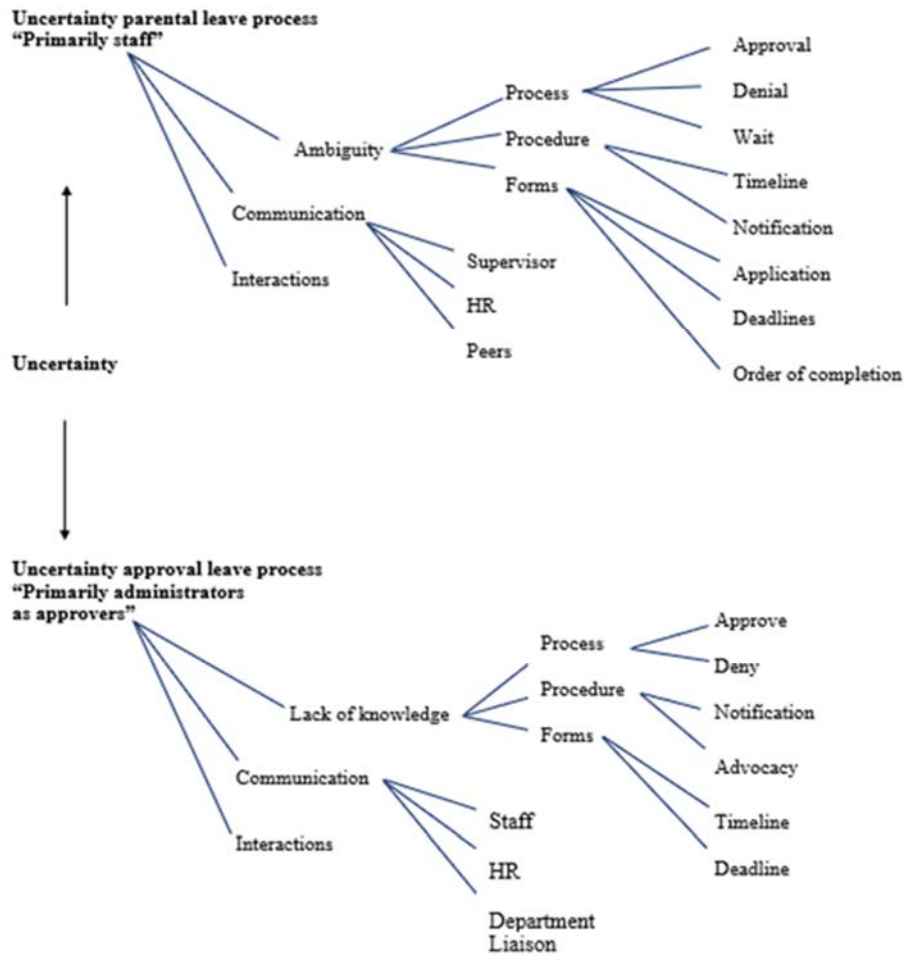
I found that administrative approvers of leave and staff have been unsuccessful at interpreting

parental leave policies. In fact, participants in those social groups agreed that communications

with human resources on processes and procedures were unsuccessful in aiding interpretation

and navigation of parental leave because of limited knowledge and ambiguous discourse on the

application processes, forms timeline, and order of completion. In addition, approving

administrator and staff participants reported uncertainty in aligning parental leave policies

because of ambiguity on the processes and policies for individual circumstances. Similarly, Anderson and Solomon (2015) found that participants' knowledge of university policies varied because of limited understanding of university policies existed and translated to individual parental leave situations.

In fact, most staff participants believed "ambiguity" in parental leave policies resulted from interactions, instructions, and discourses between supervisors, administrators, and peers. These things seemingly explained how social relationships were navigated across departmental interactions. On the other hand, administrative approvers of parental leave reported that lack of knowledge, communication, and interactions inhibited process, procedures, and form completion, resulting in staff notification and decision delays, inappropriate approval, or denials.

For example, many staff members reported having "a lot of back-and-forth conversations" and "no clue what was going on." Jillian stated, "It wasn't really communicated very well!" However, several administrative approvers of parental leave reported differently. One administrator, Jax, stressed distinguishing between human resources and supervisor roles. "Someone from HR says these are their rights and what you are able to do. Although it may be a gray area when you're working with your supervisor, I think it is important working directly through HR." Another administrator, Mathis, explained, "I think access to someone who can clearly explain what the [policy] guidelines are and understanding [the policies are important,] so if you wanted to have a conversation with staff you [would be] equipped to do so." Administrators and staff seemed to allude often to a lack of preparedness to navigate and interpret parental leave policies, guidelines, and processes across the institution. Overall, these findings supported the presumptive challenges of parental leave policies because of presumed

94

roadblocks.

I next consider research questions two through four. Under the second research question, I asked what role employer–employee relationships (social, institutional, and departmental) have in negotiating parental leave policies in higher education environments. A key assertion informing the research I found from the document analysis of federal parental leave policies, which are often the base on which policies are negotiated and distributed in higher education environments (Fairclough, 2009). In fact, this documentation served me in triangulating the experiences and discourse reported in the interview analysis.

The documents I analyzed represented discourses, comments, and transcripts gathered from DOL requests for information and public feedback on the administrative effectives of the FMLA over a 14-year period. Case statute comments and transcripts between employer representatives, employees, university officials, and institutional or organizational lawyers were scanned, isolated, and reviewed for the following information: (a) employee and employer lack of knowledge on family and medical leave rights and responsibilities; (b) employee unawareness of how family and medical leave apply to individual circumstances; and (c) communication between supervisors and employees resulting in notification, designation, and approval delays. Likewise, this documentation served me to triangulate the experiences, conversations, and discourses reported in the interview analysis in three areas: (a) uncertainty and pressures due to lack of understanding, (b) inappropriate parental leave timing, and (c) approval and designation delays.

First, from the indications of the federal discourse and document analysis, employers and employees lacked knowledge of family and medical leave rights and responsibilities (FMLA, 2009). Sources in my document analysis further cited this limited knowledge of federal medical

leave rights and responsibilities as a persistent problem since the inception of the FMLA (1993). This seems to speak to the complexity of parental leave discourses, which often lead to interactions between institutions and employees, followed by interactions with departmental supervisors.

Likewise, I found in the document analysis that employees lacked knowledge of how family and medical leave applied to their individual circumstances. I considered this discourse from employee awareness: "Despite much work by the Department, it also appears that many employees still do not fully understand their rights under the law or the procedures they must follow when seeking FMLA leave." The DOL appears from the discourse to have received questions from employers related to limited awareness of employees' rights and responsibilities, which impacts employer–employee interactions because institutions are mandated and expected to disburse and distribute federal policy information from the department representative to employees. The meaning associated with the words "continues to be unaware," which imply employees are persistently uninformed and working overtime, presents a problem for eligible employees navigating and negotiating the complexities of parental leave policies.

Although I gathered this federal parental leave document data as historical evidence— because documents are instrumental in providing contextual meaning, confirming facts, and corroborating timelines and stories (Bowen, 2009; Coffey, 2014)—my analysis of such data represented a 14-year follow-up to the Federal Reserve's administrative effectiveness of the act in 2006. Alarmingly, I found many of the same complaints reflected and corroborated in this interview data, collected 10 years after the Federal Reserve request for information, which perhaps speaks to the employers and employees' complexities, inconsistency, and unpreparedness navigating and negotiating the parental leave policies.

