

THE EFFECTS OF PARTNER AGGRESSION ON
WOMEN'S WORK

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation was to examine the relationship between partner aggression enacted against women and victims' work withdrawal, as well as to investigate the possible moderators of this relationship. To accomplish this, I conducted three studies. The first two studies examined the effects of partner aggression on work withdrawal (i.e., cognitive distraction, neglect, partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, and turnover intentions). The third study examined potential moderators (i.e., supervisor support, coworker support, mental respite, financial need, and partner interference in employment) of the relationship between partner aggression and work withdrawal.

In the first study, full-time, post secondary female students in dating relationships ($N = 122$) reported on psychological aggression, school withdrawal, and performance (i.e., course grades). Multiple regression analyses showed that experiencing psychological aggression from one's partner is related to cognitive distraction at school, school neglect, and grades but is not related to partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, or thoughts of quitting school.

In the second study, physically abused women (abused group; $n = 19$) were compared with maritally discordant, nonabused women (discordant-only group; $n = 12$) and a control group of maritally satisfied, nonabused women (control group; $n = 19$). Abused women reported significantly more cognitive distraction and job neglect compared to women in the control group. They also reported significantly more job neglect compared to women in the discordant-only group; women in the latter group reported more cognitive distraction compared to women in the control group. There were

no differences among the groups in partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, or thoughts of quitting work.

In the final study, data were collected from a sample of 242 employed women who reported on physical aggression and employment withdrawal. The results revealed that supervisor support buffers the impact of physical aggression on frequency of absenteeism, and partner interference in employment exacerbates the impact of physical aggression on frequency of absenteeism. No other significant interactions were found. I conclude by discussing the theoretical and practical implications of these results, as well as potential directions for future research.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“There’s been days that I’ve come to work and of course I work with children and I’ve come with bruises on me and I’ve come in upset from the night before aggravation or fight or whatever ... and I couldn’t come up with any good lesson plans on crafts, I couldn’t, and I’m usually the ideal person on crafts and it’s like all my creative juices would just be blocked out... I kind of slacked off...”

(Quote from a victim of partner aggression; Logan, Shannon, Cole, & Swanberg, 2007, p. 268).

Every year nearly 1.3 million American women are physically assaulted by an intimate partner (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Empirical studies suggest that experiencing physical aggression has devastating effects on victims’ emotional and physical well-being (Golding, 1999; Jackson, Philp, Nuttall, & Diller, 2002; Staggs & Riger, 2005; Sutherland, Sullivan, & Bybee, 2001). Female victims of physical aggression are at increased risk for depression (Fergusson, Horwood, & Ridder, 2005; Golding, 1999), posttraumatic stress disorder (Golding, 1999; Mertin & Mohr, 2000), substance abuse (e.g., Golding, 1999), and they have heightened rates of suicidal ideation and suicide attempts (see Kaslow et al., 1998; Pico-Alfonso et al., 2006). In addition to reporting injuries, victims of physical aggression also report health problems, including gastrointestinal disorders and migraine headaches (e.g., Campbell, 2002; Plichta, 2004; Staggs & Riger, 2005; Sutherland et al., 2001).

Although psychological aggression (e.g., verbal aggression, controlling tactics) has received less attention from researchers than has physical aggression (e.g., Murphy &

Hoover, 1999; O'Leary, 1999; Tolman, 1999), there is evidence to suggest that psychological aggression may be just as deleterious to the emotional and physical health of victims as physical aggression (Coker, Smith, Bethea, King, & McKeown, 2000; Follingstad, Rutledge, Berg, Hause, & Polek, 1990; Marshall, 2001; Pico-Alfonso, 2005; Sackett & Saunders, 1999). For example, Arias and Pape (1999) examined the impact of psychological aggression on a sample of 68 women currently residing in battered women's shelters. After controlling for the effects of physical abuse, the authors found psychological aggression to be a significant predictor of posttraumatic stress disorder symptomatology. In addition, Coker et al. (2000) conducted a study that assessed the physical health consequences of psychological forms of partner aggression in a sample of 1152 women. Psychological aggression was associated with a number of adverse health outcomes (e.g., chronic pain, migraines, stammering, frequent indigestion, diarrhea, or constipation). In fact, psychological aggression was found to be as strongly related to the majority of adverse health outcomes as was physical aggression.

It is only recently that researchers have begun to investigate the impact of experiencing physical aggression on victims' employment. One of the two foci of this existing research has been on victim employability. Consistently higher prevalence rates of abuse among welfare recipients compared to women in the general population suggest that partner aggression may be a barrier to employment (Tolman & Raphael, 2000), exerting a direct and/or an indirect impact on employability. Abusers may have a direct impact on victims' employment status by sabotaging their attempts to obtain or maintain work (see Tolman & Wang, 2005). For example, an abuser may turn off his¹ victim's

¹ Although I recognize the importance of using gender neutral language, I use gender specific language throughout this dissertation because my focus is on male-to-female aggression.

alarm clock, causing her to miss an important job interview (if she is seeking employment), or destroy her clothes, making it hard for her to attend work (if she is employed) (Raphael, 1996). When abusers engage in behaviors that specifically target their victims' employment, perpetrator behaviors are often referred to as *partner interference in employment*. Partner aggression may also have an indirect impact on employment status by increasing victims' risk for physical symptoms (e.g., chronic pain) and mental health problems (e.g., depression), making it difficult for them to search for or sustain employment (Riger & Staggs, 2004; Tolman & Rosen, 2001; Tolman & Wang, 2005).

The results of studies investigating the link between victimization and employability have been mixed. Several cross-sectional studies have failed to demonstrate a significant correlation between partner aggression and employment. For example, Lloyd (1997) conducted a random survey of 824 women living in a low-income neighbourhood in Chicago. Women who reported having experienced physical aggression in their intimate relationships in the past 12 months did not differ significantly in current employment status compared to women who did not report experiencing aggression. Tolman and Rosen (2001) also found no relationship between partner aggression and employment in their study of 753 women.

Longitudinal studies, on the other hand, have suggested that partner aggression is related to employment status. For example, Browne, Salomon, and Bassuk (1999) reported on a longitudinal study of 285 extremely poor women. The authors conducted an initial interview with the participants and two follow-up interviews, approximately 12 and 24 months later. The authors used experience of partner aggression in the first 12

month follow-up period to predict employment status during the subsequent 12 month period. They found that women who experienced physical aggression by a partner during the initial follow-up period had about one third the odds of working at least 30 hours per week for six months or more during the following year compared to women who had not experienced aggression, suggesting that partner aggression interferes with victims' capacity to maintain work. Staggs and Riger (2005) also found a negative relationship between recent partner aggression and employment in their longitudinal study of female welfare recipients.

In addition to differences in study design, one possible reason for the mixed findings may be related to the way in which employment has been defined. For example, Tolman and Rosen (2001) defined a participant as employed if she was working at least 20 hours per week, while in the Browne et al. (1999) study employment was defined as working at least 30 hours per week for 6 months. Definitions of employment have varied in terms of required hours of work per week and duration of work experiences, and it is likely that these differences have contributed to the dissimilarity in results between studies. In fact, Browne and colleagues found no significant differences between their abused and non-abused participants when they asked them whether they had worked at all in the past year. It was only when they defined employment in more specific terms (i.e., 30 hours per week for 6 months) that significant differences emerged between abused and non-abused women.

Further studies are needed to understand the impact of physical aggression on employability, given the inconsistent findings in the literature. Yet, it is clear from this research that many abused women are employed, and maintain their employment

(Tolman & Raphael, 2000). Therefore, it is also critical to understand how partner aggression impacts their employment experiences, and this has been the second focus of research on partner aggression and employment. Spillover theory suggests that individuals' experiences in their home environment carry over into their work environment and vice versa (Aldous, 1969; Wilensky, 1960). A recent meta-analysis (Byron, 2005) found that both family stress and family conflict interfere with employment.

Most of the few studies that have examined whether partner aggression influences employment experiences have used qualitative research methods and, just as spillover theory would predict, they suggest that being a victim of partner aggression impacts employment experiences. For example, Swanberg and Logan (2005) interviewed 32 women who were employed during the past 2 years, while simultaneously experiencing partner aggression. More than half of their sample reported missing work as a result of the abuse. Reported reasons for absenteeism included depression, anxiety, and hospitalization for injuries. In addition, nearly all of the women said that they had resigned or been fired from a job during the previous 24 month period as a result of being victimized, providing further evidence that partner aggression impacts employability. Several of the women also reported showing up late for work, leaving work early, and being distracted at work because of their experiences of abuse. Five of the 10 women who participated in a study on the working lives of victims of partner aggression also reported missing work as a result of being in an abusive relationship, and 7 of the 10 women reported difficulties concentrating at work (Wettersten et al., 2004). Most of the qualitative studies conducted to date, while informative, suffer from methodological

limitations, including small and nonrepresentative samples (e.g., Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Wettersten et al., 2004).

Recently, a large scale study examined whether differences exist in reported absenteeism, tardiness, and work distraction between victims of physical aggression and nonvictims (Reeves & O’Leary-Kelly, 2007). The sample consisted of 1550 women, categorized into three groups – current victims, nonvictims, and lifetime partner violence victims (i.e., women who did not experience physical aggression in the past 12 months but who reported experiencing physical aggression at some point in their lives). In this study, lifetime victims of partner aggression reported significantly more absenteeism compared to nonvictims, while there were no differences in reported absenteeism between current victims and nonvictims. However, current victims but not lifetime victims were more likely to be distracted at work compared to nonvictims. For tardiness, there was a nonsignificant trend ($p < .10$) in the data, with current victims reporting higher levels compared to nonvictims.

Results from both the Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly (2007) study and the qualitative studies suggest that victims of partner aggression experience difficulties in concentrating while at work. However, Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly (2007) did not find significant differences in reported tardiness and absenteeism between current victims and nonvictims, while victims interviewed in qualitative studies report being late for work or missing work due to victimization. Several reasons may explain the discrepancies. For example, it is possible that the women in the qualitative studies experienced more frequent and/or severe partner aggression compared to the women in the Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly (2007) study, limiting their ability to attend work on time or at all. In

addition, qualitative studies do not include nonvictims as participants, and given that all employees – even those who do not experience partner abuse – will, on occasion, miss work, neglect work, and show up late for work, an accurate test of the impact of partner aggression on work withdrawal would come from a comparison of victims and nonvictims (Reeves & O’Leary-Kelly, 2007).

In the current dissertation, I build on the existing literature on partner aggression and employment by examining the relationship between partner aggression and work withdrawal and the possible moderators (supervisor support, coworker support, mental respite, financial need, and partner interference in employment) of this relationship. I also examine whether partner aggression is associated with performance, which has not been investigated in previous studies. I operationalize work withdrawal as cognitive distraction, job neglect, partial absenteeism (arriving late for work, leaving work early, and taking extended breaks), frequency of absenteeism, and turnover intentions. Withdrawal from work has traditionally been defined as “physical removal from a particular workplace either for part of a day, an entire day, or permanently” (Johns, 2001, p. 233), and the behaviors that researchers have tended to focus on include tardiness, absenteeism, and turnover. However, in this dissertation, I extend the traditional operationalization of withdrawal to include cognitive distraction and job neglect. It is likely that some victims of abuse must attend work (e.g., due to financial need) but, once at work, will have trouble staying focused on their tasks. As well, it is possible that cognitive distraction and job neglect are precursors of traditional withdrawal behaviors (i.e., tardiness, absenteeism, and intent to turnover).

I begin by developing some empirically testable hypotheses, and I conduct three studies to answer my questions. The first study uses students as participants and examines whether psychological aggression predicts school withdrawal (i.e., cognitive distraction, neglect, partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, and thoughts of quitting school), as well as performance (i.e., grades). Previous research on relationship aggression and employment has focused on physical aggression and ignored the role of psychological aggression. Yet research has shown that psychological aggression can be as detrimental as physical aggression to victims' physical and mental health (Coker et al., 2000; Follingstad et al., 1990; Marshall, 2001; Pico-Alfonso, 2005; Sackett & Saunders, 1999). Given that physical and mental health problems have been shown to impact employability and employment experiences (e.g., Riger & Staggs, 2004; Tolman & Rosen, 2001; Tolman & Wang, 2005), it is likely that psychological aggression will be related to withdrawal, including school and employment withdrawal. Moreover, to my knowledge, there are no existing studies that have examined the impact of partner aggression on performance. Therefore, the first study extends the research literature on partner aggression by investigating the role of psychological aggression on school withdrawal and by examining its impact on an objective measure of performance (i.e., student grades).

The second study examines the impact of physical aggression on employment withdrawal by comparing three groups of females – maritally satisfied women (control group), maritally dissatisfied and non-abused women (discordant-only group), and maritally dissatisfied and physically abused women (abused group). Because of its design, which is commonly used in the marital violence literature, this study controls for

marital satisfaction. Previous studies examining the link between physical aggression and employment have not controlled for the relationship between physical abuse and relationship satisfaction, and there is evidence to suggest that these two variables are inversely related (e.g., Barling & Rosenbaum, 1986).

In my third study, I examine five possible moderators of the relationship between physical aggression and work withdrawal in a large community sample of employed women. Two of the potential moderators are workplace support variables (i.e., supervisor support, coworker support) and two are individual variables (i.e., financial need, mental respite). The third potential moderator – partner interference in employment – is a relationship variable. To my knowledge, there are no published studies that have investigated the possible moderators of the relationship between partner abuse and work withdrawal.

Chapter 2

“Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones but Names Can Impact Me at School”:

The Effects of Psychological Aggression on School Withdrawal and Performance

Interest in understanding the relationship between partner aggression and work withdrawal (e.g., tardiness, absenteeism) has been growing. To date, however, researchers have focused on physical aggression, neglecting the role of psychological aggression on work experiences. Yet psychological aggression occurs more commonly than physical aggression in intimate relationships (O’Leary, 1999), and there is evidence that experiencing psychological aggression is harmful to victims’ physical and emotional well-being (see O’Leary, 1999), suggesting that it may have an impact on victims’ work (e.g., employment, school). To my knowledge, previous studies have also not examined the link between partner aggression and performance.

In this study, I will attempt to address some of the limitations in the existing literature. Female, full-time students will report on their experiences of psychological aggression in their romantic relationships, as well as on school withdrawal and performance (i.e., grades). The current study will contribute to research in this area in two important ways. First, it will provide insight into the link between psychological aggression and withdrawal. Second, this study will address the possible impact of aggression on an objective measure of performance (i.e., grades).

School withdrawal is operationalized as cognitive difficulties at school, school neglect, partial absenteeism (i.e., arriving late for class; leaving class early; taking extended classroom breaks), frequency of absenteeism, and thoughts of quitting school. One of the major benefits of using a student population is that it allowed me to examine

the relationship between partner aggression and an objective measure of performance (i.e., school grades). As well, given that over 90% of college women in one study reported experiencing at least one incident of psychological aggression in their current dating relationship (Straight, Harper, & Arias, 2003), college-aged women appeared to be an appropriate sample to investigate the impact of psychological aggression on withdrawal cognitions and behaviors, as well as on performance. In the following paragraphs, I begin by discussing psychological aggression (predictor variable in Study 1) and physical aggression (predictor variable in Studies 2 and 3) and then turn my attention to the outcome variables examined in my three dissertation studies (i.e., cognitive distraction, neglect, partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, thoughts of quitting) and performance (outcome variable in Study 1). Lastly, I discuss the control variables (i.e., relationship satisfaction, cohabitation status, and length of relationship) used in Study 1.

Psychological and Physical Aggression

Psychological aggression occurs more commonly in intimate relationships than does physical aggression (e.g., Follingstad et al., 1990), and there is evidence that it may precede and predict physical aggression (Murphy & O'Leary, 1989). Psychological aggression is associated with physical symptoms and mental health problems (Arias & Pape, 1999; Coker et al., 2000; Follingstad et al., 1990; Marshall, 2001; Pico-Alfonso, 2005), and over 70% of formerly battered women in one study reported that experiencing psychological abuse had a more negative impact on them than did experiencing physical aggression (Follingstad et al., 1990). Physical aggression is practically nonexistent

without psychological aggression: Follingstad et al. (1990) reported that 99% of their sample of physically abused women experienced psychological abuse.

Many terms – psychological abuse, mental abuse, psychological aggression, and emotional abuse – are used in the scientific literature to refer to non-physical forms of aggression. I use the terms psychological aggression and psychological abuse in my dissertation. Contrary to physical abuse, there is no widely accepted definition of psychological abuse (e.g., Murphy & Hoover, 2001; O’Leary, 1999), which may be another reason why it has received less attention from the scientific community than physical aggression (e.g., Follingstad et al., 1990). Consistent with O’Leary (1999, p. 23), in the current study psychological aggression was defined as “...criticism and/or verbal aggression toward a partner, and/or acts of isolation and domination of a partner.”

Many terms have also been used in the academic literature to refer to physical aggression, including both physical abuse and physical violence. I use the terms physical aggression and physical abuse interchangeably in my dissertation. Physical aggression consists of both “minor” (e.g., grabbing) and “severe” (e.g., manual choking) attacks directed at a target’s body. For definitional purposes, in previous research physical abuse has been defined as the presence of at least two minor acts, or one severe act, of physical aggression within a year (see O’Leary, 1999). Women of all ages, races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic strata may report experiencing physical aggression (e.g., Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). A population-based U.S. survey placed lifetime prevalence of physical aggression for women at 22% and annual prevalence at 3% (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). Similar annual rates have been reported in Canada (Johnson & Pottie Bunge, 2001).

Compared to nonabused women, physically abused women report poorer mental health, more physical health symptoms, and lower quality of life (e.g., Fergusson et al., 2005; Pico-Alfonso et al., 2006; Plichta, 2004; Sutherland, Bybee, & Sullivan, 2002; Zlotnick, Johnson, & Kohn, 2006). Although both physical abuse and psychological aggression are associated with negative health outcomes, physical aggression has received more attention from researchers than has psychological aggression. One of the reasons for this difference is likely the risk of physical injury and death to victims of physical abuse (O’Leary, 1999). For example, one study found that just over 40% of physically abused women sustained an injury during their most recent victimization (Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000). In Studies 2 and 3, physical acts of male-to-female aggression were measured.

In the following paragraphs, I turn my attention to the outcomes variables that will be examined in this dissertation.

Cognitive Distraction

Research has consistently shown that stress decreases attention (MacEwen & Barling, 1991; Motowidlo, Packard, & Manning, 1986). Given that experiencing partner aggression is perceived as stressful (e.g., Sutherland et al., 2002), it is likely that victims of partner aggression will report difficulties concentrating at work. Indeed, a handful of studies exploring the relationship between partner aggression and employment experiences have shown this to be the case. For example, 7 of the 10 women who participated in Wettersten et al.’s (2004) study of the impact of aggression on employment experiences spoke of having difficulty concentrating at work as a result of being involved in an abusive relationship. Similarly, Mertin and Mohr (2000) reported

that 61% of their sample of 100 victims of partner aggression experienced difficulty concentrating. Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly (2007) found significant differences in reported distraction at work between current victims of partner aggression and nonvictims in their study of over 1500 females. Partner psychological aggression was also found to be positively related to cognitive impairments in a study of college students (Straight et al., 2003).

Based on the evidence described above, I propose that:

Hypothesis 1: Experience of psychological aggression will predict cognitive distraction.

Neglect

Neglect involves exerting less behavioral effort while at work, whether it is employment or school (e.g., fail to attend meetings). To date, no studies have directly investigated the relationship between partner aggression and neglect. However, Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly (2007) measured work distraction which, in addition to assessing concentration, included items that assessed job neglect (e.g., “did no work”; “worked more slowly than usual”). In their study, current victims of partner aggression reported more work distraction compared to nonvictims. Straight et al. (2003) examined the effects of psychological aggression on health risk behaviors, health promotion behaviors, and health status (including role limitations) in college women. Role limitations were assessed with four items that measured whether participants’ health “cut down on the amount of time spent on work or other activities” or resulted in “difficulty performing work or other activities.” While their role limitations scale was not a direct measure of school neglect, it contained items that tapped into it. Their results showed that

psychological aggression is positively related to role limitations. There is evidence to suggest that cognitive distraction is associated with declines in performance, including school-related performance (Barling & MacEwen, 1991; Barling, Zacharatos, & Hepburn, 1999). It is likely that this relationship exists because individuals who are distracted at work do not do what is necessary (i.e., neglect essential tasks, work slowly) to perform at a high level.

Based on the available evidence, I propose the following:

Hypothesis 2: Experience of psychological aggression will predict school neglect.

Partial Absenteeism

Partial absenteeism involves arriving late for work, leaving work early, or taking extended breaks during work. Research (e.g., Raphael, 1996) has identified the interference tactics that some abusive men engage in to sabotage their partners' work, and these include actions that would make it more likely for a victim to be late for work (e.g., refusing to care for children and hiding car keys) or to leave work early (e.g., lying about the well-being of children to get a partner to leave work). In addition, being physically and/or psychologically abused by a partner is associated with a host of negative physical and emotional health symptoms (e.g., Golding, 1999; Plichta, 2004; Sutherland et al., 2001), which could potentially increase the probability of partial absenteeism. For example, experiencing depression, which is characterized by a lack of energy and loss of interest or pleasure in most activities (American Psychiatric Association, 2000), could make it difficult for victims to arrive at work on time or to complete a full day of work.

I am unaware of any studies that have examined whether dating aggression is related to partial absenteeism (e.g., arriving late for class, leaving class early). However,

there is evidence that family demands influence partial absenteeism (Hepburn & Barling, 1996) and that partner aggression impacts class attendance (Riger, Ahrens, & Blickenstaff, 2000). Furthermore, qualitative research on employed women suggests that partner aggression is related to arriving late for work and leaving work early. For example, one woman in the Wettersten et al. (2004) study said that her partner would lie about the well-being of their children to get her to leave work early.

Based on evidence derived from research on battered women (e.g., Wettersten, 2004) and work/family balance (e.g., Hepburn & Barling, 1996), I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 3: Experience of psychological aggression will predict partial absenteeism (e.g., showing up late for class).

Frequency of Absenteeism

In contrast to partial absenteeism, absenteeism involves missing a full day (or more) of scheduled work (Johns, 2002). As previously mentioned, partner aggression increases the risk for physical and emotional health problems (e.g., Golding, 1999; Plichta, 2004). It is likely that poor health, whether physical or mental, will predict absenteeism. Indeed, research has consistently shown a positive relationship between depression and absence (Hardy, Woods, & Wall, 2003; Truax & McDonald, 2002), which is not surprising given the constellation of symptoms that characterize depressed individuals (e.g., lack of energy; American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Physical symptoms can also have an effect on an individual's ability to function on a day-to-day basis (McNutt, Carlson, Persaud, & Postmus, 2002). For example, research has implicated migraine headaches and back pain as a cause of absence (see Johns, 2002). Partner interference tactics are also likely to increase the *frequency* with which victims

miss work. Riger et al. (2000) conducted a study that examined perpetrator actions that prevent or hinder women's employment or education. Their sample consisted of 35 women – 15 were both employed and attending school, 18 were employed, and 2 were attending school. Slightly more than half of the 17 students reported missing school, and 28 of the 33 women who were employed reported missing work as a result of their partners' tactics.

