

Measuring Absence Cultures:  
An Examination of Absence Perceptions  
of Males and Females

by

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ABSTRACT

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(abstract)

Absenteeism was explored from a social psychological perspective. The purpose was to measure the absence cultures (Nicholson and Johns, 1985) of male and female employees through the use of policy capturing (Hobson and Gibson, 1983). Absence was split into three dimensions: Personal Health, Stress Relief, and Family Responsibility (Nicholson and Payne, 1987).

One hundred and two employees of a large southeastern university were used as subjects. They were asked to give their own opinion and their opinion of their organization's view about the inappropriateness / appropriateness of the absence behaviors in the 27 policy capturing vignettes. They were also asked to give their subjective weighting of how they used each dimension to make their overall rating.

Only 52.4% of the female captured policies and 48.8% of the male captured policies for own opinion were classified as meaningful. For organizational opinion, 45.7% of the female policies and 34.8% of the male policies were classified as meaningful. The non meaningful policies came from significantly older ( $p < .05$ ) employees than the employees who produced the meaningful policies. The large degree of non meaningfulness may be due to the vignettes being hypothetical and not organizational specific. It is suggested that the non meaningful policies may be measuring the psychological contract rather than the absence culture.

Cluster analysis, ordination procedures and discriminant analyses were performed on the own opinion data and the organizational opinion data. Two clusters were found for each set of data. The clusters were not based on gender as was hypothesized. For the organizational opinion data, there was a significant difference between clusters in terms of age. Employees were also unaware of the objective weighting they used to make their overall ratings, as was predicted by the policy capturing literature.

Although the gender effect was not supported, an age effect was found. It was hypothesized that older employees are influenced more by the psychological contract and younger employees were influenced more by the absence culture. This study also used policy capturing to study absence cultures, which was a new application of the technique.

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## Introduction

Absenteeism has been viewed from two perspectives, the individual prospective and the social psychological prospective. The individual perspective views absence as a function of the individual's ability and motivation to attend work (Steers and Rhodes, 1978). According to this view, the main force influencing absence is the employee's motivation to come to work. This motivation is tempered by ability to attend and pressures to attend. This explanation of absence, while considering external factors, focuses on the individual employee and his or her motivational state.

The individual approach has facilitated diverse attempts to assess the motivational state of the employee. For example, one approach is to examine the level of job satisfaction of the employee and to relate this level to the rate of absence. In a recent article examining the satisfaction / absenteeism relationship, Blau (1985) defined intrinsic satisfaction as satisfaction inherent in the job while extrinsic satisfaction was viewed as satisfaction with external factors such as pay, promotion and relations with others. Furthermore, unexcused absences were defined as absence that occurred without the permission of the employee's supervisor and excused absences were defined as absences that were authorized by the employee's supervisors. Blau found that extrinsic satisfaction was



negatively related to unexcused absences while intrinsic satisfaction exhibited a negative relationship with excused absenteeism.

Other researchers have noted that because absenteeism occurs in an organization, it is a social phenomenon (Walker, 1947; As, 1962; Chadwick-Jones, Nicholson, and Brown, 1982; Johns and Nicholson, 1982; and Johns, 1984). Social information in organizations is transmitted through the organization's culture. The social facts that the organization disseminates can be seen as "shared systems of meaning" (Smircich, 1983, p 160). This information is distributed through the social interactions of the members of the organization. Nicholson and Johns (1985) describe a system of meaning that pertains directly to absenteeism. Appropriately, this system is defined as the absence culture, which determines the appropriateness of absence behavior. That is, the absence culture provides a "mechanism for the reinforcement of the social order of the organization and its larger setting (Nicholson and Johns, 1985, p. 398)." The absence culture is important in establishing the psychological contract that links the employee and the organization. The psychological contract is a "mechanism by which collective influence is translated into individual behavior (Nicholson and Johns, 1985, p.398)." The benefits of the social psychological approach is that absence is not seen as a private behavior that can be understood without considering external factors and the

social context (Nicholson and Johns, 1985, p.397). Instead, the social psychological approach incorporates a consideration of the social context into its explanation of absenteeism.

The current study takes the social psychological approach to absence research. The purpose of the current study is to empirically measure absence cultures. Absence cultures exist on many different levels within an organization, allowing intraorganizational comparisons to be made. Male and female employees differ both in their absence behaviors and their attitudes about absenteeism. Walker (1947) reports that women are absent more than men, perhaps due to their "increased susceptibility to sicknesses" or because they were "newer to factory work than the men" (p. 213). This explanation is very dated and would not explain the differences in absence behaviors between male and female employees in today's workplace. Gibson (1966) also found that women were more likely to be absent than men. He explains this phenomenon by hypothesizing that females have less identification with the job than men because of domestic pressures. If the women employee is seriously committed to a career path, this pattern of increased absence should not hold true. Chadwick-Jones, et al. (1982) agree that women employees have more frequent absences than men and the causes of these absences are "family responsibilities, children and home maintenance (p. 121)." Accordingly, these patterns of absenteeism should change over the women employees' lifespan as domestic

responsibilities decrease. Nicholson and Payne (1987) found that male and female employees made different attributions about the cause of their absenteeism. Males seemed to attribute absenteeism to more stress relief factors, such as fights with co-workers and managers. The absence cultures of males should allow for absences due to stress relief causes, while the absence cultures of females should allow for absences due to family and domestic responsibilities.

Past research in organizational culture has used questionnaire techniques (e.g. Tucker and McCoy, c 1988). The use of questionnaires to measure organizational culture assumes that every organization or organizational subgroup has a culture or has a culture that is salient (Johns, 1984). James (1982, p. 223) notes that it is a fallacy to automatically assume that "true scores" for climate variables exist within an organization or subgroup. James (1982) also describes the aggregation bias that occurs in some climate studies. This occurs when mean scores are used as estimates of perceptual agreement among individuals (p.223). Means, in this case are being treated as individual level information. It is "a fallacy of the wrong level (p. 225)."