For example, in this study's interviews, employee, staff, and faculty participants reported remaining unaware of parental leave policies in three areas, seemingly due to limited knowledge, departmental relations, and uncertainty interpreting parental leave policies: (a) the types of parental leave accommodations available; (b) applicability to their individual circumstances; and (c) the process, procedures, and points of reference to access to apply for leave.

Figure 4 depicts administrators' and staff members' need for flexibility as a type of accommodation.

Figure 4.

Types of Leave Accommodations and Family-friendly Policies
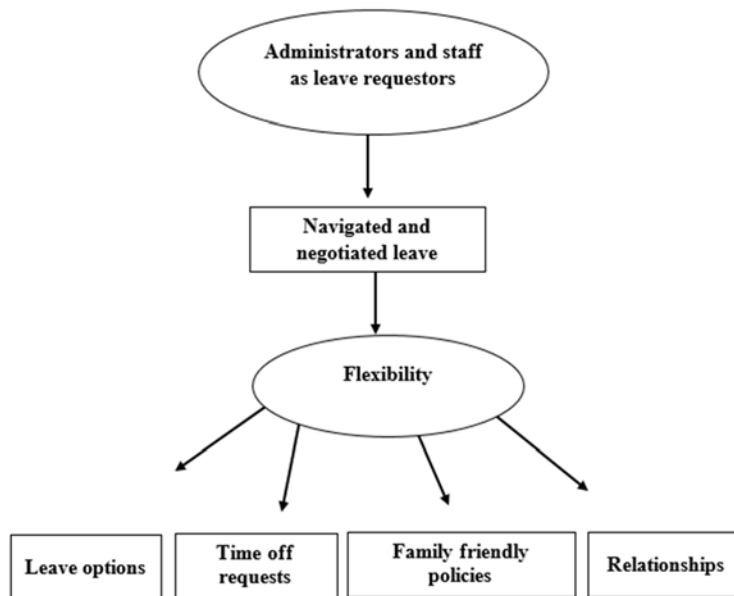
I drew types of leave accommodations and family-friendly policies from the interview data, which was related to administrators and staff who reportedly requested parental leave and triangulated with the document analysis data pertaining to family-friendly policies. Flexibility determined the type of accommodations needed during the parental leave process in four areas: leave options, time-off requests, family-friendly policies, and relationships. Most often,

administrators believed the type of accommodations informed how administrators and staff members requesting parental leave navigated and negotiated it. Overall administrators felt that departmental relationships and interactions between deans, staff, and supervisors influenced leave negotiations.

Similarly, many employees elect to substitute vacation, personal, or family leave because of the need to exhaust other forms of accrued leave as types of accommodation. Likewise, in an effort to support the workforce, the State of California initiated a paid sick leave law to remove barriers to leave and address issues of stigma and ambiguity surrounding it (Maume, 2016), which informed the interview data.

In this study's interviews, most participants declared having used unpaid leave for up to 2 weeks or having exhausted alternate family and medical leave balances—such as PTO, vacation, and sick leave—because they were ineligible to take FMLA payments or because of their status in the university. Some administrators who requested leave described the accommodations process of applying for it.

> Muneka: Did departmental relationships influence the amount of parental leave provided?
>
> Jax: Yes, our style and our culture has just been, ok when it happens or not, I will cover you, and we go with it! We'll make do; come back when you're ready. I think there is trust that I'm not going to abuse anything or be misleading.

Several concerns were at work here, including Jax's association with trust and departmental relationships. As an administrator, he believed departmental relationships and higher education culture influence the outcomes for individuals seeking parental leave. On the other hand, he seemed to be aware of how other departments interact with parental leave policies, which informs the type of accommodations needed and departmental interactions with

employers. Another administrator, Melissa, described her understanding of accommodations types.

> Muneka: In your specific department what happens if a person has exhausted vacation time and they have chosen to use sick time?
>
> Melissa: My understanding is that when you have a child, first start to accumulate your sick leave, which is hopefully what you have the largest accrual of. Vacation time—I believe there is also a shared perk out there, so other employees can share their sick leave. Based on the conditions, I don't know if pregnancy or childbirth is one of those, but I know that's an option. And then time without pay—obviously you have to figure out how long you are going to do it and how you are going to do it.

I found that interview participants in my study failed to interpret leave policies due to being unaware and uncertain of how leave aligns with individual circumstances. In addition, interview participants reported that supervisors, human resources representatives, or employers lacked awareness and knowledge of policies' connections to individual situations.

Lastly, administrators, supervisors, staff, and employees expressed a failure to properly receive parental leave designation and approval because of lack of communication and interactions with human resources. Melissa reported, "I think communication with HR is really important because of additional steps that need to occur within the first month, which why I think it is important to work directly with HR." These administrators' assertions were related to employer communications and interactions, but staff members reported different things. Jessica stated, "I didn't know what I was doing. I felt like I wasted a lot of time going back and forth between my peers, supervisor, and human resources." On the wait time process and family and medical leave approval, another staff member, Lexi, reflected, "My biggest fear was trying not to

99

be too stressed out about waiting to hear a response, because I was trying to focus on my health and my baby's health."

Overall, from the document analysis on family and medical leave's administrative effectiveness, I found that employees and employers lacked knowledge of how family and medical leave applied to individual circumstances and rights and responsibilities, thus corroborating the interview data and strengthening the need for employers and employees to understand the language of family and medical leave policies, how to navigate and negotiate the types parental leave accommodations, and how to properly approve and designate parental leave policies in higher education. Overall, these findings supported interview participants' challenges in negotiating parental leave policies and so answered the research questions.

Under the third research question, I explored gender assumptions in relationships between individuals and/or couples when applying for parental leave policies. Specifically, I sought understanding of power elements, struggles, ideologies, and assertions influenced by gender. According to Sallee et al. (2015), academia does not offer a good time to have children. Surprisingly, this assertion was evident among female participants in this study because of gender assumptions by predecessors concerning the representation of stigma and tenure, which I show in Figure 5 and discuss in the next section.

Figure 5.

Faculty Pressures and Workplace Productivity
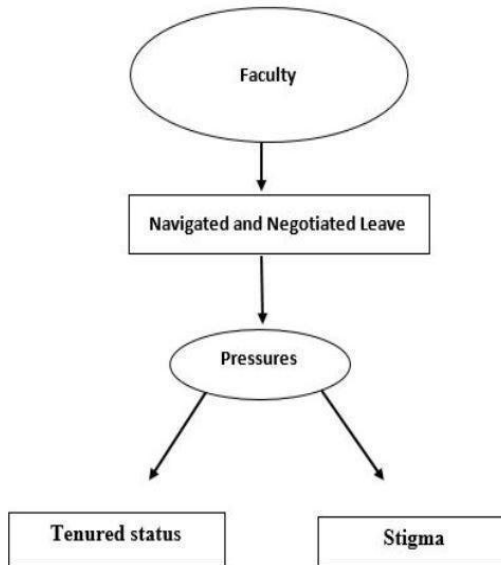
Faculty pressures and workplace productivity informed by gender—alongside pressures related

to institutional status, stigma, and planning and timing responsibilities—highlighted faculty

participants' challenges with parental leave policies. These pressures impacted interactions

between faculty members as employees, along with employer workplace productivity and

institutional status (pre-tenure, tenured, and nontenured), and thereby influenced their

employers' planning and timing responsibilities, which included formulating a plan of action and

course schedules.