Empirical evidence to date suggests that being a victim of partner aggression is associated with absenteeism. Five of the 10 women who participated in the Wettersten et al. (2004) study and more than half of the 32 women who participated in the Swanberg and Logan (2005) study reported missing work as a result of being in an abusive relationship. In contrast, Reeves and O'Leary-Kelly (2007) did not find a relationship between current victimization and absenteeism. However, because the majority of studies have reported a link between partner aggression and absenteeism, I hypothesize that:

Hypothesis 4: Experiencing psychological aggression will predict frequency of absenteeism.

Thoughts of Quitting

Thinking about quitting work (i.e., employment or school) reflects an escalation in the level of withdrawal. Turnover intentions are a major focus of research in organizational behavior, and previous research has established a strong link between employee intentions to quit work and actual turnover (Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). Intent to turnover is linked to experiencing workplace aggression (e.g., Hershcovis & Barling, 2007; LeBlanc & Barling, 2004, 2005; LeBlanc, Dupré, & Barling, 2006; LeBlanc & Kelloway, 2002), sexual harassment (e.g., Sims, Drasgow, & Fitzgerald,

2005; Hershcovis & Barling, 2007), and interpersonal work conflict (e.g., Spector & Jex, 1998). Under aversive employment circumstances, quitting the organization might reflect an option to escape the situation. In the context of partner abuse, quitting work (i.e., school or employment) may also be a way of escaping or thwarting further aggression, particularly if an abuser's aggression is targeted at sabotaging a victim's work. In other words, victims may think about quitting work or resign from work as a way of stopping abusive (e.g., ripping up of clothing) or threatening (e.g., threats to kidnap children from daycare) behavior.

Qualitative studies examining the link between partner aggression and employment suggest that it is linked to turnover (e.g., Moe & Bell, 2004; Swanberg & Logan, 2005). I am aware of only one study that has examined the link between partner abuse and quitting school. Riger et al. (2000) reported that several of the women in their sample quit school as a result of being victimized by their partners. Given that intentions predict behavior (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), victims of abuse will think about quitting work or school before they actually follow through with the behavior.

Based on the available evidence, I predict the following:

Hypothesis 5: Experiencing psychological aggression will predict thoughts of quitting school.

Performance

In this study, student grades were used as a proxy for performance. To date, there are no studies that have examined the link between partner aggression and performance, although experiencing workplace aggression has been negatively associated with self-reports of productivity (for reviews of the workplace aggression literature, see Barling,

Dupré, & Kelloway, 2009; LeBlanc & Barling, 2005; LeBlanc et al., 2006). There is also evidence that cognitive distraction is related to performance, including parenting performance, work-related performance, and grades (Barling, MacEwen, & Nolte, 1993; Barling et al., 1999; MacEwen & Barling, 1991). Because abused women report difficulties concentrating (Mertin & Mohr, 2000), and cognitive distraction predicts performance (e.g., Barling et al., 1993), I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 6: Experiencing psychological aggression will predict grades.

Statistical Control Variables

To limit plausible threats to the validity of the study findings, in Study 1 I control statistically for relationship satisfaction, cohabitation status, and length of relationship. There is ample evidence to suggest a positive relationship exists between partner aggression and relationship distress (e.g., Barling & Rosenbaum, 1986; Lawrence & Bradbury, 2001). To ensure that the outcome measures (i.e., work withdrawal and performance) are related to partner aggression and not simply a result of relationship dissatisfaction, I control for relationship satisfaction.

Cohabiting individuals are more likely to engage in aggression compared to individuals who are dating but not living together (e.g., Magdol, Moffitt, Caspi, & Silva, 1998; Stets & Straus, 1989). Although several hypotheses have been offered to explain why there may be more aggression in couples that cohabit compared to those who do not, reasons for the differences remain unknown (Magdol et al., 1998; Stets & Straus, 1989).

Aggression is more prevalent among dating relationships of longer duration (Arias, Samios, & O'Leary, 1987; Magdol et al., 1998; Neufeld, McNamara, & Ertl,

1999; Straight et al., 2003). The link between length of relationship and aggression is likely due, at least in part, to more contact hours (Stets & Pirog-Good, 1987). For example, a woman in a two-week relationship is less likely to have experienced aggression from her partner when compared to a woman who has been dating her partner for a year. For this reason, I control for length of dating relationship in the analyses.

Method

Participants

To be eligible to participate in this study, female students had to be studying full-time in a post-secondary institution (i.e., university or community college). They also had to be currently involved in a monogamous relationship with a male partner for a minimum of five months (the reason for this restriction is explained in detail later), and their partners had to reside in the same city as them to ensure that the couples had regular contact. Potential participants were recruited via advertisements published in school newspapers and posted in various locations in three schools (e.g., cafeteria; see Appendix A for a copy of the advertisement). Students were also recruited from classes; I obtained permission from approximately 20 professors to attend their classes to provide their students with a brief description of my study. Because of the particular recruitment strategy used in this study, it is impossible to calculate an exact response rate.

One hundred and thirty-six female, full-time students participated in this study. However, 11 women were excluded from the final analyses for the following reasons: One was in a lesbian relationship, seven did not provide their grades, and three were dating their partners for less than five months. In addition, the data for three volunteers were univariate outliers ($z > 4$) and, as a result, they were also excluded from the final

analyses. Thus, the final sample consisted of 122 participants; 53 were attending a post secondary institution in Quebec and the remainder were studying at one of two post secondary institutions in Ontario ($n = 50$ in one institution; $n = 19$ at another).

Participants' average age was 21.1 years ($SD = 2.7$ years).

The study took place in January, and the time period over which respondents reported on was September to December (i.e., the academic semester before the testing period). Because I was examining the influence of psychological aggression on school withdrawal and grades, it was important that the participants be in a romantic relationship during the entire fall semester (which is why they were required to be in a relationship for a minimum of five months). The length of their relationships ranged from five months to eight years ($M = 2$ years, $SD = 1$ year, 7 months). Approximately thirty percent ($n = 37$) of the participants reported that they were living with their partner.

Procedure

Women who were interested in participating and met the criteria were asked to attend a special session to complete a survey. The number of participants in each session ranged from 1 to 10. Because the confidentiality of responses was paramount, sessions were held in a room large enough to ensure that participants had at least one empty seat between them. When the participants arrived, they were provided with a letter of information (see Appendix B for a copy of the letter of information) and a consent form (see Appendix C for the consent form). Once they had read the information letter, which they could keep, and signed the consent form, I collected their consent forms and distributed the survey to them. The survey consisted of scales that measured experience of psychological abuse as well as school withdrawal. On the last page of the survey,

participants were asked to respond to several demographic questions (see Appendix D). When responding to the survey, the women were asked to reflect on their experiences during the previous fall semester. Following the completion of the survey, students were asked to report their grades for the fall semester on a sheet of paper. To ensure the accuracy of the grade data, students were asked to bring a copy of their transcripts with them. For students who forgot, a computer was available in the room so that they could look up their grades on their school website.

As a token of appreciation for their participation, all students received \$10 and were thanked for participating in the study. In addition, all participants had four chances to win \$50 in a lottery.

Predictor Measure

Psychological aggression. Psychological aggression was measured using the brief version of the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory (PMWI; Tolman, 1999). The original scale consists of 58 items and the abbreviated version consists of 14 items, with both versions containing two factors, an emotional-verbal abuse factor and a dominance-isolation factor (see O’Leary, 1999). The brief version of the PMWI has been found to be both reliable and valid (see Tolman, 1999). I deleted two items from the brief version because they were unlikely to apply to all dating relationships (e.g., “My partner used our money or made important financial decisions without talking to me about it” and “My partner restricted my use of the telephone”). I also modified one item so that it was appropriate for unmarried women (e.g., “My partner accused me of having an affair with another man” was modified to “My partner accused me of cheating on him”). Scores can range from 0 to 48, with higher scores indicating higher levels of psychological

aggression. In this study, scores ranged from 0 to 25 ($M = 4.64$, $SD = 5.2$). The scale demonstrated acceptable internal reliability ($\alpha = .83$). See Appendix E for the items that were used in this study.

Outcome Measures

Cognitive difficulties. Cognitive difficulties were measured using a modified version of Fryer and Warr's (1984) 12-item scale. In previous research, this scale has been shown to be effective for identifying cognitive distraction as a mediator of the relationship between perceptions of paternal job insecurity and undergraduate students' academic performance (Barling et al., 1999). In the proposed study, items from Fryer and Warr's scale were reworded to reflect cognitive distraction in the context of school (e.g., "I've been feeling mentally alert and wide awake" was changed to "At school, I've been feeling mentally alert and wide awake."). Three items were deleted from the original scale; two were removed because they were not relevant to this study (e.g., "I've been making mistakes adding up money when shopping" and "I've been slow to make jokes when talking to people"), and the other item ("I have been taking a long time to get my assignments done") was deleted because it was nearly identical to an item in the Neglect Scale. Additionally, one item ("I've been making mistakes when talking to my professor(s)") was added to the scale. The items were rated on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree), with higher scores reflecting greater cognitive difficulties at school. In this study, scores ranged from 1 to 5.50 ($M = 2.76$, $SD = 1.01$). Internal consistency was acceptable ($\alpha = .86$). See Appendix F for the Cognitive Difficulties Scale.

Neglect. School neglect was measured with a 6-item scale (see Appendix G), consisting of three items from Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg's (2003) Work Withdrawal Scale, all of which were modified to reflect neglect in a school context. (e.g., "How often did you fail to attend scheduled meetings" was changed to "How often did you fail to attend school-related meetings during the fall semester"), two items from Barling, Rogers, and Kelloway's (2001) Neglect Scale (e.g., "How often did you intentionally work slowly" became "How often did you work slower than you should have on your assignments during the fall semester"), and one item developed for this study (i.e., "How often did you engage in behaviors during class to avoid being called upon by a professor [e.g., sit at the back of the class; avoid eye contact with the professor]"). A 7-point response scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (all of the time). Higher scores reflected greater neglect of school duties. The scores in this study ranged from 1 to 4.17 ($M = 2.16$, $SD = .74$). Internal reliability was $\alpha = .63$.

Partial absenteeism. Partial absenteeism was measured with three items. Two of the items were taken from Barling, MacEwen, Kelloway, and Higginbottom's (1994) Partial Absenteeism Scale, modified to reflect partial absenteeism in a school context (e.g., "How many times during the past month were you late for work" became "How many times during the fall semester did you show up for class late"), and one item was taken from Hepburn and Barling's (1996) Partial Absenteeism Scale, modified to reflect an academic context (i.e., "extended a break today" was changed to "How many times during the fall semester did you return to class late following a class break"). Responses were measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (all of the time), with

higher scores reflecting higher levels of partial absenteeism. In this study, scores ranged from 1 to 3.67 ($M = 1.72$, $SD = .63$). Because the items comprised an index, calculating internal reliability was deemed inappropriate. See Appendix H for the Partial Absenteeism Scale.

Frequency of absenteeism. Self-reported frequency of absenteeism was measured using a free-response format (See Appendix I). The wording for the item, which was modified for a school context, came from Waldman and Goldberg-Sharak's (1992) unpublished study. Frequency of absenteeism ranged from 0 to 21 ($M = 4.39$, $SD = 4.04$).

Thoughts of quitting. A modified version of Booth, Johnson, and Edward's (1983) abbreviated form of the Marital Instability Index was used to measure thoughts of quitting school (see Appendix J). The original scale consists of five items and measures an individual's propensity to end an existing marriage. In the current study, five items reflecting participants' propensity to quit school were used (e.g., "Have you discussed divorce or separation with a close friend" became "During the fall semester how often did you discuss quitting school with a close friend" and "Has the thought of getting a divorce or separation crossed your mind in the past three years" became "During the fall semester how often did you think about quitting school"). Responses were on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (all of the time), with higher scores reflecting a greater propensity to quit school. Scores in this study ranged from 1 to 3.80 ($M = 1.37$, $SD = .63$). Internal reliability was acceptable ($\alpha = .75$).

Performance. Students were asked to self-report the grades they obtained during the fall semester (See Appendix K). Given that reliability increases as more ratings are averaged (Horowitz, Inouye, & Siegelman, 1979), each student's grade for this study was

calculated by averaging all of his or her marks for the fall semester. To ensure participant anonymity, I used a self-report measure. Previous research has shown a very high correlation between reported and actual grades (Sandys-Wunsch, 1991). However, to ensure the validity of the data, students were asked to bring their transcripts to the session. Students' averages for the semester ranged from 58% to 94% ($M = 79\%$, $SD = 8.0\%$).

Statistical Control Measures

Relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction was measured using a modified version of the 15-item Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; Locke & Wallace, 1959). The MAT, one of the most widely used measures of marital adjustment (Heyman, Feldbau-Kohn, Ehrensaft, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & O'Leary, 2001), assesses an individual's general level of relationship satisfaction. In this study, nine of the 15 items were used. Items that were deemed inappropriate for dating samples (e.g., handling family finances; ways of dealing with in-laws) were excluded. Scores on this revised scale can range from 1 to 41, with higher scores indicating higher levels of adjustment. In this study, scores ranged from 19 to 40 ($M = 32.48$, $SD = 4.03$). The internal consistency of this scale was $\alpha = .71$. See Appendix L for the items that were used in this study.

Cohabitation status. Women were asked if they were living with their partners. Since cohabitation status is a dichotomous variable, women living apart from their partners were assigned a value of 0, while those living with their partners were assigned a value of 1.

Length of relationship. The students were asked how long they had been dating their partners. The length of their relationships ranged from five months to eight years ($M = 2$ years and 2 months, $SD = 1$ year and 8 months).

Data Analyses

Prior to conducting any analyses, all univariate and multivariate assumptions were examined. Linearity, homoskedasticity, and multicollinearity were all found to be satisfactory, and no multivariate outliers were detected. However, as previously mentioned three univariate outliers were found ($z > 4.0$) and deleted. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was then conducted to determine whether there were any differences on the study variables depending on which post-secondary school participants were attending. Lastly, all predictions were evaluated using hierarchical multiple regression. In the first step, I entered cohabitation status, relationship satisfaction, and length of relationship as control variables. In Step 2, psychological aggression was entered.

Results

One-way ANOVAs showed significant differences between the different institutions on grades. Students from one post secondary institution reported significantly lower grades compared to students from the other two schools, $F(2, 119) = 6.54, p < .01$. As a result, I standardized grades within schools. Table 1 contains the descriptive statistics and intercorrelations of all study variables.

Six hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to test the unique contribution of psychological aggression to the different school withdrawal criteria (i.e., cognitive distraction, neglect, partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, and

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations of Study 1 Variables (N = 122)

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Psychological Abuse	4.64	5.20										
2. Cognitive Distraction	2.76	1.01	.45**									
3. Neglect	2.16	0.74	.40**	.66**								
4. Partial absenteeism	1.72	0.63	.11	.25**	.25**							
5. Absenteeism ^a	4.39	4.04	-.07	-.11	.19*	.14						
6. Thoughts of quitting	1.37	0.63	.23*	.49**	.50**	.12	.00					
7. Grades ^b	0.00	1.00	-.19*	-.13	-.12	-.08	-.25**	.02				
8. Satisfaction	32.48	4.03	-.55**	-.50**	-.46**	-.05	.16	-.40**	.04			
9. Cohabitation ^c			.11	.11	.12	-.08	-.11	.17	.05	-.20*		
10. Length of relationship ^d	26	20	.06	.12	.04	-.13	-.26**	.07	.24**	-.13	.32**	

^aAbsenteeism = frequency of absenteeism. ^bGrades were standardized. ^cCohabitation status is dichotomous – women living apart from partners = 0, women living with partners = 1. ^dLength of relationship is displayed in months.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

thoughts of quitting school) and performance (grades). The regression results are given in Table 2.

Cognitive Distraction

In the first analysis, 30% of the variance in cognitive distraction was accounted for by the overall model (R^2). The covariates were entered in Step 1. Partner psychological aggression was entered in the second step and the results were significant ($\beta = .24, p < .05, \Delta R^2 = .04$), suggesting that experiencing psychological aggression predicts cognitive distraction.

Neglect

The variables in the second analysis accounted for 24% of the variance in school neglect (R^2). After covarying relationship satisfaction, cohabitation status, and length of relationship in the first step, psychological aggression was entered in Step 2. As hypothesized, psychological aggression predicted school neglect ($\beta = .21, p < .05, \Delta R^2 = .03$).

Partial Absenteeism

In this analysis, less than five percent of the variance in partial absenteeism was accounted for by the overall model (R^2). After the control variables were entered in the first step, psychological aggression was entered in Step 2 and was non-significant ($\beta = .11, p = ns, \Delta R^2 = .01$).

Frequency of Absenteeism

The variables in the second analysis accounted for 8% of the variance in frequency of absenteeism (R^2). After the control variables were entered in the first step, psychological aggression was entered in Step 2, and it was non-significant ($\beta = .02, p = ns, \Delta R^2 = .00$).

Table 2

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses for Psychological Aggression Predicting School Withdrawal and Performance (N = 122)

		Cognitive distraction	School neglect	Partial absenteeism	Absenteeism (frequency)	Thoughts of quitting	Grade performance
Step	Predictor	β	β	B	β	β	β
1	Satisfaction ^a	-.50**	-.45**	-.08	.12	-.38**	.07
	Cohabitation ^b	-.01	.04	-.06	-.08	.09	-.01
	Length ^c	.06	-.03	-.12	-.24*	-.01	.25**
	ΔR^2	.26**	.21**	.03	.08*	.17**	.06
2	Satisfaction ^a	-.36**	-.34**	-.02	.13	-.38**	-.06
	Cohabitation ^b	.01	.04	-.06	-.01	.09	-.01
	Length ^c	.06	-.03	-.12	-.24*	-.01	.25**
	Aggression ^d	.24*	.21*	.11	.02	.01	-.23*
	ΔR^2	.04*	.03*	.01	.00	.00	.04*
	Total R ²	.30**	.24**	.03	.08*	.17**	.10*

^aSatisfaction = Relationship satisfaction. ^bCohabitation = Cohabitation status. ^cLength = Length of relationship. ^dAggression = Psychological aggression

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Thoughts of Quitting

The variables in this analysis accounted for 17% of the variance in thoughts of quitting school (R^2). The control variables were entered in the first step. Psychological aggression was entered in the final step, and it was non-significant ($\beta = .01$, $p = ns$, $\Delta R^2 = .00$).

Performance

The variables in the last analysis accounted for 10% of the variance in performance. In the first step of the regression, all control variables were entered in the model. Psychological aggression was entered in the second step, and it significantly predicted standardized average grades ($\beta = -.23$, $p < .05$, $\Delta R^2 = .04$).

Discussion

The current findings suggest that psychological aggression is linked to school withdrawal. As hypothesized, psychological aggression predicted cognitive distraction after controlling for cohabitation status, relationship satisfaction, and length of relationship. These findings provide support for the conclusions drawn in other studies (e.g., Mertin & Mohr, 2000; Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly, 2007; Wettersten et al., 2004), which suggest that victims of partner aggression have difficulties remaining focused on tasks. Psychological aggression also predicted school neglect. Previous research on partner aggression and work (including employment and school) has not directly examined the relationship between aggression and neglect. However, Reeves and O'Leary-Kelly (2007) did include items that assess job neglect in their measure of work distraction, and they found that current victims of physical aggression report more work distraction (including neglect) compared to nonvictims. Additionally, Straight et al.

(2003) reported that role limitations, which included items that measured school neglect (e.g., “difficulty performing work or other activities”), were related to psychological abuse. The current study supports their conclusions.

In addition to predicting cognitive distraction and neglect, psychological aggression also predicted grades after controlling for cohabitation status, relationship satisfaction, and length of relationship. This is the first study to my knowledge to examine whether there is a link between partner aggression, either physical or psychological, and performance. Although not examined in the current study, it is possible that cognitive distraction and school neglect partially mediate the effects of psychological aggression on grades. The finding that psychological abuse predicts grades may have potentially negative long-term consequences for victims, including limiting career prospects and admission into graduate studies.

Contrary to expectations, psychological aggression did not predict partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, or thoughts of quitting school. In previous qualitative studies, victims of partner aggression reported arriving late for work, leaving work early, being absent from work, and quitting work as a result of victimization (e.g., Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Wettersten et al., 2004). In addition, Riger et al. (2000) found partner aggression to be associated with missing classes and quitting school in their sample of students. In the current study, however, psychological aggression did not predict these traditional withdrawal measures. Similarly, Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly (2007) found no differences in absenteeism and tardiness between current victims of physical aggression and nonvictims in their quantitative study of over 1500 employed women. It is possible that some victims of aggression attend work (i.e., school or

employment) as a way of escaping an abusive partner, and there is evidence to support this. For example, 6 of the 10 participants in the Wettersten et al. (2004) study described attending work as a way of escaping an abusive home environment. Another possibility is that the women who have been interviewed in qualitative studies (e.g., Swanberg & Logan, 2005) are different (e.g., more severely abused) from the women who have participated in quantitative studies (e.g., Reeves & O’Leary-Kelly, 2007). This would not be surprising given that qualitative studies (e.g., Moe & Bell, 2004; Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Wettersten et al., 2004) recruit from clinical settings (e.g., women’s shelters, treatment centers for substance abuse), while quantitative studies (e.g., Reeves & O’Leary-Kelly, 2007) often consist of community samples of women (e.g., women recruited from their workplaces).

In the current study, psychological aggression was assessed with the Psychological Maltreatment of Women Inventory. All of the items comprising this inventory, which consists of an emotional-verbal abuse factor and a dominance-isolation factor, were summed to form an overall psychological aggression score. Future research could examine the factors separately, since it is possible that they are differentially related to work withdrawal. For example, it is possible that the dominance-isolation factor is associated with greater physical withdrawal from school (e.g., partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism), given the items (e.g., tried to keep me from doing things to better myself) that comprise this factor.

The results of this study are potentially limited by several factors. First, the same students provided the self-report data for the independent and dependent variables, increasing the possibility of mono-method bias. The main concern with this form of bias

is that it may inflate the relationships of interest. However, an examination of the correlation matrix shows several small correlations between the study variables (e.g., psychological abuse and frequency of absenteeism, $r = -.07$; psychological abuse and partial absenteeism, $r = .11$), reducing the likelihood that mono-method bias is a threat (Lindell & Whitney, 2001). Future studies could do more to address the issue of mono-method bias. Researchers could gather information on work withdrawal from organizations rather than victims. For example, organizational (or educational) records on tardiness and absenteeism could be used, as well as supervisor (or professor) reports of concentration or neglect. The second potential limitation of this study is that it is based on cross-sectional data. Information pertaining to psychological abuse, school withdrawal, and performance was collected concurrently, making it impossible to determine the causal sequence of the variables. Only by using a longitudinal research design can researchers determine with confidence the organizational outcomes of partner aggression.

Fourth, the results of this study may not generalize to other student populations such as those enrolled in high school, those whose intimate relationships have come to an end as a result of abuse, those who are involved in lesbian relationships, or those who do not live in the same city as their partners. Fifth, and perhaps most importantly, the results may not generalize to employed women who are in psychologically abusive relationships. The fact that this study was conducted in an educational rather than an organizational context and that the participants studied were relatively young women, who experienced low levels of psychological aggression, raises questions about the external validity of the findings. Study 2 attempts to address some of the limitations of the first study.