An alternative method that can be used is policy capturing (Hobson and Gibson, 1983). Policy capturing statistically describes the way raters use individual dimensions to come to an overall rating decision. Subjects look at profiles containing

ratings on various dimensions and assign an overall rating. Multiple regression is used to ascertain the relative importance of each dimension to the overall rating. The relative importance of dimensions is known as the captured rating policy (Hobson and Gibson, 1983 p. 640). The captured policy is obtained at the individual level, so policy capturing is not subject to the aggregation basis. Through policy capturing, it can be shown if an organization has a culture or does not have a culture, by examining the clusters of captured policies about absenteeism. (Aldenderfer and Blashfield, 1988). If a culture exists, it would be predicted that there would be little differences in captured policies. If a culture does not exist, there should be high variability among captured policies.

In summary, absenteeism may be examined from two research perspectives. One is the individual approach, which is concerned with the individual level variables such as the motivational state of the employee. This study takes the social psychological approach to absenteeism, by looking at absence cultures. Absence cultures may differ across organizations and within organizations. This study examines intraorganizational differences in absence cultures. In the current study, comparisons were made between male and female employees within the same organization. The subjects were non academic staff at a large sized university in the south eastern United States. These employees included lab specialists, lab mechanics and lab

technicians.

Policy capturing will be used as the measurement technique in the current study. The employees' captured policies about what kinds of absence behavior is appropriate will be clustered in order to determine if intraorganizational cultures exist. This method does not assume that some culture automatically exists within an organization, so the existence of an absence culture may be empirically tested.

### Literature Review

#### Absence as an Individual Level Phenomenon

Absenteeism is commonly viewed as a negative behavior. However, absenteeism has both negative and positive consequences at various levels (Goodman and Atkin, 1984). For the individual, absence may have positive effects. For example, stress caused by the job may be relieved or absence may allow workers to fulfill family responsibilities. The person may also benefit from non work activities that take priority over work, or have greater salience than work. Examples of this include amateur athletes who place their job in jeopardy in order to participate in athletic meets.

Individuals may also experience negative consequences of absenteeism, such as a loss of pay or punishment. When an individual is absent, there is a detriment in their familiarity with the work situation which may lead to more on the job

accidents (Hill and Trist, 1955; Goodman and Garber, 1988). There may also be a change in perceptions about the job. Being absent may lead employees to make attributions about the job to decrease the amount of dissonance between their job behavior and attitudes toward the job. This would be one way that employees could develop attitudes about the job that were far different than the actual job in question (Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982). These consequences are at the individual level, which is one perspective for examining absenteeism.

The prototypic individual motivation model of absenteeism is that of Steers and Rhodes' (1978). However, because of their focus on attendance, the model does not precisely address questions about absenteeism, which can be classified as voluntary/involuntary or as excused/unexcused. The voluntary/involuntary distinction is in the realm of the employee (Steers and Rhodes, 1978); the dichotomy is phrased in terms of the employee's actions. It is management who makes the excused/unexcused distinction (Johns and Nicholson, 1982).

Steers and Rhodes (1978) theorize that an employees' attendance behavior is based on attendance motivation and the ability to come to work. Attendance motivation is determined by pressures to attend and satisfaction with the job (Steers and Rhodes, 1978, p. 407). The main focus of this approach is the motivational state of the employee.

Zaccaro and Collins (1988) examined the differences between

excused and unexcused absences in normative organizations as related to organizational commitment, rank and interaction process. This is an individual approach to researching absenteeism because the motivational state of group members and its relationship to various types of absenteeism is being assessed. A normative organization is defined as an organization in which behavior is determined by compliance to norms, such as a fraternity. If excused/unexcused absences covaried with the other variables in a similar fashion, then they may not be orthogonal. In that case they could be treated as a unitary concept. Clegg (1983) argues against the idea of an underlying withdrawal construct that explains all withdrawal behaviors. There is additional evidence that excused and unexcused absence are two different constructs and are predicted by different variables. Zaccaro and Collins found that commitment was related to unexcused absenteeism but not to excused absence. Interaction process, defined as the kind of communication that exists among group members, was indirectly related to unexcused absenteeism. High interaction process would seem to foster communication of the absence culture more rapidly than low interaction process. This study showed that excused and unexcused absence are two different concepts and that organizational commitment could modify an employees motivation to attend.

Blau (1985) studied the relationship of extrinsic, intrinsic and demographic predictors on different types of withdrawal

behaviors, including excused absence, unexcused absence and a composite absence score. Extrinsic factors were operationally defined as pay, promotions, and the situational context, while intrinsic factors were defined as those that related directly to work (Blau, 1985, p. 443). Both the intrinsic and extrinsic variables were concerned with the employees' satisfaction with various aspects of the job. These intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction measures are in line with Steers and Rhodes's (1978) conceptualization of satisfaction with the job situation. Hence, this is an individual level approach to research on absenteeism. Blau found that extrinsic predictors had a negative relationship with unexcused absence. Intrinsic predictors had a negative relationship with excused absence that was for personal reasons. Demographic variables that tapped into family responsibilities predicted excused absence that was due to sickness in the employee's family. However, these relationships were not demonstrated with the composite absence score (Blau, p.442, 1985). In addition to the satisfaction results, Blau summarized unexcused and excused absence results. Blau's evidence, along with that of Zaccaro and Collins (1988) indicate that the distinction between excused and unexcused absence should be retained in the study of absenteeism.

The individual perspective also includes an examination of absenteeism as a trait. Johns (1984) discusses absence behavior in terms of the state vs. trait dichotomy. If all absence



behavior in an organization is due to one group of employees, cross situational consistency in absence behavior for these employees should be demonstrated. Johns' review of the literature indicated that cross situational consistency has not been shown for the so-called absence prone employee. Johns also reviews literature that indicates that membership in the absence prone employee group does not remain stable over time. Contrasting these results, Ivancevich (1988) found that previous absence behavior was a better predictor of future absence behavior than work attitudes. These studies were focused on absences as an individual behavior.