The term "pressures" was frequently mentioned in the document analysis and

productivity literature because it typically drove faculty challenges on parental leave. For

example, literature authors supported the need for family-friendly programs for academic fathers

navigating parental leave (Sallee & Harris, 2011; Ward & Wolfe-Wendel, 2012). Furthermore,

Reddick et al. (2011) declared that tenure-tracked faculty members who are fathers need to be

productive but also regularly negotiate work and family responsibilities.

The current parental leave literature amplifies constraints related to gender struggles, power relations, and departmental differences (Reddick et al., 2011; Wolfe-Wendel & Sallee, 2015), specifically associated with institutional policies for faculty, staff, and administrators and mainly attributed to delineations in institutional practices related to gender differences, tenure, and promotion inequities.

Recent authors have overwhelmingly supported the need for institutional structures to implement policy initiatives that narrow the gaps between women and men by countering stigmas on men's desire to share in family responsibilities (Lester & Sallee, 2017; Sallee, 2012). An increasing number of researchers have also suggested that females and males experience comparable levels of family stress when balancing demands of work, family, and academia (Sallee, 2014; Sallee et al., 2015). Thus, gender roles continuously influence decisions related to tenure and promotion (Eddy & Ward, 2015) across types of employees (i.e., faculty, staff, and administrators) navigating parental leave policies. In fact, researchers have argued that differences exist in stable workplace productivity because men and women have limited to no access to family-friendly policies at work, which reportedly has led parents to choose the family over work (Reddick et al., 2011; Sallee & Harris, 2011; Ward & Wolfe-Wendel, 2012). I found similar discourse in the FMLA (1993), which stated that lack of employment policies to accommodate working parents can force individuals to choose between job security and parenting. Thus, the data supports a persistent struggle—between workplace priorities and family-friendly institutional practices—that has reportedly inhibited communications, interactions, and preparedness on parental leave options because of tenure status, stigmas, and

departmental differences. As a result, faculty members have experienced pressure from peers and predecessors and in other elements depicted in Figure 6.

Figure 6.

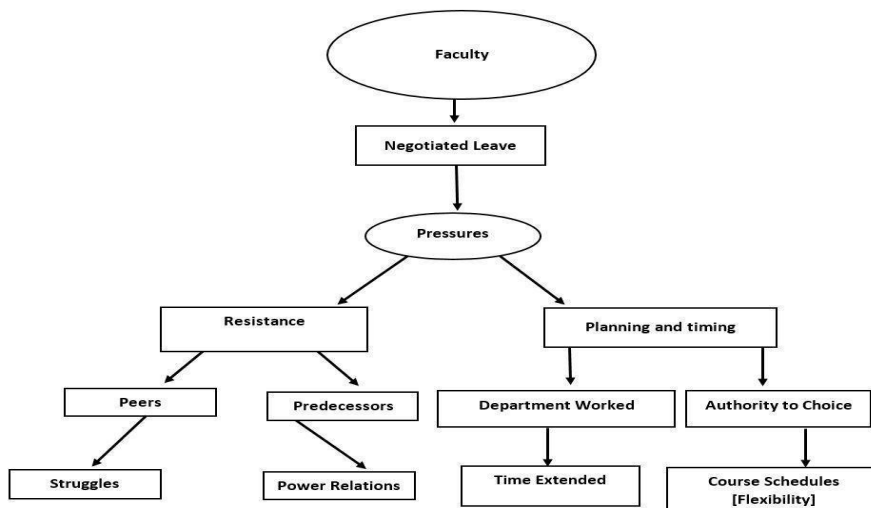*Faculty Pressures and Gendered Organizations*

Figure 6 represents faculty pressures in gendered organizations where equity has not been established in policies, protocols, and practices related to negotiating parental leave. Nonetheless, the decisions faculty participants expressed in negotiating leave were often based on the need to alleviate pressures related to faculty autonomy and flexibility by formulating a parental leave plan of action and course schedules. Similarly, Anderson and Solomon (2015) indicated that faculty members at colleges and universities face many parallel struggles in managing work and family responsibilities. Other study authors have found that these struggles worsen because of academic schedule demands and tenure tracks (Reddick et al., 2011; Sallee et al., 2015). In this study, female faculty members and their predecessors struggled with the notion of power because of interactions they had while navigating and negotiating leave.

Contrarily, no one reported and the data never suggested that men have these encounters. Most male administrators in this study navigated and negotiated leave with great flexibility and little to no resistance from peers. Males in this study never described being questioned regarding day care plans or how much time they would need when they requested off. I believe these experiences may be attributed to language construction, implementation, and communication between peers navigating and negotiating leave, as they often reveal power structure ideation, social group dissonance, or discourse practices (Fairclough, 2015) based on institutional constraints or rules.

Under the fourth research question, I considered the role of implicit and explicit language utilized to analyze the role of language construction, implementation, and communication in policies—specifically parental leave policies for individuals and/or couples in higher education—as that language would perhaps offer contextual background to corroborate or refute assumptions based on the textual processes incorporated. To address this question adequately, I first reviewed both federal and institutional parental leave policies at the intuitional level, as these would provide a baseline for eligibility, describe access, and reveal implicit and explicit ideological and social assumptions in political policies. Next, I applied document analysis and Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional discourse analysis model. I then evaluated the textual language of documents because it had the potential to yield interpretation of federal, state, and institutional policies, which might guide understanding of sociocultural functions of women and men within institutions (i.e., family, workplace, and society).

Afterward, I considered institutional responses to federal mandates and/or parental leave policies, because these could provide incorporation and reproduction evidence for institutional policies in employees' daily activities. Interview participants' language explicitly implied

frustration, which seemed to collide with claims of inflexibility—perhaps because of departmental relationships, structures, and policies—that the participants did not experience with their peers. Phrases such as "It was a little bit challenging" or "What is that going to look like?" potentially suggested feelings of intense institutional struggle and ambiguity. Figure 7 represents how discourses may collide amid ecological systems because of a triggering event.

Figure 7.

Discourse and Ecological Systems Collision
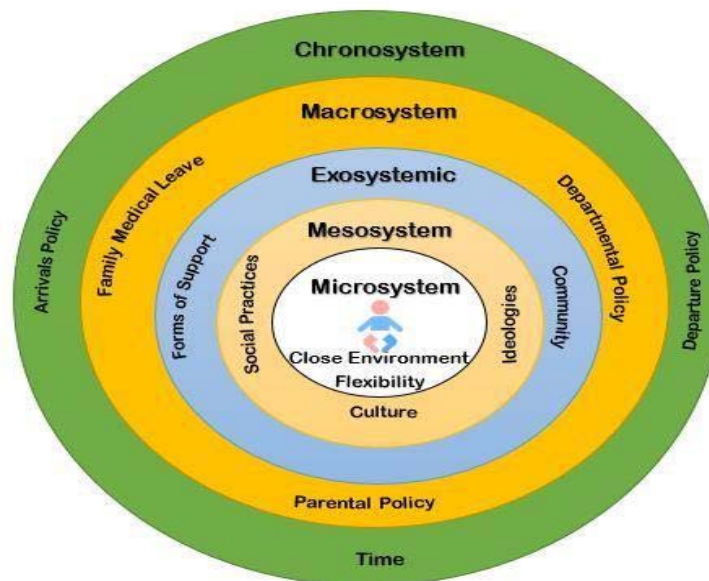
The birth of a child may be considered a triggering event, influencing all levels of interactions, decisions, and social practices because of potential ecological-system and discourse collisions. For example, at the microsystem level, immediate environment collisions might occur because of shifts, changes, or struggles related to discourses surrounding inflexible parental processes and policies.