Chapter 3

The Impact of Physical Aggression on Employment Withdrawal

Spillover theory suggests that our lives straddle various roles and contexts, and the boundaries between these roles and contexts are permeable (Barling, 1990; Wilensky, 1960). In the previous study, spillover theory was supported: Psychological aggression enacted against female students predicted victims' cognitive distraction, neglect, and performance in an educational context. However, the first study had several limitations. The sample consisted of young female, full-time students who reported experiencing little psychological aggression, limiting the external validity of the findings. In the current study, the participants are employed women, varying in age and experience of physical aggression.

One of the major benefits of the current study is that it enabled me to study the relationship between experience of physical aggression and employment withdrawal. While both forms of aggression (i.e., physical and psychological) can lead to detrimental physical (e.g., migraines) and mental health (e.g., posttraumatic stress disorder) outcomes (Arias & Pape, 1999; Campbell, 2002; Coker et al., 2000; Golding, 1999; Plichta, 2004), victims of physical abuse are also at risk of physical injury and death. As a result, physical aggression has garnered more attention from researchers (O'Leary, 1999); thus, the current study adds to the growing literature on the relationship between physical aggression and employment outcomes.

Recall that there have been inconsistent findings in the literature regarding the impact of physical aggression on work withdrawal. For example, qualitative studies suggest that physical aggression is associated with tardiness, absenteeism, and turnover.

Yet, a recent quantitative study (Reeves & O’Leary-Kelly, 2007) did not find significant differences in reported tardiness and absenteeism between current victims and nonvictims of physical aggression. The current study attempted to resolve this inconsistency in the literature.

In this study, I investigate the impact of physical aggression on employment withdrawal (i.e., cognitive distraction, job neglect, partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, and thoughts of quitting work) by studying a population experiencing male-to-female physical aggression. More specifically, maritally dissatisfied, physically abused women (abused group) were compared with two groups of women – maritally satisfied women (control group) and maritally dissatisfied, nonabused women (discordant-only group). This design is frequently used in the marital violence literature. For example, it has been used to examine group differences in thought processes, attributions, and expressions of anger among maritally violent, maritally distressed-nonviolent, and maritally satisfied husbands (Anglin & Holtzworth-Munroe, 1997; Barbour, Eckhardt, Davison, & Kassonov, 1998; Eckhardt, Barbour, & Davison, 1998; Holtzworth-Munroe & Anglin, 1991; Holtzworth-Munroe & Hutchinson, 1993), as well as to examine whether work experiences and stressors are associated with conjugal violence (Barling & Rosenbaum, 1986). Because of its design, this study controls for marital satisfaction. Previous studies examining the link between physical aggression and employment have not controlled for the relationship between physical abuse and relationship satisfaction, and there is evidence to suggest that these two variables are inversely related (e.g., Barling & Rosenbaum, 1986). Thus, in the current study, any differences in work withdrawal between the abused women and the maritally dissatisfied, nonabused women

can be attributed to physical abuse per se rather than to greater marital dissatisfaction in the abused group. To further reduce overlap between the abused and non-abused groups, I ensured that women who were in the nonabused groups never experienced any incidents of physical aggression in their current relationship. This is important given that in the Reeves and O'Leary-Kelly (2007) study, lifetime victims of physical violence (i.e., women who did not experience partner aggression in the past 12 months but who reported experiencing physical aggression at some point in the past) reported significantly more absenteeism compared to nonvictims.

Given the number of qualitative studies discussed (e.g., Moe & Bell, 2004; Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Wettersten et al., 2004) that reported that experiencing physical aggression is associated with cognitive distraction, job neglect, partial absenteeism, absenteeism, and turnover, I hypothesized the following:

Hypothesis 1: Women in the abused group will report significantly more cognitive distraction at work compared to women in both the control and discordant-only groups.

Hypothesis 2: Women in the abused group will report significantly more job neglect compared to women in both the control and discordant-only groups.

Hypothesis 3: Women in the abused group will report significantly more partial absenteeism compared to women in both the control and discordant-only groups.

Hypothesis 4: Women in the abused group will report greater frequency of absenteeism compared to women in both the control and discordant-only groups.

Hypothesis 5: Women in the abused group will report significantly more thoughts of quitting work compared to women in both the control and discordant-only groups.

Method

Participants

Because marital dissatisfaction and aggression are positively related (Barling & Rosenbaum, 1986), they must not be confounded when studying the relationship between partner aggression and work withdrawal. For this reason, I compared three groups of women: (a) maritally satisfied (control), (b) maritally dissatisfied and nonabused (discordant-only), and (c) maritally dissatisfied and abused (abused). In this study, my primary interest was in group differences in different forms of employment withdrawal.

To be eligible to participate, women in the control and discordant-only groups had to be employed full-time, defined as working 30 or more hours per week at their main or only type of job (Statistics Canada, 2004), in the past year. They also had to be living with their partners either in a long-term relationship (i.e., common-law) or married during this time period. Following Eckhardt et al. (1998), participants were included in the control group if their score on the Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; Locke & Wallace, 1959) was greater than or equal to 115 and if they had never experienced physical aggression in their current relationship. Women who scored 95 or below on the MAT and had not experienced physical aggression by their partners at any point in their relationship were included in the discordant-only group (Eckhardt et al., 1998).

Women in the abused group were not required to be living with their partners nor were they required to be employed full-time at the time of the study, but they had to have worked full-time for a minimum of six months in the past year, and they had to have lived with their partner while they were employed. To be included in the abused group, the women had to score 95 or below on the MAT and their partners had to have engaged

in at least two acts of “minor” (e.g., “My partner grabbed me”) or one act of severe (e.g., “My partner choke me”) physical aggression, as measured by the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2; Straus, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, & Sugarman, 1996), against them during the past 12 months.

To recruit women for this study, advertisements were posted in local newspapers, fitness clubs, battered women’s shelters, and counseling centers in a Canadian city (see Appendix M and N for the advertisements). In total, 52 women contacted me expressing an interest in participating in the study. The data for 15 of these women could not be used because they did not meet the eligibility requirements: (a) Two women were in lesbian relationships, (b) five women did not score high enough on the MAT to be included in the control group or low enough to be included in the discordant-only group, (c) one woman did not return her written survey, (d) one woman inadvertently did not complete one page of the written survey, (e) three women scored above 115 on the MAT, however, they experienced one “minor” incident of partner physical aggression in the past year, and (f) three women scored below 95 on the MAT and experienced only one “minor” incident of partner physical aggression in the past year. In total, 37 women met the eligibility criteria via this recruitment strategy (control group = 19, discordant-only group = 7, and abused group = 11).

While there were sufficient women in the maritally satisfied group, it was necessary to augment the numbers in the two other groups. Therefore, participants were recruited from StudyResponse (Stanton & Weiss, 2002), a not-for-profit academic service that attempts to match researchers in need of participants with individuals willing to participate in social science research. The employees at StudyResponse sent out a

recruitment letter (see Appendix O) to 173 women employed full-time and living in the United States. In total, 19 women contacted me to participate in the study, for a response rate of 11%. While the response rate may appear low, two issues must be considered: First, although 173 e-mails were sent out, it is impossible to know how many were actually received. It is possible that some of the women no longer use the e-mail addresses that StudyResponse had on file (e.g., changing jobs may mean changing e-mail addresses). Second, some of the women may not have met the eligibility criteria (e.g., not employed full-time; not in a relationship). Of the 19 women, five did not meet the eligibility criteria: (a) Two of the woman did not score low enough on the MAT to be included in the discordant-only group and (b) three women scored below 95 on the MAT and reported experiencing only one episode of “minor” physical aggression in the past year. Lastly, one woman was unable to be reached to schedule her phone interview. Thus, 13 of the 19 participated in the study (discordant-only group = 5 and abused group = 8).

Of the 19 women categorized as abused, four were separated from their partners and currently living in a shelter. At the time of the study, three of the women had been separated from their partners for one month, while the fourth woman had been separated from her partner for two months.

Procedure

Because training and experience on how to ask about abuse and respond to disclosures of abuse is crucial from both ethical and methodological perspectives (see Read, 2007), it was necessary to hire a mental health professional to collect the data. All potential participants were screened over the telephone by a social worker who had five years of experience working with abused women. Before beginning the screening

process, participants were asked to provide informed consent (see Appendix P for the Letter of Informed Consent that the social worker read to the participants). Following Anglin and Holtzworth-Munroe (1997), the social worker administered the MAT (Locke & Wallace, 1959) and the CTS (Straus et al., 1996) over the telephone to determine group membership. Only women meeting the criteria outlined above were asked to participate in the proposed study. Finally, the social worker asked several demographic questions and asked participants to generate a participant code (see Appendix Q). The participant code allowed me to match participant responses to the telephone interview, which inquired about experience of physical abuse, with their responses to the written survey, which inquired about work withdrawal (i.e., cognitive distraction, job neglect, partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, and thoughts of quitting work). The written survey was mailed to participants following the telephone interview. Women who did not meet the criteria were told that they were ineligible for the study and thanked for their time; the telephone interview was then terminated.

As previously mentioned, following the telephone interview, eligible participants were mailed the written survey inquiring about their work experiences in the past year. For safety reasons, the women were asked during the telephone interview where they would like the researcher to mail their written survey (e.g., at work, at home). Attached to the survey was an introductory letter, which informed the women (a) of the purpose of the study, (b) that their responses would remain confidential, (c) that their participation was completely voluntary, and (d) how to contact the researcher if they wished to receive the results of the study (See Appendix R for the Cover Letter). For ethical reasons, the cover letter also informed the women where they could receive counseling if they

experienced distress following completion of the study or if they needed help dealing with any marital or work-related problems. Experts agree that it is important to provide survivors of abuse with resource materials following completion of a study (see Becker-Blease & Freyd, 2007). The women were paid \$25 for their participation.

Grouping Variables

Relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction was measured using the 15-item Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; Locke & Wallace, 1959). The MAT assesses relationship satisfaction and the amount of agreement and disagreement between couples on various issues (e.g., sex). Scores can range from 2 to 158, with higher scores indicating higher levels of adjustment. In this study, scores ranged from 8 to 154 ($M = 79.18$, $SD = 46.67$). This measure has been found to be reliable and valid across numerous studies (see, e.g., Ehrensaft, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, Heyman, O’Leary, & Lawrence, 1999). The internal consistency of this scale was acceptable ($\alpha = .90$). See Appendix S for the Marital Satisfaction Test.

Physical aggression. The Revised Conflicts Tactics Scale (CTS2; Straus et al., 1996) was used to measure physical aggression. In previous studies, the CTS2 has been found to be both reliable and valid (see Straus et al., 1996). To be included in the maritally satisfied and discordant-only groups, the women had to score zero on this scale (i.e., they must not have experienced physical aggression at any time in their current relationship). To be included in the abused group, participants had to report experiencing two acts of “minor” or one act of “severe” physical aggression during the specified time period (i.e., the past year). Higher scores indicate higher levels of experienced physical aggression. In the current study, scores ranged from 2 to 62 ($M = 15.47$; $SD = 18.51$); the

highest possible score on this measure is 72. This scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .96$). See Appendix T for the CTS2 (an asterisk appears next to the items that represent “minor” acts of physical aggression).

Outcome Measures

Cognitive difficulties. Cognitive difficulties were measured using a modified version of Fryer and Warr's (1984) 12-item scale (see Appendix U). In the current study, items were reworded to reflect cognitive distraction in the context of employment (e.g., “I’ve been feeling mentally alert and wide awake” was changed to “I’ve been feeling mentally alert and wide awake at work”). Three items had to be deleted from the original scale: Two items were removed because they were not relevant to a work context (“I’ve been making mistakes adding up money when shopping” and “I’ve been slow to make jokes when talking to people”), and one item was deleted because it was too similar to an item in the Neglect Scale. One item was added to the scale (“I’ve been making mistakes when talking to my supervisor”). The items were rated on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree), with higher scores reflecting greater cognitive difficulties at work. In this study, scores ranged from 1 to 6.45 ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.27$). The scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$).

Neglect. Job neglect was measured with a 7-item scale (see Appendix V). Participants were asked to indicate how often during the past year they had engaged in behaviors that reflected neglect of their job or job duties. The measure consisted of four items from Barling et al.’s (2001) Neglect Scale (e.g., “not pass on messages to others”; “stayed out of sight to avoid work”), and three items from Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg’s (2003) Work Withdrawal Scale (e.g., “fail to attend scheduled meetings”;

“allow others to do your work for you”). A 7-point response scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (all of the time). Higher scores reflect greater neglect of job duties. Scores ranged from 1 to 5.29 ($M = 2.33$, $SD = .84$). The internal consistency of this scale was acceptable ($\alpha = .81$).

Partial absenteeism. Partial absenteeism was assessed with five items that came from Hepburn and Barling’s (1996) 6-item Partial Absenteeism Scale (i.e., “come in late”; “leave work early”; “spend time on the phone”; “take unauthorized extended lunch breaks”; “take unauthorized extended breaks”). One item from their scale was not used (“How often have you been distracted at work?”) because it is identical to an item that was used to measure cognitive difficulties at work. Responses were measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (all of the time), with higher scores reflecting higher levels of partial absenteeism. In this study, the range of scores was 1 to 5.40 ($M = 2.38$, $SD = .92$). Because the items comprised an index, calculating internal reliability was deemed inappropriate. See Appendix W for the Partial Absenteeism Scale.

Frequency of absenteeism. Frequency of absenteeism was measured using a free-response format (Appendix X). The wording for the item came from Waldman and Goldberg-Sharak’s (1992) unpublished study. Frequency of absenteeism ranged from 0 to 30 ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 5.33$).

Thoughts of quitting. A modified version of Booth and colleagues’ (1983) abbreviated form of the Marital Instability Index was used to measure participants’ intent to leave the organization. The original index consists of five items and measures an individual’s propensity to end an existing marriage. The modified index consisted of four items, reflecting participants’ propensity to leave their job (e.g., “In the past year have

you thought about quitting your job?”). A 7-point response scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (all of the time). Higher scores reflect a greater propensity to quit work. Scores ranged from 1 to 7 ($M = 2.24$, $SD = 1.06$). The scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .75$). See Appendix Y for a copy of the Thoughts of Quitting Scale.

Data Analyses

Prior to conducting the analyses, all univariate and multivariate assumptions were examined. Linearity, homoskedasticity, multicollinearity, and normality were all found to be satisfactory. No univariate or multivariate outliers were detected in any of the three groups. A MANOVA was conducted to determine whether group membership is associated with different work withdrawal measures. In addition to p values, I report effect size with partial eta-squared (η_p^2), which is equivalent to ΔR^2 from multiple regression models.

Results

Sample demographics, study variables by group, and summary of multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) are displayed in Table 3, while the intercorrelations for the study variables are contained in Table 4.

To determine whether group membership is associated with work withdrawal, I conducted a MANOVA. Using the three groups as the categorical variable, a significant MANOVA effect emerged, Wilks' Lambda (10, 86) = 2.28, $p < .05$. Univariate F tests identified the work withdrawal variables contributing to this multivariate effect. Significant differences emerged on cognitive distraction, $F(2, 47) = 8.30$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .26$ and job neglect, $F(2, 47) = 7.80$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .25$. A subsequent Tukey's analysis

Table 3

Sample Demographics, Study Variables by Group, and Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Variance

	Abused (n = 19)		Discordant-only (n = 12)		Control (n = 19)		<i>F</i>	η_p^2
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD		
<u>Demographic variables</u>								
Age	39.53	9.90	41.00	9.34	39.06	12.43	0.21	
Years married	10.38	8.75	14.58	10.39	9.81	11.99	0.82	
Education (years)	14.63	2.19	15.83	1.53	15.32	2.67	0.25	
Years employed	7.08	7.77	7.70	8.05	6.50	8.11	0.86	
Hours worked/week	40.07	5.19	39.25	4.86	39.42	9.68	0.05	
Number of children	1.79	1.40	1.83	1.47	1.63	1.50	0.13	
Marital satisfaction	41.90	18.57	51.25	23.59	134.11	8.57	160.25*	
Physical abuse	15.47	18.51	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	10.75*	
<u>Study variables</u>								
Cognitive distraction	3.98	1.41	3.55	0.88	2.53	0.89	8.30*	.26
Job neglect	2.85	1.00	2.18	0.58	1.92	0.49	7.80*	.25
Partial absenteeism	2.60	1.12	2.50	0.89	2.07	0.64	1.74	.07
Absenteeism (frequency)	5.58	7.96	2.50	1.88	2.53	2.37	2.03	.06
Intent to quit	2.68	1.34	2.04	0.74	1.92	0.76	2.96	.11

* $p < .01$

Table 4

Intercorrelations of Study 2 Variables (N = 50)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Satisfaction ^a						
2. Physical aggression	-.40**					
3. Cognitive difficulties	-.53**	.49**				
4. Neglect	-.44**	.55**	.73**			
5. Partial absenteeism	-.27	.34*	.38**	.40**		
6. Absenteeism ^b	-.14	.43**	.40**	.38**	.57**	
7. Thoughts of quitting	-.29*	.47**	.49**	.61**	.38**	.48**

^aSatisfaction = Relationship satisfaction. ^bAbsenteeism = Frequency of absenteeism.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

revealed that women in the abused group reported significantly more cognitive distraction ($M = 3.98$) than women in the control group ($M = 2.53$) but not more than women in the discordant-only group ($M = 3.55$), providing partial support for Hypothesis 1. Although not hypothesized, women in the discordant-only group ($M = 3.55$) reported more cognitive distraction compared to women in the control group.

The results also indicated that women in the abused group reported more job neglect ($M = 2.85$) compared to women in both the control ($M = 1.92$) and discordant-only ($M = 2.18$) groups, providing support for Hypothesis 2.

No other hypotheses were supported, although differences between women in the abused ($M = 2.68$) and control ($M = 1.92$) groups in thoughts of quitting work approached significance ($p = .06$).

Discussion

The aim of Study 2 was to determine whether women who are victims of physical aggression (i.e., abused group) report more work withdrawal compared to women who are maritally dissatisfied and non-abused (i.e., discordant-only group) and women who are maritally satisfied (i.e., control group). The results provide partial support for the hypotheses and suggest that experiencing physical abuse is associated with work withdrawal. I address each hypothesis in turn.

Partially supporting Hypothesis 1, women in the abused group reported more cognitive distraction at work compared to women in the control group, but they did not report more cognitive distraction than women in the discordant-only group. Participants in the discordant-only group also reported more cognitive distraction compared to women in the control group, suggesting that it may be relationship dissatisfaction and not physical abuse per se that is associated with trouble concentrating at work.

Hypothesis 2 was supported. Women in the abused group reported more job neglect compared to women in both the discordant-only and control groups, suggesting that it is physical aggression and not simply dissatisfaction that is associated with job neglect. To my knowledge, this is the first study to directly examine the link between experiencing physical abuse and job neglect. However, Reeves and O'Leary-Kelly (2007) included items that assess job neglect in their measure of work distraction, and they found that current victims of physical abuse reported more work distraction (including neglect) compared to nonvictims. The current study supports their conclusions.

Contrary to expectations, the results of the analyses do not support Hypotheses 3, 4, and 5. Women in the abused group did not differ from women in the control and

discordant-only groups on reported partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, nor thoughts of quitting work. Thus, the results of the current study suggest that abused women show up for work but, once at work, have trouble concentrating and getting their work done (i.e., they report job neglect). Just why the two forms of withdrawal – psychological withdrawal (i.e., cognitive distraction and job neglect) and physical withdrawal (i.e., partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, and thoughts of quitting work) – may be affected differently is discussed toward the end of this chapter.

The current study adds to the existing literature on partner aggression and employment outcomes. This is the first study to control for relationship satisfaction, allowing me to disentangle the role of physical abuse and dissatisfaction in explaining work withdrawal. While qualitative studies suggest that abused women frequently show up late for work, leave work early, and are often absent from work, I did not find differences between abused women and nonabused women on these outcomes. It is possible that my study design (i.e., comparing abused women with non-abused women) explains these discrepant findings. While the results of this study counter those found in qualitative research, they do support the findings reported by Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly (2007). In their study of over 1500 women, current victims of partner aggression were more likely to be distracted at work compared to nonvictims. Recall that their measure of distraction contained items that measured both cognitive distraction and job neglect. These authors did not find significant differences between current victims of abuse and their nonabused counterparts on absenteeism or tardiness.

Like all research, this study has limitations. First, all of the data were self-report; the women provided the data for the independent and dependent variables. However,

monomethod bias is less likely to be an issue in this study because the women reported on the independent variables during a telephone interview and on the dependent variables in a self-report questionnaire, and the measures were collected approximately one week apart. Regardless, future research could use non-self-report measures (e.g., organizational measures of absenteeism or tardiness). Another potential limitation of this study is that it is cross-sectional. Data on physical aggression and organizational outcomes were collected in close proximity, making it impossible to determine the causal sequence of the variables. Future research could examine these relationships using a longitudinal research design to determine with confidence the organizational outcomes of partner aggression. A third limitation of this study is the small sample size, which should be kept in mind when interpreting the results. This limitation makes replication particularly important.

The results of this study may not generalize to all women who are being physically abused by their partners. The abused women in this study were relatively well educated and, with the exception of four women, were all employed full-time at the time of the study. As well, women who did not meet the criteria for inclusion in any of my three groups (e.g., women whose partners engaged in one act of “minor” physical aggression in the past year) were excluded from the study. It is possible that women who are more severely beaten than the women in the current study would report greater work withdrawal (e.g., frequency of absenteeism), although the opposite is also possible. That is, severely victimized women may choose to attend work as a way of escaping an abusive partner. Thus, as previously mentioned, the results of Study 2 may only generalize to a select group of abused women.

General Discussion

The first two studies of my dissertation further the voluminous literature on spillover theory (e.g., Barling, 1990; Wilensky, 1960) in important ways. First, much of the literature in the organizational sciences has focused on spillover from work to home; even the research focusing on work experiences and marital aggression ascribed a causal role to work stressors in this relationship (Barling & Rosenbaum, 1986). As such, the current study joins others (e.g., Major, Cardenas, & Allard, 2004) in showing that family experiences influence work. Second, much of the literature on the spillover between work and home in the organizational sciences has focused on how responsibilities within one role (typically worker) influence performance in another role (e.g., parent, partner). The two studies reported here extend this focus from any effects of normative role requirements to extreme or chronic stressors. In addition to advancing research on spillover theory, these two studies further research on work withdrawal which has tended to be organization-centric, focusing on organizational predictors of work withdrawal (Johns, 2001). My research adds to the existing literature by demonstrating how non-work factors (i.e., partner aggression) influence withdrawal.

Several general findings about the effects of partner aggression on women's work are apparent. Across two separate studies, using different samples (student vs. employed women) and forms (psychological vs. physical) of aggression, partner abuse was linked to cognitive distraction and job neglect but not to partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, or thoughts of quitting. There are several plausible explanations for these differential effects. First, consistent with a perspective that partner aggression and partner interference tactics (e.g., destroying a victim's clothes so she is unable to attend work)

reflect behaviors that are intended to boost and maintain male superiority while enhancing female dependence (see Tolman & Wang, 2005; Yodanis, 2004), it paradoxically becomes even more critical in such a situation that women engage in behaviors that will maintain their economic independence. Enacting behaviors that ensure their continued employment would be consistent with this goal, thus making it likely that women in such situations will do what they can to ensure that they are punctual and maintain attendance. Not to do so would leave them in a potentially precarious situation in the eyes of their managers and organizations.