In summary, the individual approach has been used by numerous researchers. The important conclusion to draw is that although these researchers were concerned with individual motivations to attend work, they still considered the influence of external factors. The current study will focus on the external factors influencing absence behavior.

#### Absence as a Social Phenomenon

Co-workers, managers, the organization, the family unit and society may also influence absenteeism. It is clear that absenteeism does not occur within a vacuum. The social context of absenteeism is extremely important. There is an assumption among many psychologists of a social causation of absenteeism (As. 1962; Chadwick-Jones, Nicholson and Brown, 1982; Johns and Nicholson, 1982; Johns, 1984; Nicholson and Johns, 1985). In

brief, these researchers believe that absenteeism should be looked at in terms of social exchange (Chadwick-Jones, et al., 1982), instead of individual motivation. Through observation of absence behavior, it becomes apparent that there is a conformity to some kind of social norm, the absence culture (Nicholson and Johns, 1985). Thus, these researchers view Steers and Rhodes' concern for the individual's motivation as reductionalistic. They are concerned about the consideration of the social reality (Chadwick-Jones, et al., 1982, p. 13). Absenteeism, they contend, cannot be reduced to the neobehavioristic formula of S-O-R. This approach lends itself to fragmentary analysis in that it reduces absence behaviors to small S-R chains without sampling the full social domain of absenteeism. Considering Steers and Rhodes' concern for situational factors and pressures to attend, this criticism seems unduly harsh. Social exchange theory, however, because of its terminology and orientation, appears to be a better approach for examining organizational culture.

Under the assumption that explaining absence requires an understanding of the social and culture aspects of the environment, Johns and Nicholson (1982) initially defined the absence culture as:

"the set of shared understandings about absence  
legitimacy in a given organization and the established

'custom and practice' of employee absence behavior and its control (p. 136)."

Johns (1984) clarified this definition by that the absence culture including the social group norms as well as the organizational and managerial policies. Group norms would not be readily available to new employees. They would be related to the new employees by the current work force over time. This is part of the organizational socialization process (Louis, 1980). The organizational and managerial policies would be presented to organizational newcomers when they first joined the organization. Relating social group norms and managerial policies to Hackman's (1976) classification of environmental stimuli; some of the group norms may be discretionary stimuli, while the official policies would be ambient stimuli.

Nicholson and Johns (1985) indicate that the absence culture is dynamic and may develop over time. The absence culture consists of a societal and organizational component. The societal component involves beliefs about absence and assumptions about employment. The organizational component may influence how salient the absence culture is in that particular group.

The absence culture, which provides information, also helps to establish the psychological contract, which is the linkage between the employee and the organization. It is the general set of expectations of how the employee and the company are going to

interact with each other. The psychological contract determines the degree to which the organization and the employees trust each other. The psychological contract can be considered the conduit through which the group norms that make up the absence culture are expressed behaviorally by individuals. Action prompted by the absence culture, no matter how salient that culture, may be perhaps more restricted than attitudes because of the mediating aspect of the psychological contract. The confounding aspect of the psychological contract was not expected to taint the results of attitude research; however, the psychological contract may have affected the results of this study.

This concern with employees' attitudes about absenteeism instead of the actual behavior has been long overdue. Chadwick-Jones, et al., (1982) interviewed employees for explanatory reasons for absence. Johns and Nicholson (1982) suggested that future research look at the attributional process that goes on when employees make absence decisions. They note that absence has different meanings for different individuals (Johns and Nicholson, 1982, p. 142). However, under an absence culture, there should be more uniform perceptions of what is acceptable, because of the influence of the group norms.

Nicholson and Johns (1985) posit that there are four types of absence cultures; low salience/high trust cultures, high salience/high trust cultures, low salience/low trust cultures, and high salience/low trust cultures. The degree of trust an

employee has in his or her employee is a function of the psychological contract. The degree of trust should influence the expression of absenteeism. This is not the concern of the current study. The degree of trust inherent in the culture is not important in this case, it is the salience of the culture that is important.

Even though attitudes are the main concern in the proposed study, the definition of absenteeism must be clarified. Measuring absence behaviors is more difficult than it would initially seem. Mueller, et al (1987) have demonstrated that the correlation between employee self report and company absence records is very low. Nicholson and Payne (1987) have shown that attributions about the causes of absence may differ from the actual causes. Two other concerns must be considered. One is that the data on absence behavior should be across the same aggregation as the collection of the attitudinal data. The same employees must contribute both kinds of data. Secondly, the collection of the behavioral information is usually done in one wave which does not sample the cyclic nature of absenteeism. (Nicholson and Johns, 1982; Chadwick-Jones, et al., 1982). A good example is the seasonal trends in absenteeism. A longitudinal study tracing the absence behavior of a single group is the most desirable design to solve both of these problems.

The attitudinal data obtained in the current study must be interpreted with great caution and generalizations about absence

behavior should be kept at a minimum. These methodological problems, aside from Nicholson and Payne (1987), deal with the measurement of actual behavior. By focusing on perceptions and attitudes, most of these problems are avoided.

From the studies of the excused/unexcused distinction (Zaccaro and Collins, 1988; Blau, 1985) it can be hypothesized that absence cultures influences unexcused absence more than excused absence. Communication among employees seems to be related to unexcused absence (Zaccaro and Collins, 1988). Demographic variables and intrinsic factors predict excused absence (Blau, 1985). The influence of group norms is an extrinsic factor. It is the managers that make the distinction between excused and unexcused absence, so excused absence will probably appear to be more stable across absence cultures.

Gender and the Absence Culture Absence cultures can differ across organizations and can also differ within organizations. Two distinct subgroups within an organization are males and females. Male and female employees have been shown to exhibit differential rates of absenteeism (Walker, 1947; Gibson, 1966; and Chadwick-Jones, 1982). Male and female employees have also been shown to exhibit differential attributions about the cause of their absences (Nicholson and Payne, 1987).