The next section explores participants' perspectives on interpreting policy and process for navigating and negotiating leave. I then review the institutional process and policies filtered

and/or communicated, as they could provide evidence regarding policy interpretation. Lastly, I consider the participants' ways of interacting with parental leave policies, as these might outline their use of policies based on interpretations or advice from peers, supervisors, and human resource representatives.

In this study, the participant interviews, interactions, notes, and policy research often served as sign signals of social practices across interactions, relationships, and campus activities, which is important because sign signals in discourse often set parameters for what is implicitly or explicitly implicated in each department, interaction, and activity.

Participants identified individual, situational, and institutional experiences because they often reflected style, genre, and discourses produced, distributed, and communicated. For example, three out of five faculty members acknowledged wanting to access leave but relenting because peer and/or departmental interactions influenced their work–life choice on taking parental leave. Thus, the role of language in policy distribution, (re)production, and implementation is central to discourses and interpretation, evaluation, and critique of social practices (Fairclough, 2015), as language should reflect the voices and communication patterns of participants. In the same way, the reader should identify what is claimed and what is expected.

Limitations of the Study

I explored the implications of federal policy across discourses for higher education, role delineation, and gender. One initial limitation of the study was demographics of race and gender. Of the participants interviewed, 97% were White. Authors of future studies should expand recruitment efforts to draw upon a more inclusive and representative audience.

A second limitation was the diversification of participants. Specifically, more males responded than females, allowing me to analyze critically reoccurring issues that prevailed.

Furthermore, three couples out of the sample size responded to the study that represented couples. Thus, future studies should attempt to expand the diversification in terms of types of participants to gain additional representative perspectives.

A third limitation was the location of the study. Although employees often migrate, this study could be expanded to represent a wider regional demographic. Thus, authors of future studies should expand regional Midwest to urban institutions.

Despite the limitations of this study, I have affirmed findings similar to preexisting ones on workplace policies, faculty/staff pressures, and employee or employer rights and responsibilities (Anderson & Solomon, 2015; Berheide & Anderson-Hanley, 2012; FMLA Regulations, 2007). Thus, in the next section, I propose recommendations based on this study's findings. Finally, I identify recommendations based on faculty, staff, and administrators, as proposals should reflect suggested needs based on the findings and existing literature.

Recommendations for Future Practice

Aligning the existing literature and current study findings, I make several recommendations to promote institutional support on gender, role delineation, discourse, and social practices. Accordingly, I focus my recommendations on the following areas: (a) institutional support and diversification, (b) designation and approval services, and (c) institutional policy-mapping.

Institutional support and diversification. First, I suggest aligning institutional support in the areas of policy interpretation, practices, and parental leave supportive services for faculty, staff, and administrators—as I indicated in the first research question—because the participants often struggled to understand the parental leave process in federal and medical leave conversations, options, and interactions. I also recommend human resource advisors for staff,

administrators, and faculty to assist employees on (a) applying for parental leave; (b) transitioning new babies onto insurance; and (c) hosting onboarding consulting for departmental leaders, administrators, staff, and faculty inclusive of the institutional parental leave selection process. These methods have the potential to enhance best practices at the institutional level on navigating and negotiating federal and family medical leave policies and processes, thereby aiding in reducing designation and approval gaps.

Designation and approval services. With relation to designation and approval services, I suggest designating a human resources business partner who could address parental leave policy questions, concerns, and best practices on behalf of the institution. Administrators and staff members in this study reported major parental leave deficiencies across several human resources areas, which I discuss below.

First, some administrators believed additional human resources designation was needed to mentor people on leave options because of the complexity for staff in the parental leave decision-making process. Second, some administrators expressed limited access to human resources regarding parental leave and guiding newborn health care decisions. Third, a few administrators expressed a need to access human resources support promptly to guide best practices and decisions. Most staff, on the other hand, believed human resources instructions were often vague, thus prompting repeat visits to human resources or to supervisors over human resources processes, protocols, and parental leave options. In addition, some staff expressed concerns over not receiving timely notification from human resources on paperwork status updates. Thus, incorporating a designated human resources business partner could address some of the institutional policy disconnects related to administrator and staff member needs.

Institutional policy mapping. Incorporating an institutional policy-mapping plan (i.e.,

Drago et al., 2006) grounded in research involves identifying the institutional policy climate and assessing the needs and social practices across all departmental components (e.g., academic discipline, gender, tenure and promotion, productivity, and family and medical leave initiatives) aligned with human resources. For example, in this study, participants were not always prepared for the conversations or aware of the protocols and notification processes concerning the parental leave process. Therefore, addressing the standardization gaps would potentially foster clarity and awareness across role delineation (i.e., tenure, nontenure, and pretenure), gender, and knowledge of policies and procedures. Moreover, combating the lack of standardization could have federal and institutional implications if processes are being negotiated against terms and conditions of the policy itself.

Recommendations for Further Practice

This section explores the recommendations for further practice using the literature as a baseline.

1. Explore research initiatives related to increasing federal and parental leave knowledge related to policy acquisition for employee and employer rights and responsibilities.

The existing DOL feedback on the FMLA's administrative effectiveness (FMLA Regulations, 2007) affirms that knowledge gaps persist related to federal and medical leave policies' awareness of employee and employer rights and responsibilities. Thus, my initial recommendation includes addressing gaps by exploring shared service models related to implementing employee and employer awareness. This potentially shifts the discourse because it may reveal gaps based on offering initiatives for employers, employees, peers, departmental leaders, and institutional partners (i.e., human resources, faculty senate, etc.).

Overall, inconsistencies persist in navigating and negotiating parental leave policy standards based on the literature (Sallee, 2014; Ward & Wolfe-Wendel, 2012), specifically

policies across the elements of academic discipline, gender, family initiatives, and workplace

productivity at the institutional level. Incorporating institutional policy standards in the form of

institutional mapping could expose protocols, practices, and interactions for those engaged with

the policy.

In fact, Sallee (2012) argued that "true organizational change involves the transformation

of the policies and procedures of organizations as well as the interactions and social practices of

the people within them" (p. 787), which might allow for promoting environments where

individuals' values and beliefs are protected and respected despite whether they decide to choose

parental leave (Eddy & Ward, 2015).

On the other hand, researchers have shown that faculty may not always feel like taking

advantage of certain policies due to pressure from peers (Eddy & Ward, 2015; Sallee 2011), and

institutional policy mapping could perhaps mediate some workplace and family conflicts because

it addresses the symptoms of these deficiencies, thereby potentially minimizing bias and/or

group ambiguity.

2. Design training initiatives to combat gender-biased assumptions surrounding work
   and family policies and tenure-based decisions.