A second possible reason for the differential effects of partner aggression also centers on the instrumental functions of employment. It is possible that some victims of aggression use work (i.e., employment, school) as a form of temporary escape from an abusive relationship and as an opportunity to afford themselves some psychological and physical safety. There are data to support this, as 6 of the 10 participants in Wettersten et al.'s (2004) study described attending work as a way of escaping an abusive home environment. Similarly, the supportive and compassionate relationships that characterize many workplaces (Dutton & Glynn, 2007) could provide emotional support and friendship for abused women. Indeed, a survey of almost 1500 working parents found that when asked "Where do you have the most friends?" nearly 50% of respondents answered "at work" (Hochschild, 1997).

A recent qualitative study (Rothman, Hathaway, Stidsen, & de Vries, 2007) identified six ways in which employment may be helpful to victims of partner aggression. The authors conducted in-depth interviews with 21 employed women, all of whom were current or previous victims of partner abuse. The majority of participants (n = 20)

reported that having an income helped them to cope with the abuse and to leave their abusers. Twelve of the women said that their workplace provided them with physical safety, while nineteen of the women reported that being employed increased their self-esteem by reminding them of their competence. The majority of participants (n = 16) also reported that their experiences with work colleagues helped them feel less socially isolated. As well, fourteen of the women said that being employed was helpful because it provided them with mental respite from their problems, and ten of the women reported that work provided them with “purpose in life.”

A third possible reason for why partner aggression impacted concentration and job neglect but not the other withdrawal variables derives from research on the effects of chronic stressors. Research shows that one of the consistent consequences of exposure to chronic stressors is a decrease in attention and concentration, and an increase in errors (Wallace & Chen, 2005). Experiencing aggression by one’s partner would be a chronic stressor, and thus would be associated with cognitive difficulties and neglect.

As empirical support for the effects of aggression on work withdrawal becomes more established, it becomes critical to search for the factors that moderate (buffer or exacerbate) this effect. In my third study, I examine four variables that could potentially act as buffers: two are individual variables (i.e., financial need, mental respite) and two are workplace support variables (i.e., supervisor support, coworker support). I also examine whether partner interference in employment exacerbates the relationship between experiencing physical aggression and work withdrawal. In addition to providing insight into what buffers or exacerbates the relationship between partner aggression and work withdrawal, these potential moderators may help explain the inconsistencies in the

academic literature with respect to work withdrawal. For example, it is possible that abused women who report high levels of supervisor support are less likely to miss work compared to abused women who do not report high levels of support from their supervisors.

Chapter 4

Moderators of the Relationship Between Physical Aggression and Employment Withdrawal

“At times work has been like a vacation from home.” (Quote from a victim of partner aggression; Rothman et al., 2007, p. 140.).

In Study 2, women who were physically abused by their partners (abused group) reported significantly more cognitive distraction and job neglect compared to women who were maritally satisfied (control group). Women in the abused group also reported more job neglect compared to women in the discordant-only group, suggesting that job neglect may be attributable to physical abuse per se rather than simply to relationship dissatisfaction. There were no differences between the three groups of women in terms of partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, or intent to turnover. Thus, victims of abuse did not physically withdraw from their place of employment (e.g., they attended work, showed up on time for work), although they did report being distracted and neglecting their work. These findings are similar to those of Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly (2007) who found that current victims of physical abuse report cognitive distraction but not partial absenteeism or absenteeism. Nevertheless, the findings of Study 2 contradict those of qualitative studies (e.g., Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Wettersten et al., 2004), which suggest that experiencing physical abuse from a partner results in partial absenteeism (e.g., showing up late for work), absenteeism, and turnover.

It is important to understand why there are inconsistencies between studies. One possibility is that the women who participated in existing qualitative studies (e.g., Moe & Bell, 2004; Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Wettersten et al. 2004) differ from the women in

the Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly (2007) study. Qualitative studies may be capturing the experiences of severely battered women because participants are often recruited from clinical settings. For example, participants in the Wettersten et al. (2004) and Moe and Bell (2004) studies were recruited from domestic violence shelters, and approximately 70% of Swanberg and Logan’s (2005) sample came from substance abuse programs. In the latter study, almost 60% of participants reported experiencing severe violence (being beaten up, threatened with a weapon, or having a weapon used on them) in the past year and one third reported being sexually assaulted by an intimate partner during the same time period. In sharp contrast, Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly’s (2007) sample consisted of women employed in three midsized organizations, thus these researchers may have captured the experiences of women who were subjected to low- and mid-levels of physical aggression. Additionally, qualitative studies do not include nonvictims as participants, which may be problematic given that the most accurate test of the impact of physical abuse on work withdrawal would come from studies comparing victims and nonvictims on work withdrawal (Reeves & O’Leary-Kelly, 2007).

Another possibility is that there are moderators of the relationship between experiencing physical abuse and work withdrawal; moderators that could help explain why abuse affects work withdrawal measures (e.g., tardiness) in some studies, but not in others. In Study 3, I will examine five possible moderators of the relationship between experiencing physical abuse and work withdrawal: two are individual variables (i.e., mental respite, financial need) and two are workplace support variables (i.e., supervisor support, coworker support). For example, it is possible that under conditions of high financial need, experiencing physical abuse will not be associated with partial

absenteeism, absenteeism, or intent to turnover; while under low levels of financial need, abuse will be associated with physical withdrawal from work. I also examine whether partner interference in employment, a relationship variable, may exacerbate the relationship between physical abuse and work withdrawal. Thus under conditions of high partner interference tactics, which are intended to disrupt or limit attendance at work, it is likely that abused women will report greater partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, and thoughts of quitting work compared to victims of physical abuse whose partners do not target their employment.

In addition to extending previous research by examining whether there are moderators of the relationship between physical abuse and work withdrawal, I also attempt to replicate the results of Study 2, which showed a relationship between experience of physical aggression and both cognitive distraction and job neglect. The participants in the current study are a community sample of employed women varying in experience of physical aggression, potentially enhancing external validity. Based on the results of Study 2, I expect the following:

Hypothesis 1: Experience of physical abuse will predict victims' self-reports of cognitive distraction.

Hypothesis 2: Experience of physical abuse will predict victims' self-reports of job neglect.

Moderators

As previously mentioned, I will investigate five potential moderators (supervisor support, coworker support, mental respite, financial need, and partner interference in employment) of the relationship between experiencing physical abuse and work

withdrawal. The inspiration for three of the five moderators – coworker support, mental respite, and financial need – came from a recent qualitative study conducted by Rothman et al. (2007), who identified a number of ways that employment may help victims of partner abuse. The authors interviewed 21 current or previous victims of partner aggression to determine how employment helped them cope with the abuse. The idea for the other two moderators (i.e., supervisor support, partner interference in employment) came from my review of the physical abuse and employment literature. In the following paragraphs, I discuss the theoretical and empirical evidence to suggest that mental respite, financial need, coworker support, supervisor support, and partner interference may moderate the impact of physical abuse on work withdrawal.

Individual Variables

Mental respite. Research on recovering from employment-related stress (e.g., Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005; Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2006) may also provide important insight into how individuals recover from non-work sources of stress (e.g., partner aggression). Studies have shown that physical distance from workplace stressors, such as during a vacation, is associated with decreases in strain (e.g., burnout), at least temporarily. For example, Westman and Eden (1997) asked participants to complete measures of perceived job stressors and burnout twice before their two-week vacation, once during their vacation, and twice after their vacation (i.e., three days and three weeks post-vacation). Employees reported fewer job stressors and lower levels of burnout during vacation and at three days post-vacation compared to before vacation, evidencing a respite effect. Employee burnout levels returned to pre-vacation levels within three weeks of returning to work, suggesting gradual fade-out effects. Similar findings were

reported by Fritz and Sonnentag (2006), who found reports of health complaints significantly declined from one week before vacation to two days post-vacation, while fade-out effects were found two weeks after employees returned to work.

While several days of physical distance from the source of stress (e.g., a two-week vacation) can aid in the recovery process, it appears that even short breaks (e.g., weekends, free evenings) can reduce strain. For example, Sonnentag (2001) asked 100 teachers to complete a diary for five consecutive work days on their leisure activities and their situational well-being. After controlling for situational well-being at the end of the work day, Sonnentag found that amount of time spent after work on low-effort (e.g., watching television), social (e.g., chatting on the phone), and physical (e.g., biking) activities was positively related with an individual's situational well-being before going to bed. On the contrary, the amount of time spent on work-related activities in the evenings was negatively associated with situational well-being before going to bed. Sonnentag and Zijlstra (2006) reported similar findings. In their study, amount of time spent on work-related activities in the evenings was positively associated with employee need for recovery, which in turn negatively predicted well-being at bedtime.

In addition to physical distance, psychological detachment from stressors appears essential for recovering from strain (e.g., Etzion, Eden, & Lapidot, 1998; Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005; Sonnentag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2008). Psychological detachment requires that individuals avoid thinking about sources of stress; remaining mentally preoccupied with stressors (i.e., ruminating) makes recovering from stress less likely (Sonnentag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2008). Research on rumination suggests that it can both impede physiological recovery from negative events (Glynn, Christenfeld, & Gerin, 2002) and

maintain negative emotional states such as depression (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1991). In contrast, psychological detachment from work during evening hours relates to positive mood and low fatigue at bedtime (Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005). It is also important to note that psychological detachment was found to be the “crux of the respite effect” in a study examining burnout levels among male engineers and technicians who were away from workplace stressors due to reserve duty (Etzion et al., 1998, p. 584). The latter study also suggests that leisure is not a necessary requirement for recovery from strain.

For women with aggressive partners, it may be difficult to recover from the stress that can accompany an abusive relationship. If vacations, evenings, and weekends are spent with their partners, attending work may be the only time when abused women have the opportunity to physically and psychologically distance themselves from their assailants. A qualitative study conducted by Rothman et al. (2007) provides tentative evidence that employment may provide abused women with a mental respite from their relationships. The authors interviewed 21 employed women who had sought and received help for partner violence from the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) at their place of employment. The women were asked how work helped them cope with partner abuse. Fourteen of the 21 women mentioned that work provided a mental respite from their problems. In other words, it kept them busy and focused so that they were able to forget their problems.

For two reasons, I expect that physically abused women who experience a mental respite at work will be less likely to be distracted at work, neglect their work, frequently miss work, or think about quitting work compared to abused women whose work does not provide them with a mental respite. First, from a psychological perspective, it is

possible that women who report that work provides them with a mental respite from their problems will experience less strain (e.g., depression) compared to women who are unable to psychologically detach from their troubles. As a result, these women may be more likely to focus at work (i.e., be less cognitively distracted at work) and meet their work obligations (e.g., attend work). Women who are unable to detach from their personal problems may be less likely to recover from relationship-related stressors, thus increasing their risk for physical and mental health symptoms. Furthermore, both depression and physical health complaints have been found to have a negative impact on employment (e.g., absenteeism; Blyth, March, Nicholas, & Cousins, 2003; Burton, Conti, Chen, Schultz, & Edington, 2002; Hardy et al., 2003; McNutt et al., 2002; Paré et al., 2006). Second, from an instrumental perspective, women who experience a mental respite while at work may be less likely to want to physically withdraw from their employment (i.e., miss work, think about quitting work) because being at work provides them with a break from their personal problems.

Based on the evidence presented above, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 3a. Mental respite will moderate the relationship between experiencing physical aggression and cognitive distraction, such that the relationship will be more positively related when mental respite is low as opposed to when it is high.

Hypothesis 3b. Mental respite will moderate the relationship between experiencing physical aggression and job neglect, such that the relationship will be higher when mental respite is low as opposed to when it is high.

Hypothesis 3c. Mental respite will moderate the relationship between experiencing physical aggression and frequency of absenteeism, such that the relationship will be greater when mental respite is low as opposed to when it is high.

Hypothesis 3d. Mental respite will moderate the relationship between experiencing physical aggression and intent to turnover, such that the relationship will be higher when mental respite is low as opposed to when it is high.

Financial need. Researchers have long speculated that financial dependency may play a role in explaining why some women choose to remain in abusive relationships. For women with limited financial resources, leaving an abusive relationship may mean facing an uncertain economic future (Adams, Sullivan, Bybee, & Greeson, 2008). Several studies have examined potential correlates of decisions to leave violent relationships, including employment status (e.g., Strube & Barbour, 1983, 1984; Rusbult & Martz, 1995). Generally, results show that women who have access to economic resources (e.g., employment income) are more likely to leave abusive relationships compared to victims who have limited access to financial resources (for a review of the literature, see Anderson & Saunders, 2003; Rhatigan, Street, & Axsom, 2005). For example, Strube and Barbour (1983) examined why some women choose to leave an abusive relationship, while others do not. Using a prospective study design, the authors examined the role of economic dependence and psychological commitment in a woman's decision to remain in an abusive relationship. All 98 women in their study were victims of physical aggression and living with their partners at the beginning of the study. Their results showed that both objective (employment status) and subjective (i.e., choosing to remain in the relationship for economic reasons) economic dependence predicted whether abused women choose to

leave or remain in their relationships. Using the same study design, a larger sample (N = 251), and a greater number of predictor variables, Strube and Barbour (1984) later showed that employment status and subjective measures of economic hardship predict whether women choose to leave their abusive partners, replicating the results of their previous study.

A more recent study conducted by Rusbult and Martz (1995) also found evidence that economic dependency plays a role in whether domestic abuse victims choose to return to their partners. The authors assessed the relationship between economic dependency and abuse in 100 women who were residents at a shelter for battered women. Various measures of economic dependency (e.g., income level, amount of money on hand) were measured at intake and used to predict whether women would return to their abusive partners. Participant decisions were operationalized using a three-category classification scheme: (a) return to partner within 3 months, (b) return to partner after 3 months but before 12 months and (c) never return to partner during the 12 month duration of the study. The authors found that increased economic dependency was associated with a decreased likelihood of remaining apart from the abuser. Qualitative research also suggests that financial resources, in particular employment income, are important for abused women. In the Rothman et al. (2007) study, the majority of participants reported that their jobs provided them with the economic means to support themselves and their children, and allowed them to leave their partners.

In the current study, it is not possible to know if participants who report working because of financial need are planning on leaving their partners; however, it does suggest that they value employment income. Engaging in work withdrawal behaviors such as

frequent absenteeism and showing up late for work could place their employment at risk, thus limiting their financial independence. They would also be unlikely to want to quit their jobs if they are employed because of financial need. As a result, I expect the following:

Hypothesis 4a. Financial need will moderate the relationship between experiencing physical aggression and partial absenteeism, such that the relationship will be stronger when financial reasons for working are low than when financial reasons for working are high.

Hypothesis 4b. Financial need will moderate the relationship between experiencing physical aggression and frequency of absenteeism, such that the relationship will be stronger when financial reasons for working are low than when financial reasons for working are high.

Hypothesis 4c. Financial need will moderate the relationship between experiencing physical aggression and intent to turnover, such that the relationship will be stronger when financial reasons for working are low than when financial reasons for working are high.

Workplace Support Variables

Supervisor and coworker support. Social support is the most commonly studied protective factor in relation to partner victimization (Carlson, McNutt, Choi, & Rose, 2002), although exactly how it moderates the relationship between stressors (e.g., physical aggression) and well-being remains unknown. One possibility is that social support may impact how a stressor is appraised (Cohen & Wills, 1985). In other words, a victim's perception that she can cope with partner aggression may be bolstered knowing

that she has individuals to whom she can turn for necessary resources. Another possibility is that social support reduces or eliminates the stress reaction (which follows the appraisal of a situation as stressful) by providing a solution to the problem or by encouraging healthy behaviors (Cohen & Wills, 1985). Social support may also moderate the relationship between experiencing abuse and well-being by enhancing self-esteem or increasing victims' knowledge of coping strategies (see Cascardi & O'Leary, 1992; Carlson et al., 2002).

Regardless of the exact mechanism, there is evidence that experiencing social support may be beneficial for victims of physical aggression. For example, Kaslow et al. (1998) found that social support buffers the relationship between partner abuse and suicidal behavior. More specifically, these authors found that both physically and psychologically abused women who reported higher levels of perceived social support were less likely than abused women reporting less support to attempt suicide. In addition, Coker et al. (2002) examined whether social support may reduce the impact of abuse on the physical and mental well-being of female victims of partner aggression. Their sample consisted of 1152 women, 621 of whom reported experiencing partner aggression (physical, psychological, or sexual abuse), while the remaining women reported never being victimized by a partner. The authors measured perceived social support from various sources (i.e., friends or coworkers; family members; current male partner). Their results showed that abused women reporting higher levels of overall support were significantly less likely to report poor mental and physical health, depression, and suicide ideation compared to abused women reporting lower levels of social support. Moreover, abused women who reported that their friends and coworkers were "always" emotionally

supportive were significantly less likely to report poor mental health and depression compared to women whose friends and coworkers were not “always” supportive. Thus, there is evidence that social support interacts with partner abuse to predict well-being.

For several reasons, abused women may be in particular need of social support (Coker et al., 2002). First, in most studies victims of partner abuse report low levels of perceived social support (e.g., Levendosky et al., 2004; Thompson et al., 2000), although there are exceptions (e.g., Carlson et al., 2002). Second, victims may sever social and familial ties because they fear being stigmatized by others as a result of their abuse status (Thompson et al., 2000) or their abusive partners may socially isolate them to maintain dominance and control (Dobash & Dobash, 1998; Hadeed & El-Bassel, 2006). Third, victims may not seek support because they perceive the abuse as a personal problem or they don’t want to burden others with their problems (see Coker et al., 2002; Hadeed & El-Bassel, 2006; Thompson et al., 2000). Fourth, even if victims seek support, they may not get the support they need because potential providers may be uneasy discussing the abuse or may blame the victims for the situation (see Coker et al., 2002; Hadeed & El-Bassel, 2006; Thompson et al., 2000). Fifth, victims may exhaust the support of providers, especially if the abuse is chronic (e.g., Goodkind, Gillum, Bybee, & Sullivan, 2003; Hadeed & El-Bassel, 2006).

It is important for victims of abuse to obtain and maintain employment. In addition to being a source of income for victims, employment can potentially provide them with access to on-going support from supervisors and coworkers. Indeed, in a recent qualitative study conducted by Rothman and colleagues (2007), 16 of the 21 current and previous victims of partner aggression reported that connections with coworkers helped

them feel less socially isolated. As well, Swanberg and Logan (2005) reported that following disclosures of partner abuse, the majority of their participants received support from their supervisors (e.g., offering a sense of understanding). Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence available, I anticipate that abused women who perceive support from supervisors or coworkers, compared to abused women who do not, will be less likely to report frequently missing work or wanting to quit work because of the support they receive when they attend work. Thus, I expect the following:

Hypothesis 5a. *Supervisor support will moderate the relationship between experience of physical aggression and frequency of absenteeism, such that the relationship will be stronger when supervisor support is low than when supervisor support is high.*

Hypothesis 5b. *Supervisor support will moderate the relationship between experience of physical aggression and intent to turnover, such that the relationship will be stronger when supervisor support is low than when supervisor support is high.*

Hypothesis 5c. *Coworker support will moderate the relationship between experience of physical aggression and frequency of absenteeism, such that the relationship will be stronger when coworker support is low than when coworker support is high.*

Hypothesis 5d. *Coworker support will moderate the relationship between experience of physical aggression and intent to turnover, such that the relationship will be stronger when coworker support is low than when coworker support is high.*

Relationship Variable

Partner interference in employment. In addition to being physically aggressive, some abusers engage in behaviors that deliberately make it difficult for their victims to obtain or maintain employment (Tolman & Raphael, 2000). Between 36 and 75% of victims of partner aggression report that their partners or ex-partners interfered in some way with their employment (see Swanberg, Logan, & Macke, 2006). Examples of interference tactics include hindering transportation so that it is difficult for victims to attend or arrive on time for work, repeatedly calling their victims or their victims' supervisors during work hours, showing up unexpectedly at their victims' place of employment (i.e., stalking), and assaulting victims at work (Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Tolman & Raphael, 2000).

The nature of the interference activities are intended to disrupt or limit attendance at work, and given the power imbalance in abusive relationships (see Tolman & Wang, 2005; Yodanis, 2004), it is likely that such interference would be successful. Research shows that partner interference in employment results in partial absenteeism (e.g., leaving work early, arriving at work late) and absenteeism (e.g., Riger et al., 2000; Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Wettersten et al., 2004). In the Wettersten et al. (2004) and Swanberg and Logan (2005) studies, women reported that their partners forced them to leave work early. In the latter study, some women reported that their partners would provide false claims that their children were ill so that they would leave work early. Several women in the Swanberg and Logan (2005) study also recalled being physically restrained from going to work, while others spoke of partners refusing to provide car keys or destroying their clothing to prevent them from attending work. Similarly, in a study conducted by

Brandwein and Filiano (2000), female participants reported being absent from work because their partners would hide their clothes or refuse to provide child care after they had promised they would. In the Wettersten et al. (2004) study, one woman spoke of missing work because her partner refused to provide childcare when the children were sick, despite the fact that he was unemployed.

In its extreme form, partner interference tactics may be linked to turnover (e.g., Raphael, 1996). Indeed, some of the abused women in the Swanberg and Logan (2005) study reported resigning from work as a result of their partners' interference tactics. In the Brandwein and Filiano (2000) study, several women reported having to quit work because of their partner's jealousy. Similarly, in the Wettersten et al. (2004) study, one woman revealed that her husband forced her to quit her job because he was jealous of the men with whom she worked. Recognizing the possibility of partner interference in employment, U.S. federal welfare reform legislation offers states the opportunity to temporarily wave work requirements for women in abusive relationships (Riger et al., 2000; Riger & Staggs, 2004; Staggs, Long, Mason, Krishnan, & Riger, 2007). The underlying assumption is that some women in abusive relationships may have difficulty moving from welfare to work because their partners may prevent them from obtaining or maintaining employment (see Raphael, 1996). Based on the theoretical and empirical evidence presented above, I anticipate the following:

Hypothesis 6a. Partner interference in employment will moderate the relationship between experiencing physical aggression and partial absenteeism, such that the relationship will be stronger when partner interference in employment is high as opposed to when it is low.

Hypothesis 6b. Partner interference in employment will moderate the relationship between experiencing physical aggression and frequency of absenteeism, such that the relationship will be stronger when partner interference in employment is high as opposed to when it is low.

Hypothesis 6c. Partner interference in employment will moderate the relationship between experiencing physical aggression and intent to turnover, such that the relationship will be stronger when partner interference in employment is high as opposed to when it is low.

Statistical Control Variable

In previous research, relationship satisfaction has been found to relate to physical abuse. Hence, to limit plausible threats to the validity of the study findings, I control for relationship satisfaction.

Relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction is a frequent outcome measure assessed in the marital literature (Karney & Bradbury, 1995). Relevant to the current study, several longitudinal studies have examined the association between physical aggression around the time of marriage and subsequent marital satisfaction. For example, in a study conducted by O’Leary et al. (1989), 272 couples completed measures of relationship satisfaction and physical aggression one month prior to marriage and 18 and 30 months thereafter. Their results showed that females who were married to stably aggressive partners reported lower levels of marital adjustment compared to women in stably nonaggressive marriages and, in addition, their marital satisfaction scores declined across time. A more recent longitudinal study (Lawrence & Bradbury, 2001) distinguished among marriages on the basis of the severity of the physical aggression.