Walker (1947) found that females are absent more than males and hypothesized that this was the case because most women were more newly employed than males and they were more prone to

sickness than males. These explanations must be examined critically. The sickness explanation may be a function of the time period in which the research was done. Gibson (1966) also found that females are more likely to be absent than males, but hypothesized that the cause was differential levels of work identification. Females were hypothesized to have less identification with their job than males because of their increased domestic responsibilities. However, Gibson notes that if a woman is truly committed to her career path, these patterns of increased absences may not manifest themselves.

Chadwick-Jones, et al. (1982) agree that females have more frequent absences than males and state that the causes are "family responsibilities, children and home maintenance (p. 121)." As a woman employee gets older, her domestic responsibilities decrease, so her patterns of absence behavior should also change.

Nicholson and Payne (1987) found that male and female employees give different reasons for their absence behaviors. Males attributed absence behaviors to stress relief factors, such as fights with co-workers and managers. The absence culture of male employees should allow for more stress relief related absences. The absence culture of female employees should allow for more family responsibility related absences.

Measuring the Absence Culture Policy capturing will be used to measure the absence cultures. It has several advantages over

questionnaire techniques. Variance is examined in policy capturing and not mean scores. Policy capturing does not assume, like questionnaire techniques, that cultures always exist. This technique allows for the existence of absence cultures to be empirically tested.

Policy capturing is a method for empirically determining how a rater makes a decision. It is used most prominently in performance appraisal research (Hobson and Gibson, 1983; McCoy, 1988). This method helps determine the "information processing behavior of raters" and compare "stated rating policies with those actually used" (Hobson and Gibson, 1983, p. 640).

Policy capturing can be broken down into a series of steps. The first stage involves establishment of profiles that differ along some component dimensions. These profiles are presented to the subjects with instructions to assign each profile an overall rating that reflects all of the information in the dimensions (Hobson and Gibson, 1983, p. 640). Then multiple regression is used to determine the importance of each dimension to the overall dimension. The regression equation from this process is defined as the "captured rating policy" (Hobson and Gibson, 198, p. 640). The captured policy objectively describes the rater's weightings of the individual dimensions that determine the overall rating. Research has shown that raters typically are not aware of the policies they used to make decisions (Zedeck and Kafry, 1977; Hobson and Gibson, 1983).



The captured policy may be grouped together on the basis of their similarities through the use of clustering techniques (Naylor and Wherry, 1965; Duran and Odell, 1974; Everitt, 1974; Zedeck and Kafry, 1977; Aldenderfer and Blashfield, 1988). Two clustering techniques that have been used are Judgment analysis (Naylor and Wherry, 1965) and hierarchical cluster analysis (Hobson, et. al, 1981). Research has shown that subgroups among the raters may have different rating policies (Naylor and Wherry, 1965; Zedeck and Kafry, 1977).

There are several methodological questions to be considered before embarking on policy capturing research. One is the hypothetical versus real ratee profile question. The benefit of using real profiles is that it increases the realism in the task (Taylor and Wilsted, 1974), but the potential pool of profiles is restricted and there may be a question of intraprofile comparability. Hypothetical profiles are the norm in policy capturing literature. They allow formulation of many profiles with the specific inter dimension relationships. However, they are artificial and may differ somewhat from real world situations (Hobson and Gibson, 1983).

There is a significant problem in interpreting the metric regression coefficient and standardized regression weights if there is multicollinearity between the dimensions (Zedeck and Kafry, 1977; Hobson, et al. 1981). The regression coefficients will become unstable. Increased multicollinearity will lead to

artificial increases in the coefficient of determination and the cluster analysis results may not be accurate (Hobson and Gibson, 1983). The solution has been to construct the profiles in such a manner that the dimensions are orthogonal. In this case, the squared regression weight can be used as a measure of the percent of variance that can be attributed to a given dimension.

There have also been questions about hierarchical cluster analysis (Harvey, 1986). The correct number of clusters are determined by "rules of thumb." Selection of the rule is left to the discretion of the researcher. A second problem is that an "unrealistic underlying structure may be forced on the data (Harvey, 1986, p. 269)." These problems are not easily overcome. However, they are not so severe that hierarchical cluster analysis should not be used. Another technique, ordination, will be used to check on the results of the cluster analysis.

#### Summary and Hypotheses

Two areas of absenteeism research have been examined in this review; the individual approach and the social psychological approach. The social psychological approach incorporated many of the concepts and terminology of organizational culture. This approach is concerned mainly with the absence culture (Nicholson and Johns, 1985). The main purpose of the present study is to empirically measure the perceptual norms relating to absence.

Two subcultures within an organization may be the male and

female employees (Walker, 1947; Gibson, 1966; Chadwick-Jones, et al., 1982; Nicholson and Payne, 1987). Male and female employees may very well have different absence cultures.

Organizational culture involves "shared systems of meaning" (Smircich, 1983, p. 160). Although, policy capturing has not been applied to measuring culture before, because it is a method of determining information processing behavior and culture is seen as based on differential and shared amounts of information, the method suits the topic. James (1982) cautions that an aggregation bias may exist in estimates of perceptual agreement when using mean scores. Policy capturing does not use mean scores so the "fallacy of the wrong level (1982, p. 225)" does not occur. The captured rating policy provides an objective description of the combination of dimensions that make up the overall rating score. Tucker and McCoy (1988) and Reynolds (1986) have described organizational culture in terms of various dimensions. Policy capturing methodology will objectively describe the most important dimensions of the absence culture. It also has the advantage of determining if an absence culture exists or does not exist in an organizational or sub organizational setting. This is determined by examining the clusters obtained in each situation. If there is great individual differences, which will be shown by a lack of a coherent cluster, there is no culture. If there is little individual differences, which will be shown by the formation of

a coherent cluster, there is evidence for the existence of a culture. This comparison of clusters will be intraorganizational (across the female and male employee).

Hypothesis I The clusters of males' captured policies about absenteeism will be significantly different in terms of location in dimensional space than the clusters of females' captured policies about absenteeism.

Hypothesis II In light of the policy capturing research, all employees will show a difference between their actual weightings of dimensions and their subjective determination of the dimension weighting.