According to the National Center for Education in Statistics (2011), women account for

less than one-third of academic faculty, yet they often experience the greatest barriers to the

professorate because of caregiving decisions (Eddy & Ward, 201). In addition, barriers to the

professorate often perpetuate stigmas against women in academia. Moreover, O'Laughlin and

Bischoff (2005) have suggested that women often struggle in tenure decisions because of

increasing family priorities, conflicts, and/or lack of family-friendly workplace policies.

However, according to the literature, men are often not provided the opportunity to

110

balance the demands of the home because of productivity assumptions, responsibilities, and lack of friendly fatherhood policy initiatives (Reddick et al., 2011; Sallee, 2013). Consequently, gender bias seemingly purports the needs of one gender over the other, thereby perpetuating division between fathers and mothers because one member presumably is isolated, gains advantage, or wins. However, federal and medical leave policies were enacted to balance family and workplace demands (FMLA, 1993) by promoting family values (Sallee, et al., 2015).

In closing, the elimination of gender assumptions might offer numerous mechanisms to attract and/or retain faculty because work-based family programs could be viewed as an opportunity to support the institution's demands along with the priorities of the family. Eddy and Ward (2015) cited that women fail to assume leadership positions because gaps in balancing family and career needs often force women to choose family over career leadership options. Thus, creating inclusive parental leave systems that accompany the family's needs regardless of gender may balance the demands of workplace and family because they perhaps offer a process to prioritize family demands. These recommendations are intended to acknowledge gaps and then offer suggestions that promote institutional support across gender, policies, discourses, and social practices.

Recommendations for Further Study

Throughout this study, irrespective of departments, standardization gaps persisted across all departmental leave processes. Based on the existing literature and current study findings related to navigating and negotiating leave, I suggest several recommendations. Thus, I suggest the following two recommendations below for further study:

1. Explore parental leave policies for graduate assistants and international students employed by the university

111

According to the literature, only a few researchers have addressed the needs of graduate students navigating parental leave policies while working at the institution and pursuing a master of science or doctoral degree (Hollenshead et al., 2005; Ward & Wolfe-Wendel, 2012). These students may come to universities with families or expand their families while pursing graduate studies. Family-friendly services may be needed to address their family and medical needs. Concerning another group of graduate students, it is important to consider the parental needs of international students who bring their families over to establish residence while attending and working for the university. Additional data are needed to explore the perspectives, policies, and pressures these students may encounter in navigating family and medical leave policies.

2. Research financial-based models in the literature on shared pretax parental leave structures.

The national debate on overpaid versus unpaid leave systems continues to challenge parental leave structures in the United States. In fact, based on existing literature, there is an increasing demand for inclusive parental leave policies (Reddick et al., 2011; Sallee, 2014). Therefore, I suggest further study related to shared pretax financial leave models because it would allow contributions from the employer and employee based on the leave time frame requested between 14 and 42 weeks off. Currently, in the United States, some employees fund childcare expenses utilizing pretax dollars. However, I acknowledge that not all individuals choose to have families, and the FMLA's premise is promoting family and workplace demands so that all employees have access (FMLA, 1993). However, acknowledgement does not always equate to approval or support but simply recognition. However, the proposed paid leave system could incentivize employer and employee contributions because it would allow tax credits based on contributions. In sum, a shared pretax financial model that could support a family and medical

leave value system based on employer and employees' contributions.

Conclusion

In this qualitative study, I explored the experiences of individuals and/or couples across a higher education institution who navigated parental leave policies. Levinson, Sutton, and Winstead (2009 argued that policy appropriation highlights textual process circulated across institutional contexts where it is applied, interpreted, and contested based on a multiplicity of local actors. Depicted through participants' spoken text and voices, I attempted to identify the experiences of various individuals and/or couples across the institutional roles of staff (full-time or part-time), faculty (tenured and nontenured line), and administrators (departmental and administrative supervisors). The interviews provided insight into the experiences of staff, faculty, and administrators who navigated and negotiated leave. The results became the basis for suggested recommendations because they seemingly offered supportive mechanisms based on navigating and negotiating parental leave processes.

Moreover, part of the document analysis I conducted captured the FMLA's (1993) administrative regulatory effectiveness after 14 years of the federal law installation. This analysis revealed that instabilities existed in the administration of the FMLA's regulatory statute in three areas (Family and Medical Leave Act, 2007). First, employers and employees lack knowledge related to FMLA rights and responsibilities. Second, employees routinely remain unaware concerning FMLA application processes and individual responsibilities. Lastly, employees routinely experience significant delays related to employer leave designation and approval response time related to employee consent and notification. A key assertion related to the DOL's findings from 2006–2009 on a federal level is that (a) participants from this study's semistructured interview also lacked knowledge about their rights and responsibilities of federal

and parental leave policies; (b) administrators and staff remained persistently unaware of application processes, protocols, and individual responsibilities navigating and negotiating the leave process; and (c) the staff experienced approval timing and designation delays similar to those document analysis reports from the DOL, Request for Information and Public Comments (Family and Medical Leave Act, 2007).

Subsequently, I utilized these areas to offer additional study recommendations related to further study and practices. The implementation of these recommendations could offer additional research practices that could mitigate questions related to bias, family and workplace demands, tenure options, and shared paid leave allocations. Subsequently, resources might expand into strategic initiatives that could cause historical shifts in policy and family formation in the family.

Appendix A

Introduction to the Study

Hello,

I am a PhD candidate at the University of North Dakota, conducting research on how parental leave policies are interpreted and navigated by different couple types who are administrators, faculty, and staff. I would like to know if you are interested in participating in this research study.

You are under no obligation to participate, and you can withdraw at any time. If you choose to participate, I would like to interview you up to three times for approximately 45 min for each interview. I have attached a participant consent form and would be happy to answer any questions you have about participation in the research. You can contact me via e-mail at user.459531@my.und.edu or via phone at (734) 353-1142. Thank you so much for your time.

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

TITLE: Family and Medical Leave Act (1993): Implications for Higher Education Policy, Role Delineation, and Gender, Equity

PROJECT DIRECTOR: Muneka Townes

PHONE #: 734-353-1142
DEPARTMENT: Educational Foundations and Research

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH

A person who is to participate in the research must give his or her informed consent to such participation. This consent must be based on an understanding of the nature and risks of the research. This document provides information that is important for this understanding. Research projects include only subjects who choose to take part. Please take your time in deciding whether to participate. If you have questions at any time, please ask.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

You are invited to participate in a research study about interpreting and navigating parental leave policies. You were identified for the study because you occupy the role of faculty, staff, and/or administrator.

The purpose of this study is to capture the experiences of individuals and/or couples across higher education institutions as they navigate parental leave policies. This study will identify the experiences of various individuals and/or couples across the institutional roles of staff (full-time or part-time), faculty (tenure line), and administrators (departmental and administrative supervisors).

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL PARTICIPATE?

Approximately 35 people will take part in this study.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THIS STUDY?

Your participation in the study will last 135 min. You will need to select a mutual location up to three times. Each visit will take about 45 min.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this study is to capture the experiences of individuals and/or couples across higher education institutions as they navigate parental leave policies. This study will identify the experiences of various individuals and/or couples across the institutional roles of staff (full-time or part-time), faculty (tenure line), and administrators (departmental and administrative supervisors).

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THE STUDY?

There are no foreseen physical, emotional, or financial risks to participation in the study.

Some questions may be of a sensitive nature, and you may become upset as a result. However, such risks are not viewed as being in excess of "minimal risk."