The authors assessed 56 recently married couples every six months over four years. Couples were classified as nonaggressive, moderately aggressive, and severely aggressive, based on their CTS scores. After controlling for stressful life events and negative communication patterns, which have both been linked with poor marital functioning in previous research, the results showed that relationship dissatisfaction was more common among aggressive than among nonaggressive couples and among severely aggressive than among moderately aggressive couples. Given the link between relationship dissatisfaction and experience of physical aggression, I controlled for relationship satisfaction, as a result of which, I am able to ensure that it is experience of physical abuse per se and not simply relationship dissatisfaction that is related to work withdrawal.

Method

Participants

Participants were recruited via StudyResponse (Stanton & Weiss, 2002), a not-for-profit academic service that attempts to match researchers in need of participants with individuals willing to participate in social science research. Approximately 95,000 individuals, varying in occupation, race/ethnicity, and age are registered with StudyResponse. To be eligible for the current study, female participants had to be employed full-time for the past six months. During this period, they also had to be living with their partner either in a long-term or marital relationship.

Procedure

I first pre-screened for appropriate participants. For this purpose, StudyResponse contacted 6000 women residing in the United States to determine how many met the

eligibility criteria (i.e., employed full-time for the past six months and living with their husband or male partner during this time period) and would be interested in participating in the study. Three hundred and ninety-nine women met the eligibility criteria and expressed interest in participating in the study. These women were subsequently sent a recruitment letter via e-mail. In the letter (see Appendix Z), the nature of the study and the characteristics of the women being sought were specified. The letter also informed the women (a) of the purpose of the study, (b) that their responses would remain anonymous and confidential, (c) that their participation was completely voluntary, and (d) how to contact the researcher if they wished to receive the results of the study. For ethical reasons, the cover letter also provided the women with the phone number of the National Domestic Violence Hotline, a 24-hour toll free crisis intervention and referral service.

The e-mail provided an electronic link to the on-line survey. The women who were eligible and willing to participate in the study were asked to link to the on-line survey after providing consent. Of the 399 women who were sent the e-mail with the recruitment letter, 252 completed the survey, for a response rate of 63%. However, ten women were excluded from the analyses: Two worked ten hours or less per week; two appeared to respond randomly to the questions; and six were univariate outliers ($z > 6$). As a result, the final sample consisted of 242 women (61% response rate). All participants were issued a \$5.00 (U.S.) electronic gift certificate for Amazon.com.

Predictor Measure

Physical aggression. A modified version of Straus's (1979) Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS2; Straus et al., 1996) was used to measure physical aggression (see Appendix AA). The CTS2 measures the extent to which couples engage in verbal aggression, sexual

coercion, and physical violence against each other, as well as measuring their use of reasoning to deal with conflicts. The scale has been found to be both reliable and valid (see Straus et al., 1996). For the purposes of this study, participants were administered only the items that measured physical aggression victimization. The items were rated on a 7-point scale, ranging from 0 (never) to 6 (more than 20 times). Participant scores in this study ranged from 0 to 18 ($M = .78$; $SD = 2.39$). This scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .77$).

Moderator Measures

Mental respite. To measure mental respite, I developed three items (e.g., “Being at work takes my mind off of my personal problems”) based on the responses of women who participated in Rothman et al.’s (2007) qualitative study. The items were rated on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The range of scores was 1 to 7 ($M = 4.26$, $SD = 1.54$), with higher scores reflecting greater mental respite. Internal consistency was acceptable ($\alpha = .87$). See Appendix BB for the items used to assess mental respite.

Financial need. Three items were developed to assess whether participants are employed because of financial need (e.g., “I work because I need to earn money”). The items were rated on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores reflecting greater financial need. Participant scores ranged from 1 to 7 ($M = 5.96$, $SD = 1.12$). The scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .77$). See Appendix CC for the items that were used to assess finances.

Supervisor support. Supervisor support was assessed with a 3-item scale (e.g., “My supervisor is concerned about me as a person”). The items came from an 8-item

scale used by Lambert (2000) to measure employee perceptions of supervisor support for personal and family-related matters. The items were measured on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores reflecting greater perceptions of supervisor support (see Appendix DD for the items used to assess supervisor support). In the current study, scores ranged from 1 to 7 ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 1.55$). The scale demonstrated high internal consistency ($\alpha = .90$).

Coworker support. To assess coworker support, I developed a 3-item scale (e.g., “I feel a positive connection to my work colleagues”) based on the interview transcripts of women who participated in the Rothman et al. (2007) qualitative study. Scores in the current study ranged from 1 to 7 ($M = 5.23$, $SD = 1.33$), with higher scores reflecting greater perceived coworker support. Internal consistency was acceptable ($\alpha = .81$). See Appendix EE for the items used to assess coworker support.

Partner interference in employment. A modified version of Riger et al.’s (2000) 24-item Work/School Abuse Scale (W/SAS) was used to measure perpetrator interference with participant employment (see Appendix FF). To shorten the scale, I combined some items (e.g., “Did your partner ever not show up for child care so you couldn’t go to work” and “Did your partner ever steal your keys or money so you couldn’t go to work” were combined to read “Did your partner ever make it difficult for you to attend work [e.g., not show up for childcare; steal your keys or money]”). I also added two items to their scale based on my review of the literature (“Did your partner ever injure you so badly that you could not attend work”; “Did your partner ever physically or psychologically mistreat you while you were at work?”). The modified scale consisted of eight items, which were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 0

(never) to 6 (more than 20 times). The scores in this study ranged from 0 to 12 ($M = .29$, $SD = 1.34$), with higher scores reflecting greater partner interference in employment. The nature of the scale content (i.e., items comprising a diverse array of perpetrator tactics) made assessment of internal consistency neither appropriate nor expected (see, e.g., Bollen & Lennox, 1991; Mackenzie, Podsakoff, & Jarvis, 2005).

Outcome Measures

Cognitive difficulties. Cognitive difficulties were measured using a modified version of Fryer and Warr's (1984) 12-item scale. In this study, items were reworded to reflect cognitive distraction in the context of employment (e.g., "I've been feeling mentally alert and wide awake" was changed to "I've been feeling mentally alert and wide awake at work"). In addition, three items were deleted from the original scale: One item was nearly identical to an item in the Neglect Scale ("I've been taking a long time to get things done"), and two items were not relevant to a work context ("I've been making mistakes adding up money when shopping" and "I've been slow to make jokes when talking to people"). In addition, one item was added to the scale ("I've been making mistakes when talking to my supervisor"), resulting in a 10-item scale. The items were rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree), with higher scores reflecting greater cognitive difficulties at work. In this study, participant scores ranged from 1 to 5.50 ($M = 2.48$, $SD = 1.03$). The scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .88$). See Appendix GG for the Cognitive Difficulties Scale.

Neglect. Job neglect was measured with a 7-item scale (see Appendix HH). Participants were asked to indicate how often during the past six months they had engaged in behaviors that reflected neglect of their job or job duties. The measure

consisted of four items from Barling et al.'s (2001) Neglect Scale (e.g., "not pass on messages to others"; "stayed out of sight to avoid work"), and three items from Kammeyer-Mueller and Wanberg's (2003) Work Withdrawal Scale (e.g., "fail to attend scheduled meetings"; "allow others to do your work for you"). A 7-point response scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (all of the time) was used, with higher scores reflecting greater neglect of job duties. Participant scores ranged from 1 to 5.43 ($M = 2.08$, $SD = .78$). The internal consistency of this scale was acceptable ($\alpha = .77$).

Partial absenteeism. A modified version of Hepburn and Barling's (1996) 6-item Partial Absenteeism Scale (see Appendix II) was used. Their scale is an extension of Barling et al.'s (1994) scale, which used three items to assess partial absenteeism. In the proposed study, one item from Hepburn and Barling's scale was not used ("How often have you been distracted at work?") because it is identical to an item that was used to measure cognitive difficulties at work. Responses were measured on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (all of the time), with higher scores reflecting higher levels of partial absenteeism. In this study, participant scores ranged from 1 to 5.80 ($M = 1.94$, $SD = .85$). Because the items comprised an index, calculating internal reliability was deemed inappropriate.

Frequency of absenteeism. Self-reported frequency of absenteeism was measured using a free-response format (See Appendix JJ). The wording for the item came from Waldman and Goldberg-Sharak's (1992) unpublished study. Frequency of absenteeism in the past 6 months ranged from 0 to 12 ($M = 1.80$, $SD = 2.23$).

Thoughts of quitting. A modified version of Booth et al.'s (1983) abbreviated form of the Marital Instability Index was used to measure participants' turnover

intentions. This index consists of five items and measures an individual's propensity to end an existing marriage. I used four of their items, which I modified to reflect participants' propensity to leave their job (e.g., "In the past year have you thought about quitting your job?"). A 7-point response scale was used, with responses ranging from 1 (not at all) to 7 (all of the time). Scores ranged from 1 to 6 ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 1.04$), with higher scores reflecting a greater propensity to turnover. The scale demonstrated acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .78$). See Appendix KK for the items that were used to measure turnover intentions.

Statistical Control Measure

Relationship satisfaction. Relationship satisfaction was measured using the 15-item Marital Adjustment Test (MAT; Locke & Wallace, 1959). The MAT assesses relationship satisfaction and the amount of agreement and disagreement between couples on various issues (e.g., handling family finances). This measure has been shown to be reliable and valid across numerous studies (see, e.g., Murphy & O'Leary, 1989; O'Leary et al., 1989). Scores can range from 2 to 158, with higher scores indicating higher levels of satisfaction. Scores in this study ranged from 17 to 157 ($M = 110.96$, $SD = 33.11$). The internal consistency of this scale was acceptable ($\alpha = .84$). See Appendix LL for the Marital Adjustment Test.

Data Analyses

Prior to conducting any analyses, all univariate and multivariate assumptions were examined. Linearity, homoskedasticity, and multicollinearity were all found to be satisfactory. There were no multivariate outliers detected; as previously mentioned, six univariate outliers ($z > 6.0$) were found and deleted. To determine whether physical

aggression predicted cognitive distraction and job neglect, I used hierarchical multiple regression. In the first step, I entered relationship satisfaction as a control variable. In Step 2, physical aggression was entered.

To determine whether the individual variables (i.e., mental respite, financial need), workplace support variables (i.e., supervisor support, coworker support), and relationship variable (i.e., partner interference) moderated the relationships between physical aggression and work withdrawal, I conducted moderated multiple regression analyses. Tests for moderation were conducted following the procedures outlined by Aiken and West (1991). On the first step of each regression analysis, centered relationship satisfaction scores were entered as covariates. Centered physical aggression scores and the centered potential moderator (e.g., supervisor support) were entered in the second step. On the last step, the physical aggression x potential moderator (e.g., supervisor support) interaction term was entered into the equation.

Results

Intercorrelations for all study variables are presented in Table 5. To begin, two hierarchical regression analyses were conducted to test the unique contribution of physical aggression to cognitive distraction and job neglect. The regression results are given in Table 6.

Cognitive distraction. In the first analysis, 17% of the variance in cognitive distraction was accounted for by the overall model (R^2). The covariate was entered in Step 1. Partner physical aggression was entered in the second step and the results were significant ($\beta = .13, p < .05, \Delta R^2 = .02$), suggesting that experiencing physical aggression predicts cognitive distraction. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported.

Table 5

Intercorrelations of Study 3 Variables (N = 242)

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Physical aggression												
2. Supervisor support	-.09											
3. Coworker support	-.07	.36**										
4. Mental respite	.04	.21**	.45**									
5. Financial need	-.04	.13*	.18**	.12								
6. Partner interference	.42**	-.04	.07	.10	-.02							
7. Cognitive distraction	.21**	-.14*	-.17**	-.01	-.06	.19**						
8. Job neglect	.23**	-.14*	-.10	.03	.01	.17**	.54**					
9. Partial absenteeism	.12	.02	-.15*	-.05	-.03	.19**	.30**	.42**				
10. Absenteeism ^a	.20**	.00	-.02	-.08	-.03	.17**	.20**	.21**	.30**			
11. Intent to turnover	.28**	-.26**	-.21**	-.08	.01	.16*	.39**	.47**	.33**	.19**		
12. Relationship satisfaction	-.22**	.31**	.24**	.02	.06	-.35**	-.39**	-.23**	-.11	-.10	-.21**	

^a Absenteeism – frequency of absenteeism

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Table 6

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses for Physical Aggression Predicting Cognitive Distraction and Job Neglect (N = 242)

		Cognitive Distraction	Job Neglect
Step	Predictor	β	β
1	Relationship satisfaction	-.39**	-.23**
	ΔR^2	.15**	.05**
2	Relationship satisfaction	-.36**	-.19**
	Physical aggression	.13*	.18**
	ΔR^2	.02*	.03**
	Total R^2	.17**	.08**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Neglect. The variables in the second analysis accounted for 8% of the variance in job neglect (R^2). After covarying relationship satisfaction in the first step, physical aggression was entered in Step 2 and it was significant. Thus, Hypothesis 2 was supported – physical aggression predicted job neglect ($\beta = .18$, $p < .01$, $\Delta R^2 = .03$).

In the following paragraphs, I test for moderation.

Individual Variables

Mental respite. Four regression analyses were conducted. The first examined whether mental respite moderated the relationship between physical abuse and cognitive distraction (Hypothesis 3a). The second analysis tested whether mental respite moderated the effect of physical aggression on job neglect (Hypothesis 3b). The third examined whether mental respite moderated the effect of physical aggression on frequency of

absenteeism (Hypothesis 3c). The last regression analysis determined whether mental respite moderated the effect of physical aggression on thoughts of quitting (Hypothesis 3d).

In the analysis predicting cognitive distraction, the control variable (Step 1) was significant, explaining 15% ($p < .01$) of the variance; relationship satisfaction predicted cognitive distraction at work ($\beta = -.39, p < .01$). The main effects (Step 2) and the two-way interaction (Step 3) were not significant. Thus, Hypotheses 3a was not supported – mental respite did not moderate the effect of physical aggression on cognitive distraction.

In the analysis predicting job neglect, the control variable (Step 1) was significant, explaining 5% ($p < .01$) of the variance. The main effect (Step 2) was also significant, predicting an additional 3% ($p < .05$) of the variance; experience of physical aggression predicted job neglect ($\beta = -.18, p < .01$). However, the two-way interaction (Step 3) was not significant. Thus, contrary to expectations, mental respite did not moderate the impact of physical abuse on job neglect. Hence, Hypothesis 3b was not supported.

In terms of frequency of absenteeism, the control variable (Step 1) was not significant. Step 2 (main effects) explained 4% ($p < .01$) of the variance; experience of physical aggression predicted frequency of absenteeism ($\beta = .19, p < .01$). However, contrary to expectations, the two-way interaction (Step 3) was not significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 3c was not supported; mental respite did not moderate the relationship between experience of physical aggression and frequency of absenteeism.

In the analysis predicting intent to turnover, the control variable (Step 1) explained 4% ($p < .01$) of the variance. The main effect (Step 2) explained an additional 7% ($p < .01$) of the variance. More specifically, experience of physical aggression ($\beta =$

.25, $p < .01$) predicted thoughts of quitting work. The two-way interaction was nonsignificant. Thus, Hypothesis 3d was not supported. See Table 7 for the results of the four regression analyses.

Table 7

Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses for the Moderating Effect of Mental Respite on the Relationships Between Physical Abuse and Work Withdrawal (N = 242)

Step	Predictor	Cognitive distraction β	Job neglect β	Absenteeism (frequency) β	Intent to quit β
1.	Relationship satisfaction	-.39**	-.23**	-.10	-.21**
	ΔR^2	.15**	.05**	.01	.04**
2.	Relationship satisfaction	-.36**	-.19**	-.05	-.15*
	Physical abuse	.13*	.18**	.19**	.25**
	Mental respite	-.01	.02	-.08	-.08
	ΔR^2	.02	.03*	.04**	.07**
3.	Relationship satisfaction	-.36**	-.20**	-.06	-.15*
	Physical abuse	.13*	.18**	.18**	.25**
	Mental respite	-.01	.03	-.08	-.08
	Physical abuse x mental respite	-.02	.12	.07	.04
	ΔR^2	.00	.01	.01	.00
	Total R^2	.17**	.10**	.05*	.11**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Financial need. Three regression analyses were conducted to test Hypotheses 4a - 4c. In the analysis predicting partial absenteeism, the control variable (Step 1) was not significant. The main effects (Step 2) and the two-way interaction (Step 3) were also non-significant. Therefore, Hypothesis 4a was not supported.

Contrary to expectations, financial need did not moderate the relationship between experience of physical aggression and frequency of absenteeism (Hypothesis 4b). The control variable (Step 1) was not significant. The main effect (Step 2) was significant, explaining 3% ($p < .05$) of the variance; more specifically, experience of physical abuse predicted frequency of absenteeism ($\beta = .18, p < .01$). The two-way interaction (Step 3) was non-significant. Thus, Hypothesis 4b was not supported.

In the analysis predicting intent to turnover, the control variable (Step 1) was significant, explaining 4% ($p < .01$) of the variance. The main effect (Step 2) explained an additional 6% ($p < .01$) of the variance; that is, experience of physical aggression ($\beta = .25, p < .01$) predicted intent to turnover. The two-way interaction (Step 3) was not significant. Hence Hypothesis 4c was not supported. See Table 8 for the results of the three regression analyses.

Workplace Support Variables

Supervisor support. Separate regression analyses were conducted to determine whether supervisor support moderated the relationship between physical aggression and frequency of absenteeism (Hypothesis 5a), and whether supervisor support moderated the relationship between physical aggression and intent to turnover (Hypothesis 5b). See Table 9 for the results of both regression analyses. In the analysis predicting frequency of absenteeism, the control variable (Step 1) was not significant. The main effects (Step 2)

Table 8

Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses for the Moderating Effect of Financial Need on the Relationships Between Physical Abuse and Work Withdrawal (N = 242)

Step	Predictor	Partial absenteeism β	Absenteeism (frequency) β	Intent to quit β
1.	Relationship satisfaction	-.11	-.10	-.21**
	ΔR^2	.01	.01	.04**
2.	Relationship satisfaction	-.09	-.05	-.15*
	Physical abuse	.10	.18**	.25**
	Financial need	-.02	-.02	.03
	ΔR^2	.01	.03*	.06**
3.	Relationship satisfaction	-.08	-.04	-.14*
	Physical abuse	.10	.18**	.25**
	Financial need	-.01	-.01	.03
	Physical abuse x Financial need	-.05	-.11	-.04
	ΔR^2	.00	.01	.00
	Total R^2	.02	.05*	.10**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

were significant, explaining 3% ($p < .05$) of the variance. The two-way interaction (Step 3) was also significant, contributing an additional 2% ($p < .05$) to the explained variance. Supervisor support moderated the relationship between physical abuse and frequency of absenteeism ($\beta = -.15$, $p < .05$). I interpreted this interaction by plotting frequency of absenteeism for participants scoring one standard deviation above and one standard

Table 9

Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses for the Moderating Effect of Supervisor Support on the Relationships Between Physical Abuse and Work Withdrawal (N = 242)

Step	Predictor	Absenteeism (frequency) β	Intent to quit β
1.	Relationship satisfaction	-.10	-.21**
	ΔR^2	.01	.04**
2.	Relationship satisfaction	-.07	-.08
	Physical abuse	.19**	.25**
	Supervisor support	.04	-.22**
	ΔR^2	.03*	.10**
3.	Relationship satisfaction	-.07	-.08
	Physical abuse	.13	.22**
	Supervisor support	.04	-.22**
	Physical abuse x supervisor support	-.15*	-.09
	ΔR^2	.02*	.01
	Total R ²	.06**	.15**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

deviation below the means on experience of physical aggression and supervisor support. The plot (See Figure 1) suggests that when supervisor support was high, frequency of absenteeism was low regardless of the level of physical abuse. When supervisor support was low and physical abuse was low, frequency of absenteeism remained low. However, when supervisor support was low and physical abuse was high, frequency of absenteeism was higher.

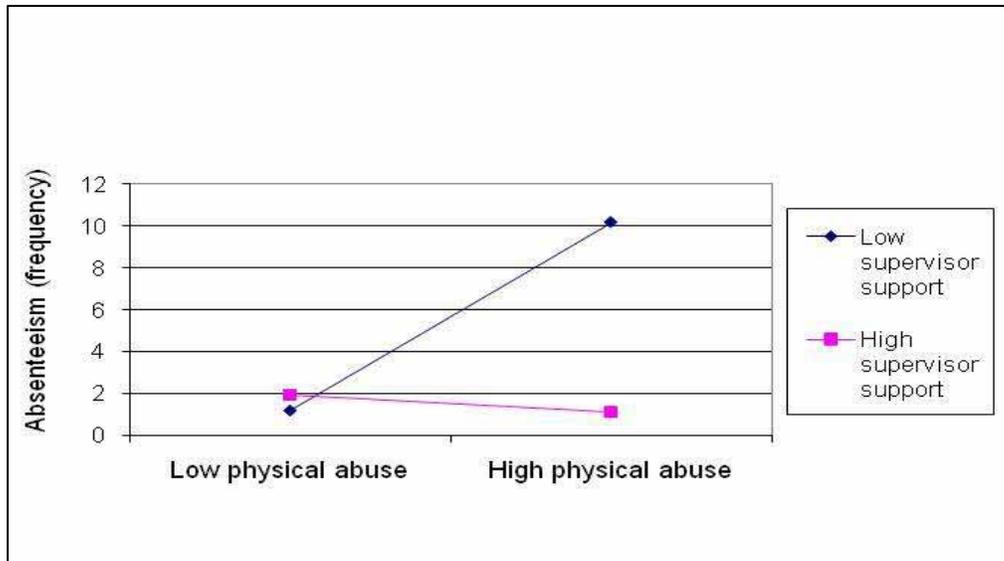


Figure 1: The moderating effect of supervisor support on the relationship between physical abuse and frequency of absenteeism

In the analysis predicting intent to turnover, the control variable (Step 1) was significant, explaining 4% ($p < .01$) of the variance. The main effects (Step 2) were also significant, contributing an additional 10% ($p < .01$) of the variance; both experience of physical abuse ($\beta = .25, p < .01$) and supervisor support ($\beta = -.22, p < .01$) predicted intent to turnover. The two-way interaction (Step 3) was not significant. Thus Hypothesis 5b was not supported.

Coworker support. Separate regression analyses were conducted to determine whether coworker support moderated the relationship between experience of physical aggression and frequency of absenteeism (Hypothesis 5c), and whether coworker support moderated the relationship between physical aggression and intent to turnover (Hypothesis 5d). In the analysis predicting frequency of absenteeism, the control variable (Step 1) was not significant. The main effect (Step 2) was significant, explaining 3% of

the variance; experience of physical abuse predicted frequency of absenteeism ($\beta = .19, p < .01$). The two-way interaction (Step 3) was not significant. Therefore, contrary to expectations, Hypothesis 5c was not supported – coworker support did not moderate the relationship between physical abuse and frequency of absenteeism.