## Method

### Study Design

Policy capturing questionnaires were distributed to male and female employees of a large southeastern state university. There were three dimensions used in the policy capturing; Personal Health, Family responsibilities and stress relief. These dimensions fall out of the attributions and explanations employees give for absence behavior (Nicholson, 1977; Chadwick Jones, et al., 1982; Nicholson and Payne, 1987). Dimensional items were split up into three levels. There were 27 combinations of dimensional variables. Only the dimensional variables differed within each vignette, so the sex of the worker remained constant (written as he/she, so the sex was neuter) as well as the frequency (3 times) and the duration (a 1 day period) of the absence behavior in the vignettes. The design was [3(personal health) x 3(dependent responsibilities) x 3(stress relief)] vignettes. Nunnally (1978) has suggested a ratio of ten profiles to each dimension (Hobson and Gibson, 1983). If the ratio is any lower, there is large sampling error and inflation of the coefficient of determination. The 27 vignettes are close to this cutoff point.

### Sample

The subjects were male and female staff employees in non academic jobs at a large southeastern university. Jobs in this

category included lab mechanics, lab specialists and lab technicians. All employees in the three job titles were asked to participate in this study. There were a total of 230 employees that were sent questionnaire packets.

#### Development of the Instrument

Development of the policy capturing questionnaire requires a pilot study to determine the appropriate content for the vignettes. Subjects rated each cause on a 9 point likert scale of inappropriate vs. appropriate. Inappropriate was specified as 1 and appropriate was specified as 9. Adjectives that are rated 1 or 2 were to be classified as inappropriate, while adjectives rated 5 were to be classified as neutral and adjectives that were rated as 8 or 9 were to be classified as appropriate. The pretest questionnaire is given in appendix a.

#### Procedure

Two hundred and thirty cover letters, informed consent forms, participation reward forms, policy capturing questionnaires, and demographic forms were sent to employees in order to get a good sampling distribution. After they were completed, the questionnaires, consent forms and participation reward forms were sent back to the researcher through intercampus mail. After two weeks, 65 follow up letters and additional questionnaires were sent to male non respondents to increase the male response rate.

After reading each vignette, the subject was asked to give

an overall rating of what they believed to be their organization's view of how appropriate the absence behavior was. They were also asked to give their own view on how appropriate the absence behavior was. At the end of the 27 vignettes, the subjects were asked to give a subjective rating of how they weighted the dimensions, by reporting the percentage they thought each dimension contributes to the overall rating. They were also asked to report demographic information. The information requested included age, educational level, marital status, tenure, and organizational title. Questionnaire return rates are higher if the demographic information is placed last (Roberson and Sundstrom, 1988).

#### Independent Variable

Gender: The independent variable was gender. Male and female employees were polled.

#### Dependent Variables

Own Rating: The "own rating" dependent variable was the overall rating subjects assigned to the absences in the vignettes based on their own standards of absence appropriateness. The rating range was from inappropriate to appropriate (1 - 9).

Organizational Rating: The "organizational rating" dependent variable was the overall rating subjects assigned to the absences in the vignettes based on their perceptions of their organization's standards of absence appropriateness. The rating range was from inappropriate to appropriate (1 - 9).

Subjective Weights: Subjects were asked to give a subjective rating of how important each of the three dimensions were in making the overall rating of the appropriateness of the absence behaviors in the vignettes. Subjects divided 100 points between Stress relief, Personal health, and Family responsibility dimensions.

#### Analysis

##### Policy Capturing

Each subjects' overall rating were regressed on the Stress relief, Personal Health, and Family responsibilities dimensions. The dimensions were effect coded (Pedhazur, 1982). Effect coding is used when using categorical variables in regression. Two new variables were constructed for each of the already existing variables. In effect coding, the number of new variables needed is the number of categories of the existing variable minus one (Pedhazur, 1982, p. 338). Each variable had three levels so six new variables were constructed. The two new variables for each old variable were coded as follows: 1, 0 for the low level of the original variable; 0, 1 for the medium level of the original variable; and -1, -1 for the high level of the original variable. Casual observation of this coding scheme may prompt the concern that differential coding (i.e, switching levels that are given a positive or negative code) would drastically change the results of the statistical analysis. This is not the case. This problem is resolved by relative weight theory, which will be discussed



shortly.

The resulting analysis produced six standardized regression weights and a squared multiple correlation coefficient ( $R^2$ ). Each  $R^2$  was determined to be "meaningful" if it was greater than .44. This assured that each regression equation explained at least .44 percent of the given variance. A test of significance was not used because the regression procedure violated the assumption of independence (all of the data in each multiple regression came from one subject). The meaningfulness / non meaningfulness distinction was decided on as an approximation of a significance test. While some may find fault with this approximation, more would find fault with the unthinking use of an inappropriate test.

The importance of each dimension was obtained through relative weight theory (McCoy, 1988). Hoffman's (1960) theory for relative weights was used. Through relative weights, the percentage of total predictable variance accounted for by each dimension can be found. The formula for relative weights is  $RW_{is} = B_{is} \times r_{is} / R^2_s$ .  $RW_{is}$  is the relative weight of the  $i$ th dimension for the  $s$ th rater,  $B_{is}$  is the Beta weight of the  $i$ th dimension,  $r_{is}$  is the validity coefficient of the  $i$ th dimension, and  $R^2_s$  is the squared multiple correlation coefficient of the  $s$ th rater. The validity coefficient was obtained by computing the Spearman correlation coefficient between the predictors and the criterion (the overall rating in question). This coefficient

acts to guard against any ill effects the negativeness or positiveness of the coding may have. After the six relative weights were obtained, the component variable relative weights were added together to produce three relative weights; one for each of the original variables. These three relative weights can be defined as the captured policy (McCoy, 1988). This combination was done to ease the later interpretation of the data. Advanced analysis (cluster analysis) was done on the six weights. Results were identical to that of cluster analysis of the three weights. The decision to use the three weights was an attempt to reduce the data to a more interpretable form. The RWiss sum to 1.00. They were multiplied by 100, so they could be compared to the subjective percentages supplied by the subjects.