If, however, you become upset by the questions, you may stop at any time or choose not to answer a question. If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings regarding this study, you are encouraged to contact your departmental University Employee Counseling Center.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THIS STUDY?

The data collected from this study will aid in understanding best practices and how policies are interpreted and navigated within a university. In addition, this study will add useful knowledge and experiential learning for understanding the application of federal law, policy, and university compliance.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATING IN THIS STUDY

Participation in this study is voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate, and you can withdraw at any time if you choose to participate.

WILL IT COST ME ANYTHING TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

There are no costs to participate in this research study.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING?

You will not be paid for participating in this research study.

WHO IS FUNDING THE STUDY?

The principal investigator is receiving no payments from other agencies, organizations, or companies to conduct this research study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The records of this study will be kept private to the extent permitted by law. In any report about this study that might be published, you will not be identified. The study data may be reviewed by government agencies, the UND Research Development and Compliance office, and the University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board.

Any information that is obtained in this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. You should know, however, that there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court or to tell authorities if we believe you have abused a child or if you pose a danger to yourself or someone else. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of storing the data in a locked office for a duration of 3 years. The principal investigator and advisor will have access to the data. The written files will be destroyed using a shredder. No personal data will be collected. Consent forms will be stored in a locked office. Consent forms will be kept in the Educational Foundations and Research Office at the University of North Dakota and then destroyed using a shedder.

If we write a report or article about this study, we will describe the study results in a summarized manner so that you cannot be identified.

Participant transcripts are anonymous, and any data that are written up will be in aggregate form, so the written document will not disclose the participant or university's identity. Transcripts will not have participant identifiers except for the category of administrator, faculty, or staff. Written documents will be anonymized including all names and university locations. All interviews will be digitally audio recorded and stored on an external drive and kept with written transcripts in a locked drawer in the principal investigators' office. Audio files will be deleted after 3 years. Transcripts may be kept indefinitely.

COMPENSATION FOR INJURY

There is no compensation for any injury associated with the study.

IS THIS STUDY VOLUNTARY?

Your participation is voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate, and you can withdraw at any time if you choose to participate. You may choose not to participate, or you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS?

The researcher conducting this study is Muneka Townes. You may ask any questions you have now. If you later have questions, concerns, or complaints about the research, please contact Muneka Townes at (734) 353-1142 during the day. The advisor for this research is Cheryl

Hunter at (701) 777-3431.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact The University of North Dakota Institutional Review Board at (701) 777-4279.

- You may also call this number with any problems, complaints, or concerns you have regarding this research study.
- You may also call this number if you cannot reach the research staff or you wish to talk with someone who is independent of the research team.
- General information about being a research subject can be found by clicking "Information for Research Participants" on the website: http://und.edu/research/resources/human-subjects/research-participants.cfm

I give consent to be audio recorded during this study.

Please initial: ____ Yes   ____ No

I give consent for my quotes to be used in the research; however, I will not be identified.

Please initial: ____ Yes   ____ No

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Subject's Name: _____

_____   _____
Signature of Subject   Date

I have discussed the above points with the subject or, where appropriate, the subject's legally authorized representative.

_____   _____
Signature of Person Who Obtained Consent   Date

Appendix C

Journal Notes

In observing Jon's countenance during the interview, the physical disposition of the interviewee reflects disparity, confusion, and lack of awareness with regard to access or knowledge that employees can access leave policies within the department as a right. Jon verbally indicated that he struggles with relational interactions with the current supervisor, who he described as "contentious, stressful, and unpleasant."

Although the interviewee in this particular interview discussed with the supervisor what the spouse was expecting during the recruitment and interview process, the interviewee stated that there were no follow-up processes or conversations regarding access to the leave policy.

The interviewee recounted being alone with no support from other family members as the distance from home was so great. The interviewee recalled the despair in the spouse's tone when pleading and sobbing for help throughout this transition. How could the supervisor not follow protocol; was he simply too busy with work demands or was this an absence of judgement? The pressure that this interviewee is experiencing is disheartening.

Theme recognized: Departmental access to policies and guidelines.

Appendix D

Field Notes

Field notes: Summer 2016 – Jillian Leadership Initiatives staff

Observation:

There appears to be a theme from staff participants related to the unawareness of employee rights. Two claims are provided below.

Jillian, for instance, believed supervisors were intentionally sabotaging the leave process by withholding information related to the application process.

A second male staff employee claimed to have provided information related to his wife's expected delivery to his supervisor months in advance yet stated he did not receive supervisor support related to understanding the process, documentation, and protocols to access leave.

My personal perplexity:

I am perplexed by the suggested role and actions of departmental supervisors who might be expected to be a pillar for assistance.

Researcher Questions:

What gain would the supervisor have in withholding leave information?

Appendix E

Family and Medical Leave Documents Reviewed

Department of Labor Final Rule: Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) to be unconstitutional. Final Rule is effective - March 27, 2015	Employment Standards Administration, Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor: February 11, 2008	Request for Information (RFI) responses on June 28, 2007	FMLA DOL Request for Comments - Summary of Chapters I-XI:	FMLA DOL Request for Comments - Summary of Themes	SBHE Policies Section: 607.4 Sick and Dependent Leave;
SUMMARY: The Department of Labor's (Department) Wage and Hour Division (WHD) revises the regulation defining "spouse" under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA or the Act) in light of the United States Supreme Court's decision in United States v. Windsor, which found section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) to be unconstitutional. DATES: This Final Rule is effective - March 27, 2015. FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mary Ziegler, Director of the Division of Regulations, Legislation, and Interpretation, U.S. Department Labor, Wage and Hour Division, 200 Constitution Avenue NW., Room S–3502, Frances Perkins Building, Washington, DC 20210; telephone: (202) 693–0406 (this is not a toll-free number). Copies of this Final Rule may	AGENCY: Employment Standards Administration, Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor. ACTION: Request for information from the public. Employment Standards Administration Wage and Hour Division 29 CFR Part 825 **ESA Proposed Rules The Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 [Federal Register: February 11, 2008 (Volume 73, Number 28)] [Proposed Rules][Pages 7875-8001]From the Federal Register Online via GPO Access [wais.access.gpo.gov] [DOCID:fr11fe08-21]**	Request for Information on the Family and Medical Leave Act of **1993 RFI responses on June 28, 2007** (72 FR 35550). SUMMARY: This notice requests comments related to the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (the "FMLA" or the "Act"). The Employment Standards Administration, Wage and Hour Division, of the Department of Labor (the "Department") seeks information for its consideration and review of the Department's administration of the Act and implementing regulations.	**AGENCY: Employment Standards Administration, Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor** Family and Medical Leave Act Regulations: A Report on the Department of Labor's Request for Information **Date:** Thursday, June 28, 2007 ACTION: Report on public comments SUMMARY: The undertook a review of the Family and Medical Leave Act ("FMLA" or the "Act") and its regulations, and published a **Request for Information ("RFI") in the Federal Register on December 1, 2006 (71 FR69504). The RFI asked the public to assist the Department by furnishing information about their experiences with the Act and comments on the effectiveness of the FMLA regulations.** More than 15,000 comments were **submitted in response to the RFI.** than 15,000 comments were received in the next few months from workers, family members, employers, academics, and other interested parties. This input ranged from personal accounts, legal reviews, industry and academic studies, surveys, and recommendations for regulatory and statutory changes to address particular areas of concern.	Information (RFI) on December 1, 2006. The RFI asked **the public to comments on their experiences with, and observation of, the Department's administration of the law and the effectiveness of the regulations.** More than 15,000 comments were received in the next few months from workers, family members, employers, academics, and other interested parties. This input ranged from personal accounts, legal reviews, industry and academic studies, surveys, and recommendations for regulatory and statutory changes to address particular areas of concern. [outcome] a summary of documents from I -XI	
What's the purpose of the document section What is the intended meaning of the text? PI What was the outcome (possible indicator)		Q: Interpretation: – seeking meaning of text What sort of assumptions appear to [support] what is being said and how was it being said? What are potential consequences of the discourses that are being used?	Employee Rights and Responsibilities (Chapter V) Chapter V of the Report summarizes comments received regarding the FMLA rights and responsibilities of employees. The comments to the RFI indicate that many employees are not knowledgeable about their rights and responsibilities under the FMLA. Even among employees who possess a general awareness of the law, many do not know how the FMLA applies to their individual circumstances. This reported lack of employee awareness may contribute to frustrations voiced by the employer community concerning employee notice of the need for FMLA leave. Employers and their representatives commented on employees not providing notice of the need for leave in a timely fashion and receiving notice without sufficient		