In terms of intent to turnover, the control variable (Step 1) was significant, explaining 4% ($p < .01$) of the variance. The main effects (Step 2) were also significant; both experience of physical aggression ($\beta = .25, p < .01$) and perceived coworker support ($\beta = -.17, p < .01$) predicted intent to turnover, accounting for an additional 9% ($p < .01$) of the variance. The two-way interaction (Step 3) was not significant – coworker support did not moderate the relationship between physical aggression and intent to quit. See Table 10 for the results of the two regression analyses.

Relationship Variable

Partner interference in employment. Separate regression analyses were also computed to determine whether partner interference in employment moderated the relationship between experiencing physical aggression and partial absenteeism (Hypothesis 6a), frequency of absenteeism (Hypothesis 6b), and intent to turnover (Hypothesis 6c). See Table 11 for the results of the three regression analyses.

In the analysis predicting partial absenteeism, the control variable (Step 1) was not significant. The main effect (Step 2) was significant, explaining 3% of the variance; interference in employment predicted partial absenteeism ($\beta = .15, p < .05$). Contrary to expectations, the two-way interaction (Step 3) was not significant. Thus, Hypothesis 6a was not supported.

Table 10

Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses for the Moderating Effect of Coworker Support on the Relationships Between Physical Abuse and Work Withdrawal (N = 242)

Step	Predictor	Absenteeism (frequency) β	Intent to quit β
1.	Relationship satisfaction	-.10	-.21**
	ΔR^2	.01	.04**
2.	Relationship satisfaction	-.06	-.11
	Physical abuse	.19**	.25**
	Coworker support	.01	-.17**
	ΔR^2	.03*	.09**
3.	Relationship satisfaction	-.05	-.11
	Physical abuse	.21**	.25**
	Coworker support	.00	-.17**
	Physical abuse x Coworker support	.07	-.00
	ΔR^2	.00	.00
	Total R^2	.05*	.13**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

In the analysis predicting frequency of absenteeism, the control variable (Step 1) was not significant. Both the main effects (Step 2) and the two-way interaction (Step 3) were significant, explaining an additional 4% and 3% of the variance, respectively. Hence, Hypothesis 6b was supported; partner interference tactics moderated the relationship between experience of physical abuse and frequency of absenteeism ($\beta = .28$, $p < .01$). I interpreted this interaction by plotting frequency of absenteeism for participants

Table 11

Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses for the Moderating Effect of Partner Interference in Employment on the Relationships Between Physical Abuse and Work Withdrawal (N = 242)

Step	Predictor	Partial absenteeism β	Absenteeism (frequency) β	Intent to quit β
1.	Relationship satisfaction	-.11	-.10	-.21**
	ΔR^2	.01	.01	.04**
2.	Relationship satisfaction	-.05	-.03	-.15*
	Physical abuse	.04	.15*	.25**
	Interference in employment	.15*	.09	.00
	ΔR^2	.03*	.04**	.06**
3.	Relationship satisfaction	-.06	-.06	-.16*
	Physical abuse	.01	.06	.20**
	Interference in employment	.08	-.07	-.09
	Physical abuse x Interference in employment	.12	.28**	.15
	ΔR^2	.01	.03**	.01
	Total R^2	.04*	.08**	.11**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

scoring one standard deviation above and one standard deviation below the means on experience of physical aggression and partner interference in employment. The plot (see Figure 2) suggests that regardless of level of physical abuse, when partner interference was low, frequency of absenteeism was low. However, when partner interference was high and physical abuse was high, frequency of absenteeism was high. The variables in this analysis accounted for 8% of the variance (R^2) in frequency of absenteeism.

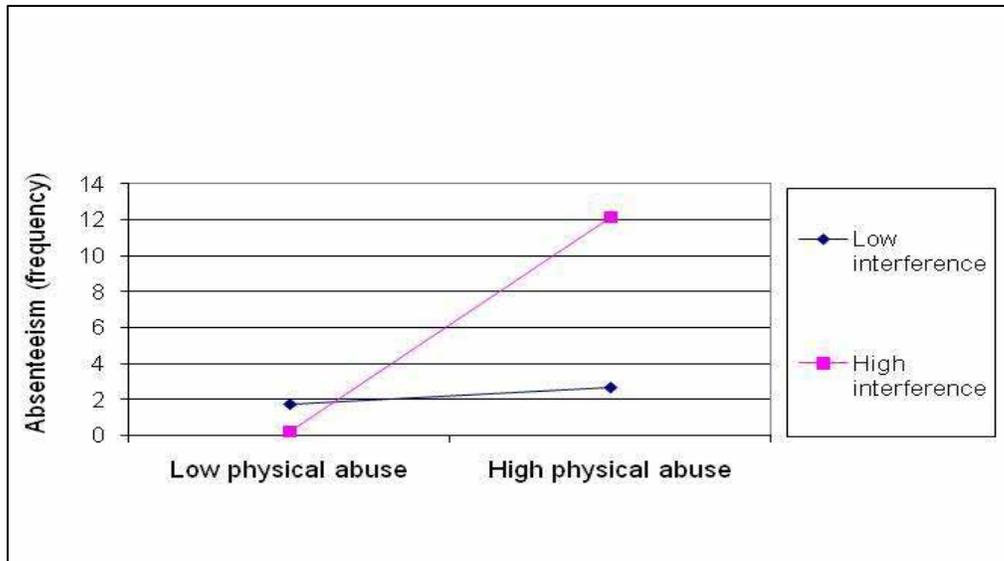


Figure 2: The moderating effect of partner interference in employment on the relationship between physical abuse and frequency of absenteeism.

In terms of intent to turnover, the control variable (Step 1) was significant, explaining 4% ($p < .01$) of the variance. Step 2 (main effects) was also significant, explaining an additional 6% ($p < .05$) of the variance; experience of physical abuse predicted intent to turnover ($\beta = .25, p < .01$). The two-way interaction (Step 3), however, was not significant. The variables in this analysis accounted for 11% of the variance (R^2) in turnover intentions.

Discussion

The current study extends prior research by examining whether the relationship between physical aggression and work withdrawal can be further explained by accounting for moderation. Specifically, I examined five potential moderators of this relationship: two individual variables (i.e., mental respite, financial need), two workplace support variables (i.e., supervisor support, peer support), and one relationship variable

(i.e., partner interference in employment). The results of the analyses provided partial support for the hypotheses.

To begin, I hypothesized that physical aggression would predict cognitive distraction (Hypothesis 1) and job neglect (Hypothesis 2). As anticipated, experience of physical abuse predicted both work withdrawal measures. These findings support those of quantitative (Reeves & O’Leary-Kelly, 2007) and qualitative (e.g., Swanberg & Logan, 2005) researchers who have examined the link between partner aggression and employment withdrawal. To my knowledge, this is the second study (Study 2 was the first) to examine the specific link between physical abuse and job neglect. Recall that in study 2, women in the abused group reported significantly more job neglect compared to the women in the control and discordant-only groups.

Individual Variables

The first individual moderator to be examined was mental respite. In the current study, I anticipated that physically abused women who were able to detach from their personal problems when at work (i.e., high mental respite) would be less likely to report withdrawing from work compared to abused women who were unable to detach from their personal problems (i.e., low mental respite). More specifically, I examined whether mental respite would moderate the influence of physical abuse on cognitive distraction (Hypothesis 3a), job neglect (Hypothesis 3b), frequency of absenteeism (Hypothesis 3c), and intent to turnover (Hypothesis 3d). Contrary to expectations, the results did not support my hypotheses. Mental respite did not interact with physical abuse to predict any of the work withdrawal measures examined. It is possible that quality of employment experiences, which was not measured in this study, must be perceived as positive to

derive the benefits of the mental respite. For example, an abused woman who does not think about her relationship problems when at work is unlikely to obtain the full benefits of the mental respite if she is experiencing chronic frustration due to her job.

Alternatively, an abuse victim who is able to forget her relationship problems while simultaneously deriving a sense of accomplishment from her job is likely to obtain greater benefits from the respite. Recall that Etzion et al. (1998) found that individuals who were psychologically detached during a reserve service that they perceived as positive reported greater relief from burnout compared to those who perceived their reserve experience as negative (i.e., 3-way job stressors x quality of reserve experience x detachment interaction). Future research could examine whether mental respite and quality of employment experience interact to moderate the impact of physical aggression on work withdrawal.

The second individual moderator to be examined was financial need. I hypothesized that financial need would moderate the impact of experience of physical aggression on work withdrawal (i.e., partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, and intent to quit). Contrary to expectations, my hypotheses were not supported. Previous research suggests that victims who have access to economic resources (e.g., employment income) are more likely than victims who have limited financial resources to leave abusive relationships (e.g., Rusbult & Martz, 1995; Strube & Barbour, 1983). These studies have tended to use clinical samples – women living in shelters for battered women or females seeking services for domestic abuse. The current study consists of a community sample of women; those who reported physical abuse experienced ‘minor’ acts of physical aggression. It is possible that victims of “minor” acts of aggression may

minimize the abuse and risk of injury; hence, ending their relationships may not be a priority, which may diminish the need to remain employed.

The two individual factors examined in the current study did not moderate the relationship between physical abuse and work withdrawal. However, it is likely that there are individual factors (e.g., coping style, resilience, optimism, self-esteem) that might still act as moderators in this relationship. For example, problem-focused coping style moderates the effects of family-related demands on depression (Pinquart & Silbereisen, 2008), which research (e.g., Golding, 1999) has shown to be linked to partner abuse. Future research could identify individual characteristics of abused women who do not withdraw from work. Identifying characteristics that enable them to continue to work does not in any way preclude the need for interventions to prevent the incidence of physical abuse. Rather, this line of inquiry could provide abused women with strategies (e.g., methods of coping) that could assist them to meet their work obligations. Maintaining employment may provide abused women with the financial resources necessary to leave their partners.

Workplace Support Variables

Hypothesis 5a was supported: Supervisor support moderated the relationship between experience of physical abuse and frequency of absenteeism. More specifically, women who perceived their supervisors to be emotionally supportive did not routinely miss work, regardless of level of physical abuse. However, when participants reported low levels of supervisor support and high levels of physical abuse, frequency of absenteeism was highest. It is possible that abused women with supportive supervisors choose not to miss work because their supervisors provide them with much needed

emotional support. As previously mentioned, abused women may be in particular need of social support (Coker et al., 2002). For abused women whose supervisors are not supportive, work may be a place with little appeal.

Hypothesis 5b predicted that supervisor support would moderate the relationship between experience of physical abuse and intent to turnover. Contrary to expectations, supervisor support did not moderate this relationship. Rather, experience of physical abuse positively predicted and supervisor support negatively predicted thoughts of quitting work (after controlling for relationship satisfaction). A main effect of experience of physical abuse on intent to turnover provides support for the findings of qualitative studies (e.g., Swanberg & Logan, 2005) that one reason abused women quit work is their experience of physical abuse. Although Study 2 did not find a significant difference in reported intent to turnover between the three groups of women (i.e., abused group, discordant-only group, control group), there was a trend in the anticipated direction with the relatively small sample; women in the abused group reported greater turnover intentions compared to women in the control group ($p = .06$).

The second workplace support variable examined was coworker support. Hypotheses 5c and 5d predicted that coworker support would moderate the influence of physical abuse on frequency of absenteeism and on intent to turnover, respectively. Contrary to expectations, these hypotheses were not supported. However, significant main effects emerged: First, experience of physical abuse predicted both frequency of absenteeism and intent to turnover, providing support for the findings reported in qualitative studies (e.g., Swanberg & Logan, 2005). Second, coworker support negatively predicted intent to turnover. Previous research suggests that social support can moderate

the impact of partner aggression on physical and mental health (e.g., Coker et al., 2002; Kaslow et al., 1998). This is the first study, to my knowledge, to examine the potential moderating role of emotional support, including coworker and supervisor emotional support, on work withdrawal in the context of domestic violence. It appears that when it comes to work withdrawal, supervisor support, but not support from coworkers, can moderate the impact of experiencing physical aggression on frequency of absenteeism. Why support from supervisors but not support from coworkers moderated the relationship between experience of physical aggression and frequency of absenteeism remains unclear.

In the current study, the workplace support variables examined focused on participants' relationships with their supervisors and coworkers. Future research could investigate victims' perceptions of the work that they perform on the job (e.g., job satisfaction, quality of employment, job characteristics). Westaby, Versenyi, and Hausmann (2005) found that intrinsic reasons for working (i.e., interest in and enjoyment of the work) were strong predictors of intentions to work among a sample of terminally ill individuals. It might be interesting to determine whether intrinsic reasons for working or quality of employment might moderate the impact of partner abuse on work withdrawal.

Relationship Variable

As hypothesized, partner interference in employment exacerbated the impact of physical aggression on work withdrawal. More specifically, Hypothesis 6b was supported: Partner interference moderated the relationship between physical abuse and frequency of absenteeism. Under conditions of low partner interference in employment,

experience of physical abuse was not related to frequency of absenteeism. However, when participants reported high levels of both partner interference in employment and physical abuse, frequency of absenteeism was highest. The results of this analysis may help clarify the discrepancy in findings between previous studies. Existing qualitative studies (e.g., Swanberg & Logan, 2005) suggest that being a victim of partner aggression is associated with absenteeism, while a recent quantitative study (Reeves & O’Leary-Kelly, 2007) did not find a relationship between current victims of physical abuse and absenteeism. It is possible that the preponderance of women in the qualitative studies had partners or previous partners who, in addition to physically abusing them, interfered in their employment. If this is the case, it could explain why women in these studies report missing work as a result of their abuse status. In contrast, the Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly (2007) sample of employed women, some of whom were physically abused, may not have been with partners who interfered with their employment. Thus, the results of this analysis suggests that when high levels of partner interference and physical abuse interact, abused women are more likely to physically withdrawal from work (i.e., frequently miss work).

Contrary to expectations, Hypothesis 6a and 6c were not supported: Partner interference in employment did not moderate the relationship between physical aggression and either partial absenteeism (e.g., showing up late for work, leaving work early) or intent to turnover. However, there was evidence that partner interference in employment predicts partial absenteeism. The presence of a significant relationship between interference tactics and partial absenteeism provides support for the results of

qualitative research (e.g., Swanberg & Logan, 2005), which suggest a link between victimization and partial absenteeism.

Limitations

Like all research, the current study has limitations. First, all data in the current study are self-report, which introduces several potential concerns. For example, one cannot verify the accuracy of the participants' reports of physical aggression or their reports of work withdrawal. With respect to accuracy, objective measures are often preferred to participant self-reports. However, with experience of physical aggression, the only other person who can verify the accuracy of the reports is usually the assailant, unless there are witnesses to the abuse or police reports have been filed. A source of concern with using perpetrator accounts of abuse is the low agreement between abusers and victims on acts of aggression (e.g., Armstrong, Wernke, Medina, & Schafer, 2002; Cunradi, Bersamin, & Ames, 2009); thus researchers cannot assume that perpetrators can act as proxies for victims (Armstrong et al., 2002). While using police reports may be a viable option, there are limits to the generalizability of data collected in this manner. A recent study (Akers & Kaukinen, 2009) showed that victims' decision to report abuse to the police varies along a number of dimensions; for example, severity of abuse increases the likelihood that victims will report the incident to the police; minority women are more likely than White women to involve the authorities; the presence of children in the home increases reporting behavior; and age impacts reporting behavior, with younger and older victims being less likely to contact the police. In their sample, Akers and Kaukinen (2009) found that only about a third of abuse victims reported their abuse to the police. Future research could do more to avoid relying on self-reports of work withdrawal by

gathering employment information (e.g., absenteeism, tardiness) from organizational records rather than from victims.

Second, monomethod bias might also be an issue in the current study. The main concern with this form of bias is that it may inflate the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. However, the nonsignificant correlations between some of the study variables, and the presence of significant interactions, reduce the possibility that mono-method bias is a threat (Aiken & West, 1991; Lindell & Whitney, 2001).

The third potential limitation of the current study is that it is cross-sectional. Data on the predictor, moderator, and outcome variables were collected simultaneously, making it impossible to isolate the causal sequence of the variables. To determine with confidence the organizational outcomes of experiencing physical aggression, future research would need to examine these relationships using a longitudinal research design.

The fourth potential limitation is that I examined only experience of physical aggression (e.g., 'My partner slapped me'). In future studies, researchers should consider examining both physical and psychological aggression, for several reasons: First, aggression is believed to be a higher-order construct that includes both physical aggression and psychological aggression (see, e.g., Schat, Frone, & Kelloway, 2006); thus, examining both would provide researchers with a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of partner aggression on work withdrawal. Second, both physical and psychological aggression are associated with negative outcomes (e.g., depression) for victims (e.g., Coker et al., 2000; Follingstad et al., 1990; Golding, 1999; Jackson et al., 2002; Marshall, 2001; Pico-Alfonso, 2005; Sackett & Saunders, 1999;

Staggs & Riger, 2005; Sutherland et al., 2001). Third, physical aggression is practically nonexistent without psychological aggression; in one study, 99% of physically abused women reported experiencing psychological abuse (e.g., Follingstad et al., 1990). To examine both types of aggression, researchers can include a measure of overall aggression (including items that measure both physical and psychological abuse) or separate measures of physical and psychological aggression in their analyses.

The fifth potential limitation is that the results may not generalize to all physically abused women. In community samples of women, such as this one, severe acts of aggression are relatively rare²; thus comparisons to women who have experienced more severe levels of physical aggression are not possible. In a similar vein, this study was composed of intact couples, making the results unlikely to generalize to abused women whose relationships have ended due to separation or divorce. Finally, all of the women in the current study were employed full-time; thus results of this study can not be generalized to women who have recently quit work, were fired from work, are employed on a part-time basis, or are receiving social assistance.

A further potential limitation of this study relates to my use of the Work/School Abuse Scale (W/SAS). Due to their small sample size ($N = 35$), Riger et al. (2000) were unable to conduct a factor analysis of the W/SAS. However, their scale appears to consist of two subscales, which they refer to as Interference (Items 1 - 4) and Restraint (Items 5 – 8). With the first four items, perpetrator abusive behaviors spill into the workplace,

² One constraint with studying relatively rare phenomena, such as physical abuse and partner interference in employment, in community samples is that the distributions are likely to have significant skewness and kurtosis. Thus, in future studies, researchers should consider either transforming their data or dichotomizing the non-normal variable(s) if departures from normality are severe (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001)

possibly impacting the victim as well as other individuals (e.g., co-workers) who are present in the organization. The last four items in the scale are abusive actions that take place in the home environment. Although these latter tactics are also likely to impact victim work withdrawal, they occur outside of the workplace; thus, coworkers and supervisors may be unaware of their existence and, as a result, be potentially shielded from them. In the current study, I summed all of the items to form an overall partner interference in employment score.

Future research could examine whether these two subscales are differentially associated with employment outcomes for both victims and co-workers/supervisors. It is possible that the last four items of the scale are associated with victim partial absenteeism and frequency of absenteeism, given the items (e.g., ‘In the past six months did your partner ever make it difficult for you to attend work’) that comprise this subscale. Items 1-4 may, in addition to impacting victims, also impact coworkers/supervisors. For example, both victims and colleagues/supervisors may fear for their personal safety if a perpetrator displays rage in the workplace. In this scenario, both intended victims and vicarious victims (e.g., colleagues, supervisors) may withdraw from the workplace due to fear. It is up to future research to examine whether these two subscales result in different outcomes.

Conclusion

By isolating some of the moderators of the relationship between physical partner abuse and various workplace outcomes, the results of this study contribute to our understanding of partner physical aggression and employment in important ways. First, the results of this study provided further evidence that experience of physical abuse

predicts both cognitive distraction and job neglect. Second, this study demonstrated that supportive supervision moderates the relationship between experiencing physical aggression and frequency of absenteeism, suggesting one avenue for organizational interventions. Third, the results showed that partner interference in employment exacerbates the relationship between experience of physical partner aggression and attendance at work.

Chapter 5

General Discussion

Researchers have recently begun to examine whether experiencing partner aggression at home impacts victims' employment. Spillover theory would suggest that experiences in the home environment carry over into the work environment and vice versa (Aldous, 1969; Wilensky, 1960). Existing qualitative studies support spillover theory – abused women report having various difficulties at work as a result of their abuse status (e.g., Swanberg & Logan, 2005; Wettersten et al., 2004). More specifically, in these studies, abused women report trouble concentrating at work, showing up late for work, leaving work early, missing work, quitting work, and being fired from work. In contrast, a recent large scale, quantitative study (Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly, 2007) did not find differences between current victims of abuse and nonvictims in attendance at work or tardiness, although the former reported more trouble concentrating at work compared to the latter. Thus, there are inconsistencies in this fledgling literature, suggesting additional research is needed.

The main goal of my first two studies was to provide further insight into the relationship between partner aggression, both physical and psychological, and work withdrawal (i.e., cognitive distraction, neglect, partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, and intent to turnover) and performance. In each study, participants were asked about their experience of either psychological (Study 1) or physical (Study 2) aggression and asked an identical series of questions about work withdrawal. Participants in Study 1 were also asked to report their grades, as a proxy for performance. Study 1 is the first study, to my knowledge, to examine whether experience of partner aggression

impacts performance. In my third study, I examined possible moderators of the relationship between experience of physical aggression from an intimate partner and work withdrawal. Two of the potential moderators were workplace support variables (supervisor support, coworker support), two were individual variables (mental respite, financial need), and one was a relationship variable (partner interference in employment). Testing for moderators is important, as identifying moderators provides insight into what buffers or exacerbates the relationship between experiencing partner abuse and work withdrawal. Moderator variables can also potentially explain inconsistencies in the existing literature. In the following paragraphs, I provide further detail about each of my studies.

Study 1 examined whether psychological aggression predicts school withdrawal (i.e., cognitive distraction at school, school neglect, partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, and thoughts of quitting school) and performance (i.e., grades). Using data from 122 female post-secondary students, the results showed that psychological abuse by a male partner predicts cognitive distraction, school neglect, and grades (after controlling for relationship satisfaction) but not partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, or thoughts of quitting school. These results add to the existing literature on partner aggression and withdrawal in important ways: First, to my knowledge, this was the first study to investigate the relationship between psychological aggression and withdrawal cognitions and behaviors. Previous studies have focused on physical aggression while neglecting the role of psychological aggression in work withdrawal. Given that women experience psychological aggression in relationships more frequently than they do physical aggression (e.g., Follingstad et al., 1990), it is vital to understand its impact on

work (i.e., school or employment). Second, Study 1 demonstrated that psychological aggression predicts performance, in addition to various school withdrawal outcomes. This was the first study to investigate the relationship between partner aggression and an objective measure of performance (i.e., grades).

Study 2 investigated whether employed women who are physically abused by their partners (abused group) report more employment withdrawal compared to non-abused women who are either maritally dissatisfied (discordant-only group) or maritally satisfied (control group). In this study, women in the abused group reported more cognitive distraction and job neglect compared to women in the control group. They also reported more job neglect than nonabused women who are dissatisfied in their relationships (i.e., discordant-only group). This study advances existing research; because of its design, relationship satisfaction is controlled, and this has not been accomplished in previous studies examining the link between physical abuse and employment outcomes. Given the positive relationship between abuse and dissatisfaction, controlling for relationship satisfaction ensures that work withdrawal is the result of physical aggression per se and not simply dissatisfaction.