#### Subjective vs. Objective Weights

A discrepancy index (Oskamp, 1967) was computed for each subject to compare their objective and subjective ratings. The discrepancy index is the mean absolute difference between the objective and subject weights (McCoy, 1988). Three discrepancy indices were computed for each subject that had a significant policy. They were the stress relief index, personal health index, and family responsibility index. These indices were compared against zero in univariate t tests. A significant finding indicates that the subjective and objective weights were dissimilar.

### Cluster Analysis

A hierarchical cluster analysis was performed on the own opinion relative weights and on the organizational opinion relative weights. The purpose of the cluster analysis was to group similar policies together. The hypothesis was that males having similar absence cultures, would cluster together and females, having similar absence cultures, would cluster together. Hierarchical cluster analysis "combines individual rating policies to minimize intragroup differences and maximize intergroup differences (McCoy, p. 54, 1988)." Instead of having many individual policies, it was predicted that there would be two composite groups of policies.

The F test developed by Bottenberg and Christal (1968) was used as the criterion for determining how many clusters were obtained from the data. The equation is  $( (R2s - R2s + 1) / (1 - R2s) ) ( (N - (k - s) p / p) )$  where  $R2s$  = composite maximum predictive efficiency at iteration  $s$ ,  $R2s + 1$  = maximum predictive efficiency at iteration  $s + 1$ ,  $k$  = total number of raters,  $s$  = iteration,  $N$  total number of observations (profiles  $\times$  total number of raters)  $P$  = the number of dimensions and  $df = (p, N - (k - p)p)$  (Naylor and Wherry, p. 971, 1965).

### Ordination

Harvey (1986) warns that cluster analysis techniques may force the data into nonexistent clusters. Milligan and Cooper (1987) offer many alternatives to hierarchical cluster analysis

in terms of clustering techniques. Sokal (1974) recommends ordination as a classification technique because of its successful usage in the biological sciences. Milligan and Cooper list ordination as an alternative to hierarchical cluster analysis. Ordination was chosen as the technique to check on the clustering results.

Milligan and Cooper (1978) explain that the purpose of ordination is to create a dimensional representation of the data. Usually, the number of dimensions used is less than the dimensions in the data. Ordination supplies only a spatial representation of the data. Interpretation of the spatial representation is left to the discretion of the experimenter. The situation is similar to that in factor analysis in which the researcher must supply the labels for the factors. This method is used as a checking procedure instead of a primary procedure because of the subjective nature of the data labelling.

## Results

### Pretest

Subjects in the pretest were graduate students in industrial organizational psychology and applied experimental psychology. 27 questionnaires were distributed and 17 were returned (a return rate of 62.9%). There was range restriction in the data, so inappropriate was redefined as 1 to 2, neutral was defined as 2 to 3, and appropriate was defined as 3 to 5 on the 9 point

inappropriate to appropriate scale.

For the stress dimension, the low levels were conflict over new equipment ( $M=1.5$ ), conflict over new work assignment ( $M=1.7$ ), and conflict with employees in other areas ( $M=1.7$ ). The medium levels were sporting event ( $M=2.5$ ) and an event of local interest (a party) ( $M=2.5$ ). The high levels for the stress dimension were feeling depressed ( $M=4.1$ ) and a need to rest after a period of intense work ( $M=4.2$ ).

The low levels for the personal health dimension were runny nose ( $M=1.5$ ) and feeling "stuffed up" ( $M=1.8$ ). The medium levels were headache ( $M=2.8$ ) and muscle ache ( $M=2.3$ ). The high levels for the personal health dimension were stomach ache ( $M=4.2$ ) and mild nausea ( $M=4.5$ ). The low level for family responsibility is errands ( $M=1.7$ ). The medium level was waiting for telephone repair personnel ( $M=2.8$ ). The high levels for family responsibility were visiting a sick relative ( $M=4.7$ ) and child's sore throat ( $M=4.0$ ).

When there was more than one example per level, they were alternated between vignettes. The dimensions were randomized across vignettes. Appendix b is the policy capturing questionnaire.

#### Policy\_Capturing

Out of 230 questions distributed, 102 usable questionnaires were returned (a return rate of 44%). Fifty nine subjects were female and 43 were male. In the original subject pool there

were 123 females and 107 males. The return rate for females was 47.9% and the return rate for males was 40.1%.

The captured policies are given in tables 1 - 4. The captured policies for females' own opinion are given in table 1. The 31 policies reported the ones classified as meaningful. This was 52.4% of the female policies for own opinion. The captured policies for females on organization's opinion are given in table 2. The 27 policies reported are the ones classified as meaningful. This was 45.7% of the female policies for organization's opinion.

The captured policies for males on own opinion are given in table 3. 48.8% of the male policies for own opinion were classified as meaningful. The captured policies for males on organization's opinion are given in table 4. 34.8% of the male policies for organization's opinion were classified as meaningful.

The number of captured policies that were classified as meaningful ranged from 34.8% to 52.4%. Even the largest percentage is small in comparison to the norm in the policy capturing literature. The low percentage of meaningful policies must not be regarded lightly. It is most likely due to the vignettes not totally capturing all of the variables that comprise absenteeism in the organization. Several subjects provided feedback that the vignettes did not address specific absence policies of the organization (i.e., sick leave and annual

leave). The employees who had non meaningful policies may have relied on these organizational policies in making their overall rating.

It was not known if the meaningful / non meaningful employees differed on any other variables, so exploratory t tests were performed on demographic variables. These t tests were performed on the own opinion meaningful vs. non meaningful policy subjects and the organizational opinion meaningful vs. non meaningful policy subjects. There was a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the mean age of meaningful ( $M = 33.76$ ,  $SD = 7.50$ ) vs non meaningful ( $M = 37.69$ ,  $SD = 11.01$ ) policy subjects for own opinion data. There was also a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the mean tenure of meaningful ( $M = 6.52$ ,  $SD = 7.20$ ) vs. non meaningful ( $M = 8.70$ ,  $SD = 9.32$ ) policy subjects for organizational opinion data. There also was a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the mean age of meaningful ( $M = 34.80$ ,  $SD = 7.10$ ) vs. non meaningful ( $M = 36.17$ ,  $SD = 10.99$ ) policy subjects for organizational opinion data. There was also a significant difference ( $p < .05$ ) in the mean tenure of meaningful ( $M = 6.82$ ,  $SD = 6.64$ ) vs. non meaningful ( $M = 8.08$ ,  $SD = 9.45$ ) policy subjects for organizational opinion data.