References

American Association of University Professors. (2001). Statement of principles on family

    responsibilities and academic work. Retrieved from

    http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/workfam-stmt.htm

American Association of University Women. (2004). *Under the microscope: Decade of gender*

    equity projects in science. Washington, DC: Author.

Armenia, A. (2016). Family-friendly policies and practices in academe. *Work and Occupations*,

    43(1), 110–111. https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888415622253

Baker, P., & Ellece, S. (2011). *Key Terms in Discourse Analysis.* London; New York, N.Y.:

    Continuum International Pub. Group.

Bakirci, K. (2011). Parental leave act. In M. Z. Stange, C. K. Oyster, & J. E. Sloan (Eds.),

    Encyclopedia of women in today's world (Vol. 1, pp. 1075–1075). Thousand Oaks, CA:

    SAGE Publications. doi:10.4135/9781412995962.n614

Berheide, C. W., & Anderson-Hanley, C. (2012). Doing it all: The effects of gender, rank, and

    department climate on work–family conflict for faculty at liberal arts colleges. *Advances*

    in Gender Research, *16,* 165–188.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1986). Ecology of the family as a context for human development:

    Research perspectives. *Developmental Psychology, 22*(6), 723–742.

Byron, R., & Roscigno, V. (2014). Relational power, legitimation, and pregnancy discrimination.

    Gender & Society, *28*(3), 435–462. doi:10.1177/0891243214523123

Bowen, G.A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative*

    Research Journal, 9(2), 27-40

Carspecken, P. F. (1996). *Critical ethnography in educational research: A theoretical and*

practical guide. New York, NY: Routledge.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London, England: SAGE Publications.

Civil Rights Act of 1964 § 7, 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq (1964).

Clark, B. R. (1983). *The higher education system: Academic organizations in cross-national perspective*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Coffey, A. (2014). Analysing documents. In Flick, U. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 367-379). London: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi: 10.4135/9781446282243

College and University Work and Family Association. (2011). About CUWFA. Retrieved from http://www.cuwfa.org/

Coltrane, S., Miller, E. C., DeHaan, T., & Stewart, L. (2013). Fathers and the flexibility stigma. *Journal of Social Issues*, *69*, 279–302. doi:10.1111/josi.12015

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative inquiry & research design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Daniel, P., Gee, E., Pauken, P., & Sun, J. (2012). *Law, policy, and higher education* (1st ed.). New Providence, NJ: LexisNexis.

Definition of a Spouse, 29 CFR §§ 825.102 and 825.122(b) (2015).

Denzin, N. (2012). Triangulation 2.0. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *6*(2), 80–88. doi:10.1177/1558689812437186

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2013). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Dumas, T., & Sanchez-Burks, J. (2015). The professional, the personal and the ideal worker: Pressures and objectives shaping the boundary between life domains. *The Academy of Management Annals*, *9*,1–69. doi:10.1080/19416520.2015.1028810

Dye, T. (1998). *Understanding public policy*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Eddy, P. L., & Ward, K. (2015). Lean in or opt out: Career pathways of academic women. *Change*, *47*(2), 6–13. https://doi -org.ezproxy.library.und.edu/10.1080/00091383.2015.1018082

Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. New York, NY: Longman.

Fairclough, N. (2003). *Analyzing discourse: Textual analysis for social research.* London, England: Routledge.

Fairclough, N. (2009). A dialectical-relational approach to discourse analysis in social research. *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis*, p. 162–186.

Fairclough, N. (2015). *Language and power* (2nd ed.). London, England: Longman.

Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993, 29 U.S.C. § 2601 (1993).

Family and Medical Leave Act Regulations: A Report on the Department of Labor's Request for Information, 72 Fed. Reg. 124 (June 28, 2007) (to be codified at 29 CFR Part 825).

Gee, J. P. (2005). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Gee, J. P., & Handford, M. (2012). *The Routledge handbook of discourse analysis*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Gee, J. P. (2014). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and Method.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Gee, J. P. (2014). *How to do a discourse analysis: A tool kit.* New York, NY: Routledge.

Glavin, P., & Schieman, S. (2012). Work–family role blurring and work–family conflict: The
moderating influence of job resources and job demands. *Work and Occupations*, *39*(1),
71–98. https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888411406295

Gould, E., Schieder, J., & Geier, K. (2016, October). What is the gender pay gap and is it
real? Economic Policy Institute. Retrieved from https://www.epi.org/files/pdf/112962.pdf

Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from The Prison Notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*. New York, NY:
Lawrence & Wishart London.

Han, W., Ruhn, C., & Waldfogel, J. (2009). Parental leave policies and parents' employment and
leave-taking. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, *28*(1), 29–54.
https://doi.org/10.1002/pam.20398

Heller, M. (1995). *Discourse and interaction*: *The handbook of discourse analysis*. Malden, MA:
Blackwell Publishers.

Hollenshead, C., Sullivan, B., Smith, G., August, L., & Hamilton, S. (2005). Work/family
policies in higher education: Survey data and case studies of policy implementation. *New
Directions for Higher Education*, *2005*, 41–65.

Holmes, J., & Meyerhoff, M. (2003). *The handbook of language and gender* (1st ed.). Malden,
MA: Blackwell.

Horsburgh, D. (2003). Evaluation of qualitative research. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, *12*(2),
307–312.

Human Rights Campaign. (2015). Sexual orientation and gender identity definitions. Retrieved
from http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity
-terminology-and-definitions

Jorgensen, M., & Phillips, L. (2002). *Critical discourse analysis: Discourse analysis as theory and method*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Lazar, M. M. (2009). Entitled to consume: postfeminist femininity and a culture of post-critique. *Discourse & Communication*, *3*(4), 371–400. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750481309343872

Lerner, G. (1986). *The creation of patriarchy*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Lester J., & Sallee M. W. (2017). Troubling gender norms and the ideal worker in academic life. In P. Eddy, K. Ward, & T. Khwaja (Eds.), *Critical approaches to women and gender in higher education* (pp. 115–138), New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Levinson, B. A. U., Sutton, M., & Winstead, T. (2009). Education policy as a practice of power: Theoretical tools, ethnographic methods, democratic options. *Educational Policy, 23*(6), 767–795.