Following Studies 1 and 2, which consisted of different samples (student vs. employed women) and forms of aggression (psychological vs. physical), some general comments can be made. Partner aggression predicts cognitive distraction and job neglect but not partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, or turnover intentions. Thus, it appears that abused women attend work but once at work, have trouble concentrating and completing tasks. The results of Studies 1 and 2 are consistent with those reported by Reeves and O'Leary-Kelly (2007). They also correspond to research findings on illness

and employment (Blyth et al., 2003; Paré et al., 2006; Schwartz et al., 1997), which suggest that when unwell or in pain employees often choose to attend work; as a result, employee illness tends to have a greater impact on presenteeism than on physical withdrawal (e.g., absenteeism). The results of my first two studies do not support a link between partner abuse and physical withdrawal (i.e., partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, intent to turnover) from school or employment, thus contradicting previous qualitative research (e.g., Swanberg & Logan, 2005). However, sample characteristics must be considered when comparing my first two studies with those of qualitative researchers. In my first study, the female students experienced very little psychological aggression, limiting the generalizability of the findings. In my second study, the majority of the women in the abused group endorsed CTS items that represented only “minor” aggression (e.g., “My partner grabbed me,” “My partner slapped me”) and not severe aggression (e.g., “My partner choked me,” “My partner used a knife or gun on me). It is possible that participants in the qualitative studies were subjected to more severe aggression and, as a result, experienced more traumatic outcomes (e.g., inability to attend work due to injuries). Another option is that moderators might explain why abuse affected physical withdrawal measures in the qualitative studies but not in my studies or the Reeves and O’Leary-Kelly (2007) study. This possibility was explored in my third study.

As previously mentioned, in my first two studies, partner aggression predicted cognitive distraction and job neglect but not partial absenteeism, frequency of absenteeism, or turnover intentions. Study 3 investigated five variables that might exacerbate or buffer these relationships; to my knowledge, this is the first study to

examine potential moderators of the relationship between partner aggression and work withdrawal. Two of the five potential moderators were workplace support variables (supervisor support, peer support), two were individual variables (mental respite, financial need), and the fifth was a relationship variable (partner interference in employment). Results of Study 3 revealed important findings: First, supervisor support moderated the relationship between experience of physical aggression and frequency of absenteeism. More specifically, under conditions of high perceived support from supervisors, women who reported high levels of physical abuse continued to attend work, while under conditions of low perceived support women who reported high levels of physical abuse were more likely to miss work. The finding that supervisor support moderates the impact of abuse on frequency of absenteeism underscores the critical role that organizations, and in particular supervisors, play in an abused woman's decision to attend work.

Second, the results showed that partner interference in employment exacerbates the impact of physical abuse on frequency of absenteeism. In other words, under conditions of low partner interference in employment, experience of physical abuse did not predict frequency of absenteeism. However, when women reported high levels of both partner interference in employment and physical aggression, frequency of absenteeism was high. These results may help explain conflicting findings among existing studies. Recall that qualitative research (e.g., Swanberg & Logan, 2005) suggests that partner abuse is associated with absenteeism, while Reeves and O'Leary-Kelly (2007) did not find differences between current victims of abuse and nonvictims on reported absenteeism. Qualitative studies tend to recruit participants from battered

women's shelters and/or treatment centers and, as a result, may be reporting on the experiences of women who have been severely physically abused and whose partners have engaged in interference tactics. Conversely, Reeves and O'Leary-Kelly (2007) recruited their participants from work; therefore, the women were all employed full-time. Also, the women did not appear to have experienced severe aggression and may not have had partners who interfered in their employment. Thus, the results of Study 3 suggest that the combination of physical abuse and partner interference in employment predicts frequency of absenteeism. This study also showed that partner interference in employment predicts partial absenteeism, providing support for qualitative research (e.g., Swanberg & Logan, 2005).

Third, after controlling for relationship satisfaction, experience of physical aggression predicted cognitive distraction, providing support for the results of both quantitative (Reeves & O'Leary-Kelly, 2007) and qualitative (Wettersten et al., 2004) research. Similar to the results found in Study 2, my third study showed that experience of physical aggression predicts job neglect. Contrary to expectations, mental respite did not moderate these relationships. Future research could examine whether there are organizational or individual factors that could moderate the impact of physical aggression on cognitive distraction and job neglect.

In addition to informing research on the effects of partner abuse on employment, the current dissertation also furthers research on spillover theory (e.g., Wilensky, 1960) and work withdrawal. With respect to the former, my dissertation showed that events that take place in the home environment impact the work environment. Much of the research on spillover theory has focused on spillover from work to home, although there are

exceptions (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992, 1997). My dissertation focuses on how severe or chronic stress (i.e., partner aggression) in the home environment impacts work, while most research on family-work conflict has focused on normative role requirements. In addition to advancing research on spillover theory, my dissertation furthers research on work withdrawal, which has tended to focus on organizational predictors of work withdrawal rather than non-work predictors (Johns, 2001). I also extend the operationalization of work withdrawal, which has traditionally been defined as “physical removal from a particular workplace either for part of a day, an entire day, or permanently” (Johns, 2001, p. 233), to include cognitive distraction and job neglect. It is possible that cognitive distraction and job neglect will occur when missing work (i.e., absenteeism) is not an option.

Practical Implications

The results of my dissertation provide further evidence that both physical and psychological aggression from an intimate partner negatively impact individuals and organizations by demonstrating that partner abuse predicts work withdrawal and performance. Furthermore, partner interference in employment (e.g., repeatedly calling or stalking victims at work) predicts partial absenteeism and exacerbates the impact of experiencing physical abuse on frequency of absenteeism. Given these findings, the financial costs to organizations of partner abuse (e.g., frequent absenteeism) could be significant (e.g., Reeves & O’Leary-Kelly, 2007). While employers are likely cognizant of their responsibility in preventing and reducing traditional workplace violence such as coworker-on-coworker aggression, they may not be aware of the role that they could play

in addressing partner aggression. Managers likely perceive partner abuse as a ‘family problem’ that is not under their purview.

Yet, the negative consequences of partner aggression demonstrated in my three studies and others (e.g., Reeves & O’Leary-Kelly, 2007), as well as the significant number of women who will, at some point in their working lives, experience abuse at the hands of an intimate partner (e.g., Tjaden & Thoennes, 2000), underscore how important it is for organizations to address this form of aggression. Not surprisingly, the need for organizations to address partner aggression has been identified by a number of researchers (e.g., LeBlanc & Barling, 2005; O’Leary-Kelly, Lean, Reeves, & Randel, 2008). Some organizations (e.g., Liz Claiborne Inc., Polaroid Corp.) have implemented domestic violence awareness programs, and best practices for tackling partner violence have emerged as a result (see O’Leary-Kelly et al., 2008 for a detailed review of the practices employed at Liz Claiborne Inc.).

Educating management and employees about partner aggression, having policies and practices in place to address partner abuse, displaying posters with the phone number for a domestic abuse hotline, and fostering a culture of trust can go a long way in ensuring that female employees feel safe asking for help (e.g., Kolettis, 2000). These practices can also ensure that those on the receiving end of a request for help will know how to proceed, thus increasing the likelihood that employee victims get the assistance they need. My third study showed that supportive supervision can moderate the relationship between physical abuse and frequency of absenteeism, providing evidence that characteristics of the work environment can have an impact on victims. Organizations might consider providing supervisors with training on how best to support

victims of abuse. In addition to ensuring that supervisors are aware of their organization's policies and practices, they should also be made aware of the positive impact that their supportive actions can have on employee victims, as the results of Study 3 suggest.

Given the finding in Study 3 that frequency of absenteeism was highest when victims of physical abuse had partners who interfered in their employment, employers should consider various strategies for reducing the harmful consequences of these interference tactics. For example, organizations might consider providing employee victims whose partners interfere with their employment with extra security (e.g., escorts to and from parking lots; screening phone calls).

Directions for Future Research

The results of my dissertation suggest several directions for future research. Recall that my first study showed that psychological aggression predicts cognitive distraction, neglect, and grades. Participants were young, full-time students who experienced very little psychological aggression. It would be important to understand the impact of severe psychological aggression on employment. It would also be worth examining whether psychological aggression predicts performance in an employment context. Researchers could also examine the impact of physical aggression on employee performance.

Johnson (1995) argued that there are two qualitatively distinct types of partner aggression, intimate terrorism and situational couple violence. The former, which is perpetrated by men, is characterized by escalating patterns of control and violence. In contrast, situational couple violence, which is enacted by both women and men, is believed to be a response to couple conflict and not an attempt by one partner to control

the other. Although empirical support for Johnson's argument is mixed (Anderson, 2008), it begs the question as to whether these two types of partner violence would be differentially associated with work withdrawal. My third study provides indirect evidence that this may be the case. Recall that partner interference in employment exacerbated the impact of physical abuse on frequency of absenteeism. Given the definition of situational couple violence, partner interference in employment would unlikely be present in this type of aggressive relationship. It is up to future researchers to examine the link between intimate terrorism, situational couple violence, and work outcomes.

In my dissertation, I did not examine potential mediators of the relationship between experiencing partner aggression and work withdrawal/performance. Future research could determine what mediates these relationships. For example, investigators could determine if fear of future partner aggression mediates the relationship between experiencing partner aggression and work withdrawal. There is evidence that fear of future workplace violence mediates the relationship between experiencing workplace violence and both intent to turnover (Rogers & Kelloway, 1997) and job neglect (e.g., Schat & Kelloway, 2000; see also Barling et al., 1999). Researchers could also examine other potential moderators of the relationship between partner aggression and withdrawal. In my third study I looked at two individual variables (i.e., financial need, mental respite). It would be interesting to examine other individual variables (e.g., coping style, self-esteem). Cascardi and O'Leary (1992), for instance, speculated that high self-esteem might buffer abused women from depression, which is linked to partner aggression (e.g., Golding, 1999). It would also be important to uncover other organizational variables that could potential moderate the impact of abuse on work withdrawal. For example, would

an organizational culture that supports victims of domestic abuse, such as the culture at Liz Claiborne Inc., moderate the impact of partner abuse on work withdrawal? If yes, what aspects of the culture would be most beneficial?

Limitations

All research has limitations, and the three studies that comprise my dissertation are no exceptions. First, all of the data are based on self-reports, increasing the possibility of mono-method bias. The main concern with mono-method bias is that it may inflate the relationships of interest. However, the presence of nonsignificant zero-order correlations between study variables in the three studies, and the presence of significant interactions in Study 3 reduce the likelihood that mono-method bias is operating (Aiken & West, 1991; Lindell & Whitney, 2001). Another concern with self-report data is the accuracy of participant responses. Future research could do more to address this issue. Rather than rely solely on self-reports of experience of partner abuse, this information could come from police reports or from perpetrators of aggression. However, recall that both of these methods of data collection come with their own set of concerns such as low agreement between perpetrators and victims on incidents of aggression (e.g., Armstrong et al., 2002), and the finding that demographic characteristics (e.g., age) predict whether women report incidents of abuse to the police (e.g., Akers & Kaukinen, 2009).

The second limitation of my dissertation is its cross-sectional nature. All data were collected concurrently, making it impossible to determine the causal sequence of the variables. Only with a longitudinal research design will researchers be able to determine with any degree of certainty the organizational outcomes of partner abuse. Researchers could, for example, follow married women over an extended period of time, periodically

measuring experience of abuse and organizational attitudes and behaviors. At the end of the testing period, researchers could examine the relationship between experience of abuse and organizational outcomes, controlling for the appropriate variables. A study of this nature could allow for a better understanding of the causal ordering of the variables of interest.

Another limitation of my studies is that they may not generalize to all abused women. In my first study, participants were female students who experienced low levels of psychological aggression, thus comparisons to employed women who have experienced severe psychological aggression or physical aggression is not possible. The women in my second study had to meet certain criteria to be eligible to participate. That is, the women had to fall near the extreme ends of the relationship satisfaction continuum (abused and discordant-only groups ≤ 95 on the MAT; control group ≥ 115 on the MAT), and women in the abused group could not have experienced simply one act of “minor” aggression in the past year. Furthermore, women in both the discordant-only and control groups could never have experienced any physical aggression in their current relationships. These criteria, while necessary for my study design, limit the generalizability of the results. My third study consisted of a community sample of women. Community samples typically under-represent the most severe forms of partner aggression, and this was the case in my third study.

Conclusion

In conclusion, my first two studies suggested that experiencing aggression is linked to cognitive distraction and neglect but not to partial absenteeism, absenteeism, or thoughts of quitting work. Study 1 also showed that experience of psychological

aggression predicts performance (i.e., grades). The third study showed that under conditions of high supervisor support there is no relationship between physical abuse and frequency of absenteeism, while under conditions of low levels of supervisor support and high levels of physical abuse, frequency of abuse is highest. Study 3 also showed that when women report high levels of both partner interference tactics and physical abuse, frequency of absenteeism is highest. Alternatively, when participants report low levels of partner interference in employment, regardless of level of physical abuse, there is no relationship between abuse and frequency of absenteeism. Should the findings of the current research be replicated with different samples (e.g., psychologically abused employees; severely physically abused women) and across different outcomes (e.g., employee performance), our understanding of the relationship between partner aggression and work outcomes will have been advanced.

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Appendix A

Advertisement to Recruit Students

Investigators are currently recruiting female students to participate in a study on dating and academic experiences. The study takes approximately 20 minutes. If you participate in this study, you will be paid \$10 and your name will be put into a draw to win one of four prizes of \$50.

If you agree to participate, in January you will be asked to complete a written survey asking about your relationship with your partner and your experiences as a student. You will also be asked to self-report your grades for your fall semester classes.

To participate in this study...

- you must be in a relationship for at least five months with one partner exclusively
- you and your partner must live in the same city
- you must be a full-time student

Your participation is completely CONFIDENTIAL – your name will not be attached to your answers.

Appendix B

Cover Letter

Dear Student,

The attached survey is part of a research project being conducted by Manon LeBlanc and Dr. Julian Barling of the School of Business at Queen's University. The purpose of this study is to understand how dating experiences and academic experiences are related.

Participation in our study involves the following:

You will be asked to complete a survey asking about your relationship with your partner, your experiences as a student, and demographic questions. You will then be asked to self-report your fall semester grades for your fall semester courses.

Possible Risks:

To answer some of the questions on the survey, you will need to recall negative experiences with your partner. Some women may feel upset during or following completion of the study.

On the following page, I have provided you with the names and phone numbers of several counseling centers in Kingston, including the counseling center at Queen's University. Please contact one of these centers if you are feeling distressed following your participation in this study or if you would like help with your relationship.

Anticipated Benefits to You:

If you complete the study, you will be paid \$10. Your name will also be put into a draw to win one of four prizes of \$50. Your participation will also help contribute to a better understanding of the relationship between dating experiences and academic experiences.

Participating in and Withdrawing from the Study:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to stop your participation at any time. As well, you do not have to answer any questions in the survey that you find objectionable or that make you feel uncomfortable.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

Only Manon LeBlanc and Dr. Julian Barling will have access to your data. Please be assured that the data being collected for this study will be kept completely anonymous and confidential. You will not be asked for your name. Please do NOT put your name on the survey. Your data will be used for research purposes and will be reported in the form of group totals only.

If you would like further information about the project or wish to receive a short summary of the research results, please feel free to contact either Manon LeBlanc (e-mail: mleblanc@business.queensu.ca; phone: 613-549-3137) or Dr. Julian Barling (e-mail: jbarling@business.queensu.ca; phone: 613-533-2477).

This research has been reviewed and approved by the Queen's University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact either of us or you may contact Dr. Joan Stevenson, Chair of the General Research Ethics Board, by phone at 613-533-6288 or by e-mail at stevensj@post.queensu.ca.

Sincerely,

Manon LeBlanc, M.A.
Ph.D. Candidate
Queen's School of Business
Queen's University

Julian Barling, Ph.D.
Associate Dean
and Professor of Organizational Behavior
Queen's School of Business
Queen's University

Queen's University Counseling Services
146 Stuart Street, Queen's University
Call: 533-2506

- They offer personal as well as crisis counseling

Kingston Interval House
Call: 613-546-1833

- They provide shelter for abused women
- They have a community outreach program

Kingston Interval House
Call: 613-546-1777

- This is a 24hr. crises and support line for women who are in abusive relationships

Kingston Community Counseling Centre
417 Bagot Street, Kingston, Ontario, K7K 3C1
Call: 613-549-7850

- They provide individual and group counseling for women in abusive relationships

North Kingston Community Health Centre
400 Elliott Avenue, Kingston, Ontario, K7K 6M9
Call: 613-542-2949

- They provide counseling services
-

Appendix C

Consent Form

I, _____ (please print your name), have volunteered to participate in the study entitled, Dating Relationships and Academic Outcomes.

I have read the Letter of Information and understand what is required for participation in this study. I understand that I will be asked to complete a survey inquiring about my relationship with my partner and my academic experiences. I also understand that I will be asked to report my fall semester grades.

I understand that my participation in this study is completely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time. I also understand that I do not have to answer any questions that I find objectionable or that make me feel uncomfortable. I understand that it is possible that I may experience some distress during or following completion of the study. I also understand that my confidentiality will be protected throughout the study, and that the information I provide will be available to only Manon LeBlanc and Dr. Julian Barling.

Should I have further questions, I understand that I can contact Manon LeBlanc (e-mail: mleblanc@business.queensu.ca; phone: 613-549-3137) or Dr. Julian Barling (e-mail: jbarling@business.queensu.ca; phone: 613-533-2477). I may also contact the Chair of the General Research Ethics Board, Dr. Joan Stevenson (e-mail: stevensj@post.queensu.ca; phone: 613-533-6000 ext. 74579).

Finally, I understand that I will be paid \$10 once I have completed the study. I also understand that my name will be put into a draw to win one of four prizes of \$50.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

Demographic Questionnaire

The following information is necessary for statistical purposes only. Since you will remain anonymous, this information will in no way identify you.

1. What is your age? _____
2. What is your race-ethnicity? _____
3. What year of school are you in? _____
4. What are you studying? _____
5. How long have you and your partner been a couple? _____
6. Is your partner male or a female? _____

Appendix E

Psychological Maltreatment of Women Scale

Please rate how often your partner engaged in the following behaviors during the fall semester. Please circle the appropriate number using the following scale.

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Very frequently
0	1	2	3	4

During the fall semester (i.e., last semester), my partner...

1.	called me names.	0	1	2	3	4
2.	swore at me.	0	1	2	3	4
3.	yelled and screamed at me.	0	1	2	3	4
4.	treated me like an inferior.	0	1	2	3	4
5.	monitored my time and made me account for my whereabouts.	0	1	2	3	4
6.	accused me of cheating.	0	1	2	3	4
7.	interfered in my relationships with other people (e.g., friends, family members).	0	1	2	3	4
8.	tried to keep me from doing things to better myself.	0	1	2	3	4
9.	blamed me for his or her problems.	0	1	2	3	4
10.	tried to make me feel crazy.	0	1	2	3	4
11.	was jealous or suspicious of my friends.	0	1	2	3	4
12.	told me my feelings were irrational or crazy.	0	1	2	3	4

Appendix F

Cognitive Difficulties Scale

The following questions ask about your performance during the fall semester (i.e., last semester). Please answer the questions by using the scale below and circling the appropriate number.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

During the fall semester (i.e., last semester), I have ...

1.	been slow to ‘catch on’ to what people (e.g., professors, classmates) are saying to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	been having difficulty understanding written material (e.g., textbooks, exam questions).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	felt unmotivated to get started on assignments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	been unable to concentrate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	been “rusty” at things I use to do well.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	been feeling mentally alert and wide awake.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	found remembering school-related information or tasks difficult.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	felt capable of making decisions at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	been making mistakes when talking to my fellow classmates.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	been making mistakes when talking to my professor(s).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix G

Neglect Scale

The statements below describe actions that students take from time to time. Indicate how often you have taken each action during the fall semester (i.e., last semester).

Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Some of the time	Fairly often	Often	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

During the fall semester (i.e., last semester), how often did you...

1.	submit poor quality work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	fail to attend school-related meetings (e.g., miss a group project meeting)?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	allow others to do your work for you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	engage in behaviors to avoid being called upon by a professor (e.g., sit at the back of the class; avoid eye contact with the professor)?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	work slower than you should have on your assignments?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	hope that any school-related problems would resolve themselves?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix H

Partial Absenteeism Scale

The statements below describe actions that students take from time to time at school. Indicate how often you have taken each action during the fall semester (i.e., last semester).

Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Some of the time	Fairly often	Often	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

During the fall semester (i.e., last semester), how often did you...

1.	show up for class late?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	leave class early?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	return to class late following a class break (e.g., you take 20 minutes when the break was 15 minutes)?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix I

Frequency of Absenteeism

Students have many reasons for missing class. Most students miss an occasional class once in a while.

1. How many times did you miss class during the fall semester (i.e., last semester)?

Count one or more classes in one day as one time. For example, if you missed three classes in one day, count this as one time.

Number of times you missed class this semester: _____

Appendix J

Thoughts of Quitting Scale

The statements below describe thoughts that students can have or actions that they can take from time to time. Indicate how often you have taken each action or had each thought during the fall semester (i.e., last semester).

Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Some of the time	Fairly often	Often	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

During the fall semester (i.e., last semester), how often did you...

1.	think about taking a leave of absence from school (e.g., take a year off)?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	think about quitting school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	discuss quitting school with a close friend?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	discuss quitting school with a school counselor?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	engage in job-seeking behaviors (e.g., surf the net for a job) because you were thinking of quitting school?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix K

Fall Grades

Please provide your numerical grades for your fall semester classes.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Appendix L

Marital Adjustment Test

State the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner on the following issues by circling the most appropriate answer.

Always Disagree	Almost always disagree	Frequently disagree	Occasionally disagree	Almost always agree	Always agree
0	1	2	3	4	5

1. Matters of recreation 0 1 2 3 4 5
2. Demonstrations of affection 0 1 2 3 4 5
3. Friends 0 1 2 3 4 5
4. Sex 0 1 2 3 4 5
5. Conventionality (right, good, or proper conduct) 0 1 2 3 4 5
6. Philosophy of life 0 1 2 3 4 5
7. When disagreements arise, they usually result in...
(circle the ONE statement that best applies to your relationship)

1. Your partner giving in 2. You giving in 3. Agreement by mutual give and take
8. Do you ever wish you were not in a relationship with your partner?
(circle the ONE word that best applies to your relationship)

1. Frequently 2. Occasionally 3. Rarely 4. Never
9. Do you ever confide in your partner?
(circle the ONE statement that best applies to your relationship)

1. Almost never 2. Rarely 3. In most things 4. In everything

Appendix M

Advertisement to Recruit Maritally Satisfied Women

Are you happy with your relationship? Investigators at Queen's University are currently recruiting women to participate in a study on relationship quality and employment. The study involves completing a written survey, which should take approximately 10 minutes. To determine your eligibility for the study, you must complete a phone interview (approximately 30 minutes). In return for your participation in this study, you will be paid \$25.

To participate in the study, you must be:

- in a happy relationship
- married or living with your partner
- employed full-time (30 or more hours per week)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

CALL (613-547-6275) or E-MAIL (ResearchStudy1@business.queensu.ca).

Your participation is completely CONFIDENTIAL

Appendix N

Advertisement to Recruit Maritally Dissatisfied Women

Are you unhappy with your relationship? Investigators at Queen's University are currently recruiting women to participate in a study on relationship quality and employment. The study involves completing a written survey, which should take approximately 10 minutes. To determine your eligibility for the study, you must complete a phone interview (approximately 30 minutes). In return for your participation in the study, you will be paid \$25.