Age of the subject seems to be a factor in whether in not they produced meaningful policies. The statistical techniques carried on from this point must be interpreted with a critical eye in light of the meaningful policies question. There is a

possibility that norms may lose their salience as employees' tenure increases. For the first few years, employees seem to be influenced by absence culture, as indicated by their significant policies. Later on, as the employees have more tenure in the organization, the absence culture may influence their perceptions less, as indicated by their non significant policies.

#### Objective vs Subjective Weights

Oskamp's (1967) discrepancy index was used to compare the objectively derived and subjectively derived weights. It was predicted that subjects would be unaware of the weightings they used to make their overall ratings. The discrepancy index was computed for the total number of significant policies, male significant policies and female significant policies. This information is summarized in tables 5 - 7. The discrepancy indices were tested against zero in t tests. All objectively derived weights were significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) than the subjectively obtained weights except for two. Male's family responsibility weights for their own opinion were not significantly different. Female's family responsibility weights for their organization's opinion were not significantly different. Males seem to be aware of their own weightings concerning family responsibility. Females seem to be aware of the expectations the organization has for them in terms of family responsibility. However, eighteen t tests were performed and the two significant results may be due to experiment wise error.



### Cluster Analysis

It was predicted that for the two sets of relative weights, a male and female cluster would result from the cluster analysis. Hierarchical cluster analyses were performed on the data. It was hypothesized that the captured policies would be iteratively combined until two homogeneous composite clusters would appear.

The composite R2 obtained at each iteration "provided information about the drop in predictive efficiency caused by further combining rater policies (McCoy, p. 67., 1988). The reduction in composite R2 obtained at each iteration was tested using Bottenberg and Christal's (1968) modified F test. Table 8 gives the reduction in composite R2 for own opinion ratings. Table 9 gives the reduction in composite R2 for organization opinion ratings. The composite R2's, degrees of freedom and F values are shown in the tables. The greatest decrease in composite R2 was between the second and first clusters in both cases. In both cases, two clusters were accepted as the best clustering solution. These two clusters, in both cases, were not male and female. For own opinion cluster 1, 64% of the subjects were females and 36% of the subjects were males. For own opinion cluster 2, 53.8% of the subjects were females and 46.2% of the subjects were males. For organizational opinion cluster 1, 61% of the subjects were females and 39% of the subjects were males. For organizational opinion cluster 2, 70% of the subjects were females and 30% of the subjects were males. The first

hypothesis, that male and females' captured policies would cluster based on gender was not supported.

Table 10 gives the demographic and descriptive information for the two own opinion clusters. Demographically, cluster 1 (n = 25) and cluster 2 appear to be very similar. Table 11 gives the demographic and descriptive information for the two organizational opinion clusters. Cluster 1 (n = 31) appears to be the "young" cluster with a mean age of 33.54. Cluster 2 (n = 10) with a mean age of 38.00 would be classified as the "old" cluster. These results are especially intriguing when the age difference between meaningful and non meaningful policy subjects is considered. The data does not show a gender effect, as hypothesized, but does show an age effect.

It is interesting to examine relative weights for the four clusters. For the own opinion cluster 1, stress relief is weighted most highly (M = 59.37) personal health is weighted lowest (M = 6.47) and family responsibility is weighted in between (M = 27.46). For the own opinion cluster 2, Stress relief (M = 15.66) and personal health (M = 15.47) are weighted similarly and family responsibility has the heaviest weighting (M = 68.30). For the organizational opinion cluster 1, personal health is weighted the lowest (M = 10.72), stress relief is weighted in between (M = 23.01) and family responsibility is weighted the highest (M = 63.91). For organizational opinion cluster 2, personal health was weighted the least (M = 13.37).

Family responsibility was weighted in the middle ( $M = 14.26$ ) and Stress relief was weighted the highest ( $M = 67.96$ ). Organizational opinion cluster 2's mean age was significant older ( $p < .05$ ) than organizational cluster 1.

Across the four clusters, the personal health dimension was consistently weighted the least. The two other dimensions differed across the four clusters. The weightings of stress relief and family responsibility cannot be compared directly across the own opinion and organization opinion clusters because cluster 1 membership and cluster 2 membership was not consistent across the own opinion and organizational opinion data.

The differences between the organizational opinion clusters are more interpretable because the two clusters differ in mean age. It makes sense that cluster 1 ( $M$  age = 33.54) subjects would weigh family responsibility more than the older cluster 2 subjects. Cluster 1 subjects' children would be more likely be young and require more attention. Cluster 2 subjects ( $M$  age = 38.00) rate the stress relief dimension the highest. These subjects children are most likely older and they are more experienced at handling household chores. Stressors at work would then be more likely to prompt absence behavior.