Lincoln, Y. S. (1995). Emerging criteria for quality in qualitative and interpretive research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *1*(3), 275–289. doi:10.1177/107780049500100301

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills CA: SAGE Publications.

Litosseliti, L., & Sunderland, J. (2002). *Gender identity and discourse analysis*. Amsterdam, the Netherlands: John Benjamins.

Lundquist, J. H., Misra, J., & O'Meara, K., (2012). Parental leave usage by fathers and mothers at an American university. *Fathering, 10*(3), 337-363. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.3149/fth.1003.337

MacBeth, D. (2001). On reflexivity in qualitative research: Two readings and a third. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *7*(16), 35–68.

Maume, D. (2006). Gender differences in taking vacation time. *Work and Occupations, 33*(2), 161–190. doi:10.1177/0730888405284568

Maume, D. (2016). Can men make time for family? Paid work, care work, work-family reconciliation policies, and gender equality. *Social Currents, 3*(1), 43–63. doi:10.1177/2329496515620647

Maume, D. (2016). Shorter work hours and work-to-family interference: Surprising findings from 32 countries. *Social Forces, 95*(2), 693–720. doi:10.1093/sf/sow057

Milem, J. F., Chang, M. J., & Antonio, A. L. (2005). *Making diversity work on campus: A research-based perspective.* Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges and Universities.

Miller, V. D., Jablin, F. M., Casey, M. K., Lamphear-Van Horn, M., & Ethington, C. (1996). The maternity leave as a role negotiation process. *Journal of Managerial Issues*, *8*(3), 286–309.

O'Brien, M. (2009). Fathers, parental leave policies, and infant quality of life: International perspectives and policies impact. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *624*(1), 190–213. doi:10.1177/0002716209334349

O'Laughlin, E. M., & Bischoff, L. G., (2005). Balancing parenthood and academia: Work/family stress as influenced by gender and tenure status. *Journal of Family Issues*, *26*, 79–106.

Padgett, D. K. (1998). *Qualitative methods in social research: Challenges and rewards.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications.

Prior, L. (2012). *Using documents in social research*. Location: SAGE Publications.

Reddick, R. J., Rochlen, A. B., Grasso, J. R., Reilly, E. D., & Spikes, D. D. (2011). Academic

    fathers pursuing tenure: A qualitative study of work-family conflict, coping strategies,

    and departmental culture. *Psychology of Men & Masculinity, 13*(1), 1–

    15. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0023206

Request for Information on the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. 71 Fed. Reg. 231

    (December 1, 2006) (to be codified at 29 CFR Part 825).

Rocco, T. S., & Gallagher, S. J. (2006a). *Straight privilege and moralizing: Issues in career*

    development. In R. J. Hill (Ed.), *New directions for adult and continuing education: No.*

    112. Challenging homophobia and heterosexism: Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender

    and queer issues in organizational settings (pp. 29–39). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Rogers, R. (2011). *An introduction to discourse analysis in education* (2nd ed.). New York, NY:

    Routledge.

Roulston, K. (2010). *Reflective interviewing: A guide to theory and practice.* London, England:

    SAGE Publications. doi:10.4135/9781446288009

Saldana, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers.* Thousand Oaks, CA

    SAGE Publications.

Sallee, M. (2008). A feminist perspective on parental leave policies. *Innovative Higher*

    Education, *32*(4), 181–194. https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.und.edu/10.1007/s10755-007

    -9049-5

Sallee, M. (2012). The ideal worker or the ideal father: Organizational structures and culture in

    the gendered university. *Research in Higher Education*, *53*(7), 782–802. https://doi

    -org.ezproxy.library.und.edu/10.1007/s11162-012-9256-5

Sallee, M. W. (2013). Gender norms and institutional culture: The family-friendly versus the

father-friendly university. *Journal of Higher Education*, *84*(3), 363–396. https://doi
-org.ezproxy.library.und.edu/10.1080/00221546.2013.11777293

Sallee, M. W. (2014). *Faculty fathers: Toward a new ideal in the research university*. Albany,
NY: SUNY Press.

Sallee, M. W., & Harris, F. (2011). Gender performance in qualitative studies of
masculinities. *Qualitative Research*, *11*(4), 409–429.
https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794111404322

Sallee, M., Ward, K., & Wolf-Wendel, L. (2016). Can anyone have it all? Gendered views on
parenting and academic careers. *Innovative Higher Education*, *41*(3), 187–202.
https://doi-org.ezproxy.library.und.edu/10.1007/s10755-015-9345-4

Sandberg, J. (1999). The effects of family obligations and workplace resources on men's and
women's use of family leaves. *Sociology of Work, 7*, 261–281.

Sandberg, S. (2013). *Lean in: Women, work, and the will to lead*. New York, NY: Alfred A.
Knopf.

Shaw, K. M., & Heller, D. E. (Eds.). (2007). *State postsecondary education research*: *New
methods to inform policy and practice.* Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Solomon, C. R. (2010). The very highest thing is family: Male assistant professors' work/family
management. *Interactions and Intersections of Gendered Bodies at Work, at Home, and
at Play*, *14*, 233–255. Bingley, England: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Solomon, C. R. (2011). Sacrificing at the altar of tenure: Assistant professors' work/life
management. *The Social Science Journal, 48,* 335–44.

Stanley, C. A., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). Cross-race faculty mentoring. *Change, 37*(2), 44–50.

The Family and Medical Leave Act, 29 U.S.C. § 2601 (a)(5)(6) (1993).

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C.A. §§ 1681–1688 (West Supp. 2006).

Tolman, D., Diamond, L., & Bauermeister, J. (2014). *APA handbook of sexuality and psychology*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Tremblay, D. G., & Genin, É. (2011). Parental leave: An important employee right, but an organizational challenge. *Employment Rights and Responsibilities Journal, 23*, 249–268.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2014). Usual weekly earnings of wage and salary workers, first quarter 2014. Retrieved from http://www.bls.gov/cps/demographics.htm

van Dijk, T. A. (1985). *Handbook of discourse analysis* (1st ed.). London, England: Academic Press.

van Dijk, T. A. (1993). Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society, 4*(2), 249–283. https://doi.org/10.1177/0957926593004002006

van Dijk, T. A. (2008). *Discourse and power*. Houndmills, England: Palgrave.

Ward, K., & Wolf-Wendel, L. E. (2012). *Academic motherhood: Managing work and family*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Ward, K., & Wolf-Wendel, L. (2016). Academic Motherhood: Mid-Career Perspectives and the Ideal Worker Norm. *New Directions for Higher Education*, (176), 11–23. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/1969015801/

Weaver-Hightower, M. B. (2018). *How to Write Qualitative Research*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Weiss, G., & Wodak, R. (2003). Introduction. In G. Weiss & R. Wodak (Eds.), *Theory, interdisciplinary and discourse analysis* (pp. 155–169). London, England: Palgrave.

Wodak, R. (2012). *Critical discourse analysis*. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE Publications.

Willig, C. (2014). Interpretation and analysis. In Flick, U. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 136-150). London: SAGE Publications Ltd. doi: 10.4135/9781446282243