To participate in the study, you must be:

- in an unhappy relationship
- married or living with your partner
- employed full-time (30 or more hours per week)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

CALL (613-547-6275) or E-MAIL (ResearchStudy1@business.queensu.ca).

Your participation is completely CONFIDENTIAL

Appendix O

Recruitment Letter

Dear Madam,

My name is Manon LeBlanc, and I am a PhD student in the School of Business at Queen's University (Ontario, Canada). I would like to invite you to participate in my study, which is examining the effects of relationship quality on women's employment. This study, which is part of my doctoral dissertation, is being supervised by Dr. Julian Barling. Participation in this study involves completing a phone interview (30 minutes) and a written survey (10 minutes). As a token of our appreciation, you will be paid \$25 for your participation.

If you agree to participate, a social worker will conduct the phone interview. She will ask you questions about your relationship with your partner. After completing the phone interview, you will be asked to complete a written survey inquiring about your employment experiences. You can have the written survey mailed to you (at home, at work, or at any other location). You also have the option of having the social worker administer the written survey to you over the phone (it would be administered approximately 24 hours after the administration of the phone interview).

Because this study is examining the effects of relationship quality on employment outcomes, you must be living with a partner (married or common law) and employed full-time (30 or more hours per week) to participate in this study. You must also be unhappy in your relationship, and you and your partner can not have attended counseling together in the past year. If you decide to participate in this study, please be assured that the data being collected for this study will be kept completely anonymous and confidential – your name will not be attached to your data.

If you would like to participate in this study or if you would like further information about the project, please feel free to contact me (e-mail: mleblanc@business.queensu.ca; phone: 613-549-3137 OR 613-328-2793). Please feel free to call collect. This research has been reviewed and approved by the Queen's University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact me or you may contact Dr. Joan Stevenson, Chair of the General Research Ethics Board, by phone at 613-533-6288 or by e-mail at stevensj@post.queensu.ca.

Sincerely,

Manon LeBlanc, M.A.
Ph.D. Candidate
Queen's School of Business
Queen's University

Appendix P

Informed Consent to Participate in the Telephone Survey

To determine whether you are eligible to participate in this study, I will ask you a series of questions over the telephone about your relationship with your partner. To answer these questions, you will be required to recall negative experiences with your partner. You will also be asked a series of demographic questions.

If you are eligible to participate in the study, you will be asked to complete a written survey inquiring about your work experiences. You can have the written survey mailed to you (at home, at work, at any other location) or, if you prefer, I can administer it over the telephone.

Possible Risks:

When asked to recall negative experiences with their partner, some women may feel upset during or following the telephone interview. I will provide you with a list of counseling services that you can contact if you feel distressed and want someone to talk to or if you want help with your relationship.

Anticipated Benefits to You:

If you complete the study, you will be paid \$25. Your participation will also help contribute to a better understanding of how intimate relationships influence employment.

If, after completing the telephone interview, you are found to be ineligible to participate in the study, you will not be paid for your participation in the telephone interview. As well, the information that you have provided in the telephone interview will not be used in the study.

Privacy and Confidentiality:

Only Manon LeBlanc, Dr. Julian Barling, and I will have access to the data gathered in the telephone interview. Please be assured that the data being collected for this study will be kept completely anonymous and confidential – your name will not be attached to your data. The data will be used for research purposes and will be reported in the form of group totals only.

Participating in and Withdrawing from the Study:

Your participation in this telephone interview is voluntary. You are free to stop your participation at any time. As well, you do not have to answer any questions that you find objectionable or that make you feel uncomfortable.

Further Information:

If you would like further information about the project or wish to receive a short summary of the research results, please feel free to contact Manon LeBlanc (e-mail: mleblanc@business.queensu.ca; phone: 613-549-3137) or Dr. Julian Barling (e-mail: jbarling@business.queensu.ca; phone: 613-533-2477).

If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Manon LeBlanc or Dr. Julian Barling or you may contact Dr. Joan Stevenson, Chair of the General Research Ethics Board, by phone at 613-533-6288 or by e-mail at stevensj@post.queensu.ca.

To determine your eligibility for the study, I need to ask you a series of questions about your relationship? Do I have your permission to begin the telephone survey?

I will now give you a list of counseling services that are available in the greater Kingston area.

Kingston Interval House

Call: 613-546-1833

- They provide shelter for abused women
- They have a community outreach program

Kingston Interval House

Call: 613-546-1777

- This is a 24hr. crises and support line

Kingston Community Counseling Centre

417 Bagot Street

Kingston Ontario, K7K 3C1

Call: 613-549-7850

- They provide individual counseling for women in abusive relationships
- They provide group counseling for women in abusive relationships
- They provide counseling for various personal issues

The Assaulted Women's Helpline

In Toronto call: 416-863-0511

Outside Toronto call: 866-863-0511

- This is a 24 hr. crises and support line
- They provide referral to emergency shelters
- They provide information on legal/community services

North Kingston Community Health Centre

Rockcliffe Plaza

400 Elliott Avenue

Kingston, Ontario, K7K 6M9

Call: 613-542-2949

- They provide counseling services

Appendix Q

Demographic Questionnaire

The following information is necessary for statistical purposes only. Since you will remain anonymous, this information will in no way identify you.

1. How old are you? _____
2. What is your race-ethnicity? _____
3. How many years of formal education do you have? _____
4. Are you married to, or living with, your partner? _____
5. How long have you been married or living with your partner? _____
6. Is your partner male or female? _____
7. How many children do you have? _____
8. What is your current occupation? _____
9. How long have you been employed at your current job? _____
10. How many hours a week do you work? _____

In order for us to match your responses to the questions that we've asked you over the telephone with the survey that we will mail to you, we need you to generate an ID number for yourself. Your ID number is based on your responses to the following three questions.

For example, if your mother's first name is Diane and your father's first name is Michael, and you were born on the 30th of May, your ID number is DiMi30.

The first two letters of your mother's first name _____

The first two letters of your father's first name _____

The day you were born (not the month) _____

11. ID code is _____

Appendix R

Cover Letter

Dear Madam,

The attached survey is part of a research project being conducted by Manon LeBlanc and Dr. Julian Barling of the School of Business at Queen's University. The purpose of this study is to understand how intimate relationships influence women's employment. Participation in this study involves filling out the attached survey, which should take approximately 10 minutes to complete. This research is being conducted as part of Manon LeBlanc's Ph.D. thesis. As a token of our appreciation, you will be paid \$25 for your participation.

To answer some of the questions on this survey, you will need to recall potentially negative work experiences. Some women may feel emotionally upset during or following completion of the survey. On the following page, I have provided you with the names and phone numbers of several counseling centers in Kingston. Please contact one of these centers if you are feeling distressed.

Participation in this study is voluntary and you may discontinue your participation at any point in the study. As well, you do not have to answer any questions in the survey that you find objectionable or that make you feel uncomfortable. Completing and returning the survey will be taken as consent to use your data in this study. Please be assured that the data being collected for this study will be kept completely confidential. Only Dr. Barling and Manon LeBlanc will have access to the completed survey. The data will be used for research purposes and will be reported in the form of group totals only.

If you would like further information about the project or wish to receive a short summary of the research results, please feel free to contact Manon LeBlanc (e-mail: mleblanc@business.queensu.ca; phone: 613-549-3137) or Dr. Julian Barling (e-mail: jbarling@business.queensu.ca; phone: 613-533-2477). This research has been reviewed and approved by the Queen's University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact either of us or you may contact Dr. Joan Stevenson, Chair of the General Research Ethics Board, by phone at 613-533-6288 or by e-mail at stevensj@post.queensu.ca.

Sincerely,

Manon LeBlanc, M.A.
Ph.D. Candidate
Queen's School of Business
Queen's University

Julian Barling, Ph.D.
Associate Dean
and Professor of Organizational Behavior
Queen's School of Business
Queen's University

Available Services

Kingston Interval House

Call: 613-546-1833

- They provide shelter for abused women
- They have a community outreach program

Kingston Interval House

Call: 613-546-1777

- This is a 24hr. crises and support line

Kingston Community Counseling Centre

417 Bagot Street

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Call: 613-549-7850

- They provide individual counseling for women in abusive relationships
- They provide group counseling for women in abusive relationships
- They provide counseling for various personal issues

The Assaulted Women's Helpline

In Toronto call: 416-863-0511

Outside Toronto call: 866-863-0511

- This is a 24 hr. crises and support line
- They provide referral to emergency shelters
- They provide information on legal/community services

North Kingston Community Health Centre

Rockcliffe Plaza

400 Elliott Avenue

Kingston, Ontario, K7K 6M9

Call: 613-542-2949

- They provide counseling services

Appendix S

Marital Adjustment Test

1. On a scale of 1 to 7, with the middle point, 4, representing the degree of happiness that most people get from their relationship, and the number 1 representing those people who are very unhappy in their relationship and the number 7 representing those people who experience extreme joy in their relationship... what number best represents the way you feel about your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Unhappy			Happy			Perfectly Happy

State the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner on the following items using the following scale.

Always Disagree	Almost always disagree	Frequently disagree	Occasionally disagree	Almost always agree	Always agree
0	1	2	3	4	5

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|---|---|---|----|----|
| 2. | Handling family finances | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Matters of recreation | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Demonstrations of affection | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 |
| 5. | Friends | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | Sex | 0 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 12 | 15 |
| 7. | Conventionality (right, good, or proper conduct) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | Philosophy of life | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | Ways of dealing with in-laws | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | When disagreements arise, they usually result in: | | | | | | |
| | Your partner giving in: | 0 | | | | | |
| | You giving in: | 2 | | | | | |
| | Agreement by mutual give and take: | 10 | | | | | |

11. Do you and your partner engage in outside interests together?

All of them:	10
Some of them:	8
Very few of them:	3
None of them:	0

12. In leisure time, do you generally prefer: To be on the go OR To stay at home
Does your partner generally prefer: To be on the go OR To stay at home
(Stay at home for both, 10 pts; on the go for both, 3 pts; disagreement, 2 pts)

13. Do you ever wish you had not married (or not moved in with your partner)?

Frequently	0
Occasionally	3
Rarely	8
Never	15

14. If you had your life to live over again, do you think you would:

Marry (or live with) the same person	15
Marry (or live with) a different person	0
Not marry at all (not live with anyone)	1

15. Do you ever confide in your partner:

Almost never	0
Rarely	2
In most things	10
In everything	10

Appendix T

Conflict Tactics Scale

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with each other, want different things from each other, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason. Couples also have many different ways of trying to settle their differences. I will list some things that may have happened to you when you and your partner have had disagreements.

Never	Once	Twice	3 to 5 times	6 to 10 times	11 to 20 times	More than 20 times
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

How often did this happen in the past year?

1.	My partner threw something at me that could hurt*	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	My partner twisted my arm or hair*	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	My partner pushed or shoved me*	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	My partner grabbed me*	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	My partner slapped me*	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	My partner used a knife or gun on me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	My partner punched or hit me with something that could hurt	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	My partner choked me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	My partner slammed me against a wall	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	My partner beat me up	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	My partner burned or scalded me on purpose	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	My partner kicked me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix U

Cognitive Difficulties Scale

The following questions ask about your behavior at work in the past year. Please answer the following questions by using the scale below and circling the appropriate number.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

In the past year at work, I have ...

1.	been slow to ‘catch on’ to what people are saying to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	had difficulty understanding written information (e.g., memos)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	felt unmotivated to get started on tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	been unable to concentrate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	been “rusty” at things I use to do well	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	felt mentally alert and wide awake	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	found remembering work-related information or tasks difficult	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	felt capable of making decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	made mistakes when talking to my colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	made mistakes when talking to my immediate supervisor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix V

Neglect Scale

The statements below describe actions that employees take from time to time in the workplace. Please answer the following questions by using the scale below and circling the appropriate number.

Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Some of the time	Fairly often	Often	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

In the past year at work, how often did you...

1.	hope that any work-related problems would resolve themselves?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	not pass on messages to others?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	fail to attend scheduled meetings?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	allow others to do your work for you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	do poor quality work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	stay out of sight to avoid work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	work slower than you should have?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix W

Partial Absenteeism Scale

The statements below describe actions that employees take from time to time in the workplace. Indicate how often you have taken each action over the past year.

Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Some of the time	Fairly often	Often	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Over the past year at work, how often did you...

1.	come in late?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	leave work early?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	spend time on the phone for non work-related reasons?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	take <u>unauthorized</u> extended lunch breaks?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	take <u>unauthorized</u> extended breaks?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix X

Frequency of Absenteeism Scale

People have many reasons for missing work. Most people miss an occasional day once in a while.

1. How many times did you miss scheduled work in the past year (a half-day or longer counts as a single day)?

Count two or more consecutive days as one time. For example, if you missed three consecutive days, count this as one time.

Number of times you missed schedule work in the past year: _____

Appendix Y

Thoughts of Quitting Scale

The statements below describe thoughts that employees may have, and actions that they may take, from time to time in the workplace. Indicate how often you have taken each action or had each thought over the past year.

Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Some of the time	Fairly often	Often	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Over the past year, how often did you...

1.	think about quitting your job?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	discuss leaving your job with a close friend?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	discuss leaving your job with a professional job counselor?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	discuss leaving your job with your supervisor?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix Z

Letter of Information Partner Aggression and Employment Outcomes

Welcome to the study on relationship quality and employment!

Before starting the questionnaire, you will be asked to provide consent for your participation. This information will be put in a separate data file and will not be associated with your answers.

As you work through the survey, please follow the links to continue and complete the survey. There may be a delay of a few seconds as each subsequent page is loaded. The following section explains the study in more detail.

Thank you for participating!

Information about this study

My name is Manon LeBlanc, and I am a doctoral student in the School of Business at Queen's University (Ontario, Canada). I would like to invite you to participate in my study. My study is examining how physical and psychological aggression in intimate relationships influence women's employment. You do NOT have to have experienced physical and/or psychological abuse in your current relationship to participate in my study. Participation in my study involves completing an on-line survey, which should take approximately 25 minutes. If you complete this study, you will receive a \$5 certificate to Amazon.com.

My survey asks questions about your relationship with your partner and your employment experiences, as well as questions about yourself. Because the aim of my study is to understand the relationship between intimate relationships and employment, to participate in my study, you must be (1) living with a partner (married or 'living together') for at least the past six months and (2) employed full-time for at least the past six months.

In this study, you will be asked whether you have experienced physical and psychological abuse in the past six months by your partner. If completing this survey can place you at physical risk, please do not participate in this study. If you have experienced physical and/or psychological abuse from your partner and would like help, please call the National Domestic Violence Hotline. The National Domestic Violence Hotline provides 24 hour, toll free crisis intervention and referrals to partner violence shelters and programs. The phone number is 1-800-799-7233. If you are hearing impaired, you can call the TTY line at 1-800-787-3224.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may discontinue your participation at any point in the study. As well, you do not have to answer any questions that you find unpleasant or that make you feel uncomfortable. Please be assured that the data being

collected for this study will be kept completely anonymous and confidential. Your confidentiality and anonymity is guaranteed; your responses will not be connected to your name in any future publication that results from this study. Only Dr. Barling and I will have access to the completed survey. The data will be used for research purposes and will be reported in the form of group totals only. Once you have completed the study, you can NOT withdraw your data – because the study is anonymous, it would be impossible for us to know what data belongs to you.

If you would like further information about the project or wish to receive a short summary of the research results, please feel free to contact me (Phone: 819-347-3405, E-mail: mleblanc@ubishops.ca). This research has been reviewed and approved by the Queen's University Research Ethics Board. If you have any questions or concerns about the study, you may contact me or one of the following individuals: Dr. Julian Barling, Associate Dean and Professor of Organizational Behavior (Phone: 613-533-2477, E-mail: jbarling@business.queensu.ca); Dr. Kelley Packalen, Chair of the Queen's School of Business Ethics Committee (Phone: 613-533-3243, E-mail: kpackalen@business.queensu.ca); Dr. Stephen Leighton, Chair of the General Research Ethics Board (Phone: 613-533-6081, E-mail: chair.GREB@queensu.ca).

Sincerely,

Manon LeBlanc, M.A.
Ph.D. Candidate
Queen's School of Business, Queen's University

Appendix AA

Conflict Tactics Scale

No matter how well a couple gets along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with each other, want different things from each other, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason. Couples also have many different ways of trying to settle their differences. I will list some things that may have happened to you when you and your partner have had disagreements.

Never	Once	Twice	3 to 5 times	6 to 10 times	11 to 20 times	More than 20 times
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

How often did this happen in the **past six months**?

1. My partner threw something at me that could hurt	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. My partner twisted my arm or hair	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. My partner pushed or shoved me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. My partner grabbed me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. My partner slapped me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. My partner used a knife or gun on me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. My partner punched or hit me with something that could hurt	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. My partner choked me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. My partner slammed me against a wall	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. My partner beat me up	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. My partner burned or scalded me on purpose	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. My partner kicked me	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix BB

Mental Respite Scale

The statements below describe the way individuals may or may not feel about their workplace. Indicate how often you have felt this way over the past 6 months, using the following scale.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1.	When I am at work, I am able to forget my personal troubles.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	Being at work takes my mind off of my personal problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	Work keeps my mind busy so that I don't think about my personal problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix CC

Financial Need Scale

The statements below describe the way individuals may or may not feel about their employment. Indicate how often you have felt this way over the past 6 months, using the following scale.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				
1.	One of the main reasons I work is for the pay.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	The pay I receive for the work I do is very important to me.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	I work because I need to earn money.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix DD

Supervisor Support Scale

The statements below describe the way individuals may or may not feel about their immediate supervisors. Indicate how often you have felt this way over the past 6 months, using the following scale.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1.	My supervisor is concerned about me as a person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	My supervisor feels each of us is important as an individual.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	My supervisor is concerned about the way we workers think and feel about things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix EE

Coworker Support Scale

The statements below describe the way individuals may or may not feel about their coworkers. Indicate how often you have felt this way over the past 6 months, using the following scale.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7				
1.	I feel a positive connection to my work colleagues.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	My workplace provides me with a community of friends.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	Because of my work colleagues, I don't feel socially isolated.				1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix FF

Work/School Abuse Scale

The following questions are about things that your partner may have done to bother you at work or to keep you from going to work. Please indicate how frequently your partner engaged in the following behaviors in the past six months.

Never	Once	Twice	3 times	4 times	5 to 10 times	More than 10 times
0	1	2	3	4	5	6

In the past six months, did your partner ever...

1. harass you while you were working (e.g., phone you repeatedly; show up at your work)?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. physically (e.g., hit) or psychologically (e.g., yell) mistreat you while you were at work?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. threaten your well-being or use force to get you to leave work?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. bother your coworkers or supervisor? (e.g., phone them)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. make it difficult for you to attend work (e.g., not show up for child care; steal your car keys; refuse to drive you to work; prevent you from sleeping the night before work)?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. physically restrain you to prevent you from going to work?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. threaten to injure you to prevent you from going to work?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. injure you so badly that you could not attend work?	0	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix GG

Cognitive Difficulties Scale

The following questions ask about your behavior at work in the past six months. Please answer the following questions by using the scale below and circling the appropriate number.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

In the past six months at work, I have ...

1. been slow to ‘catch on’ to what people are saying to me	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. had difficulty understanding written information (e.g., memos)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. felt unmotivated to get started on tasks	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. been unable to concentrate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. been “rusty” at things I use to do well	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. felt mentally alert and wide awake	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. found remembering work-related information or tasks difficult	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. felt capable of making decisions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. made mistakes when talking to my colleagues	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. made mistakes when talking to my immediate supervisor	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix HH

Neglect Scale

The statements below describe actions that employees take from time to time in the workplace. Please answer the following questions by using the scale below and circling the appropriate number.

Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Some of the time	Fairly often	Often	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

In the past six months at work, how often did you...

1. hope that any work-related problems would resolve themselves?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. not pass on messages to others?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. fail to attend scheduled meetings?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. allow others to do your work for you?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. do poor quality work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. stay out of sight to avoid work?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. work slower than you should have?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix II

Partial Absenteeism Scale

The statements below describe actions that employees take from time to time in the workplace. Indicate how often you have taken each action over the past six months.

Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Some of the time	Fairly often	Often	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Over the past six months at work, how often did you...

1. come in late?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. leave work early?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. spend time on the phone for non work-related reasons?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. take <u>unauthorized</u> extended lunch breaks?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. take <u>unauthorized</u> extended breaks?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix JJ

Frequency of Absenteeism Scale

People have many reasons for missing work. Most people miss an occasional day once in a while.

1. How many times did you miss scheduled work in the past six months (a half-day or longer counts as a single day)?

Count two or more consecutive days as one time. For example, if you missed three consecutive days, count this as one time.

Number of times you missed schedule work in the past six months: _____

Appendix KK

Thoughts of Quitting Scale

The statements below describe thoughts that employees may have, and actions that they may take, from time to time in the workplace. Indicate how often you have taken each action or had each thought over the past six months.

Never	Rarely	Once in a while	Some of the time	Fairly often	Often	All of the time
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Over the past six months, how often did you...

1. think about quitting your job?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. discuss leaving your job with a close friend?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. discuss leaving your job with a professional job counselor?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. discuss leaving your job with your supervisor?	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Appendix LL

Marital Adjustment Test

1. On a scale of 1 to 7, with the middle point, 4, representing the degree of happiness that most people get from their relationship, and the number 1 representing those people who are very unhappy in their relationship and the number 7 representing those people who experience extreme joy in their relationship... what number best represents the way you feel about your relationship?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Very Unhappy			Happy			Perfectly Happy

State the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner on the following items using the following scale.

Always Disagree	Almost always disagree	Frequently disagree	Occasionally disagree	Almost always agree	Always agree
0	1	2	3	4	5

- | | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|----|---|---|---|----|----|
| 2. | Handling family finances | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | Matters of recreation | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | Demonstrations of affection | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 |
| 5. | Friends | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. | Sex | 0 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 12 | 15 |
| 7. | Conventionality (right, good, or proper conduct) | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. | Philosophy of life | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. | Ways of dealing with in-laws | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. | When disagreements arise, they usually result in: | | | | | | |
| | Your partner giving in: | 0 | | | | | |
| | You giving in: | 2 | | | | | |
| | Agreement by mutual give and take: | 10 | | | | | |

11. Do you and your partner engage in outside interests together?
- | | |
|-------------------|----|
| All of them: | 10 |
| Some of them: | 8 |
| Very few of them: | 3 |
| None of them: | 0 |
12. In leisure time, do you generally prefer: To be on the go OR To stay at home
Does your partner generally prefer: To be on the go OR To stay at home
(Stay at home for both, 10 pts; on the go for both, 3 pts; disagreement, 2 pts)
13. Do you ever wish you had not married (or not moved in with your partner)?
- | | |
|--------------|----|
| Frequently | 0 |
| Occasionally | 3 |
| Rarely | 8 |
| Never | 15 |
14. If you had your life to live over again, do you think you would:
- | | |
|---|----|
| Marry (or live with) the same person | 15 |
| Marry (or live with) a different person | 0 |
| Not marry at all (not live with anyone) | 1 |
15. Do you ever confide in your partner:
- | | |
|----------------|----|
| Almost never | 0 |
| Rarely | 2 |
| In most things | 10 |
| In everything | 10 |