#### Ordination

Two ordination procedures were performed to check on the cluster analysis results concerning gender. One was on relative weights for own opinion (figures 1-3) and the other was on the

relative weights for organization's opinion (figures 4-6). The grouping variable in both cases was gender. The dimensional space was reduced by plotting the three dimensions in two dimensional space. The relative weight for stress relief was plotted against the relative weight for personal health. The relative weight for personal health was plotted against the relative weight for family responsibility and the relative weight for stress relief was plotted against the relative weight for family responsibility. This method assured that although the data was being plotted in  $n-1$  dimensional space, all possible relationships would become apparent. From examination of the 6 diagrams, no gender specific clusters are apparent. The solution in ordination is based on the researcher's interpretation of the spatial representation of the data. At the bare minimum, to fulfill a cluster criterion, the data must show a clear grouping in terms of the variable of interest. This was not the case with this data. The lack of evidence for male or female clusters from ordination confirms the hierarchical cluster analysis results. However, ordination is a subjective procedure. It is up to the researcher to determine how many clusters exist on the plot. Discriminant analysis was used as a check on the ordination procedure and cluster analysis. A discriminant analysis using gender as the grouping variable was run on the own opinion and organizational opinion data. The prior lack of support for any clusters lead to the hypotheses that there would

be no significant discriminant functions in either data set. This was the case. The three techniques used agreed that there did not appear to be clusters based on gender,

#### Ordination\_for\_Age

The finding of an age effect made additional ordination procedures appropriate. Age of the subject was coded into three categories. For own opinion data, the categories were 22 - 29 years (29.4% of the data), 30 - 34 years (39.2% of the data), and 35 - 62 years (31.4% of the data). For organizational opinion data, the categories were 22 - 30 years (33.3% of the data), 31 - 38 years (33.3% of the data), and 39 - 42 (33.3% of the data). The data might have been coded into an old and young category, but it was felt this trichotomization provided more information.

An ordination procedure was performed on the relative weights obtained for the own opinion data (figures 7-9) and on the relative weights for the organizational opinion data (figures 10-12). The cluster demographics indicates that the own opinion data should not cluster on age. There should be age differences in the organizational opinion data according to the cluster analysis results.

Examining figures 7 through 9, there does not appear to be any homogeneous clusters. In figures 10 through 12, the most apparent cluster appears in the left hand side of figure 11. This cluster has been circled on the figure. This subjectively derived cluster consists of 5 of the oldest category and 3 of the

mid range category. There are 13 of 14 oldest category members in this figure and 38.4% are clustered in this area. There are 12 of 14 mid range category members in this figure and 25% are clustered in this area. 14 youngest category members are in this figure and none are in this temporal location. Three cluster members are hidden. This is the plot of the stress relief dimension versus the family responsibility dimension. These are the dimensions that differ the most for the two organizational opinion clusters. It is obvious that this is the plot that any clusters that might exist would appear on. This ordination procedure confirms the cluster analyses' solutions.

Discriminant analysis was also used in this case to check of the outcome of the ordination procedure. The trichotomized age variable was used as the grouping variable in the discriminant analyses run on the own opinion and organizational opinion data. From the prior findings, it was hypothesized that there would be no significant discriminant functions found in the own opinion data and at least one significant discriminant function would be found in the organizational opinion data. The results matched the hypotheses. There were no significant discriminant functions in the own opinion data and there was one significant discriminant function in the organizational opinion data.

#### Discussion

The important results of this research are threefold. The

first was that there was a low percentage of captured policies that were classified as meaningful. The non meaningful policies came from subjects that were significantly older and had significantly more tenure in the organization. The hierarchical cluster analysis produced 2 clusters for both sets of ratings. These clusters were not based on gender as was hypothesized. For the organizational opinion rating, the smaller cluster consisted of significantly older employees than the larger cluster. The ordination procedure for gender did not produce any clusters, based on gender or otherwise. The ordination procedure for age confirmed the findings of an age effect. The discriminant analysis results were in line with the cluster analysis and ordination results. For the most part, the subjects were not aware of the weightings they used to make their decisions about the appropriateness of absenteeism

In regards to the low number of significant policies, there are several possible reasons that this would occur. On the basic level, employees with non significant policies may have needed information that was not in the vignettes to make their overall ratings. It was hoped that the information contained in the vignettes would provide enough information to measure the absence culture. However, employees may have been influenced by other factors besides the absent culture in making their ratings.

There are several theories that may explain what external forces were exerting an influence on the ratings. Gibson (1966)

notes that female perceptions about the appropriateness of absence behavior may change over their careers. Generalizing this concept, perhaps all workers change their perceptions about the appropriateness of absenteeism as their careers progress and their commitments, concerns and responsibilities change. However, this change would not necessarily prompt a change in variance accounted for by their captured policies, it may in fact lead to a change in the relative weights.

An alternative theory could be that as employees become more familiar with the organization, they learn more about the policies of the company and become more entrenched into the psychological contract (Nicholson and Johns, 1985). To review, the absence culture is the social group norms employees hold concerning absence behavior. This is opposed to the psychological contract, which consists of the organizational policies and procedures concerning absenteeism. It is the linkage between the employee and the organization (Nicholson and Johns, 1985). As employees get older, they have less and less job alternatives and may be more rigid in conforming to the organizational policies and less interested in the employee norm based absence culture. They would strive to protect their vested interest.

Louis' (1980) research on the organizational socialization process may also apply as an alternative explanation of these findings. Younger employees may have generalized perceptions



about absenteeism they bring with them to the organization, while older employees may rely more on the psychological contract (Nicholson and Johns, 1985) to base their judgments. It would appear, if this were the case, that the policy capturing questionnaire was more directed to generalized opinions about absenteeism rather than organizational policies. This was the purpose of the questionnaire; it was intended as a measure of the absence culture and not the psychological contract. Several subjects provided feedback that indicated that the questionnaire was not concerned with actual absence policies of the organization. This was the intent from the outset. By making the questionnaire too organizational policy specific, it was feared that the psychological contract would confound the culture measure. Also, by setting up artificial vignettes, the orthogonality of dimensions principle of policy capturing (Hobson and Gibson, 1983) was fulfilled. However, this was obviously at the cost of reducing the realism of the vignettes.

The policy capturing technique still has merit in exploring cultural issues. In the future, instructions must be less hypothetical, and more in line with actual absence scenarios in that organization. The concern in the current study was that by specifying the situation too much, possible variance differences would be minimized. In the future, it is suggested that vignettes directly concern unexcused absences, because it is highly likely that it is that type of absence that would be most

affected by the absence culture. Zaccaro and Collins (1988) found that communication within the organization is indirectly related to unexcused, not excused absence. This indicates that unexcused absences should be specified in future vignettes of this type.

The number of meaningful policies question limits the utility of the cluster analysis findings as well as the ordination results. However, there are two important and relevant results to report. The first is a methodological issue. Cluster analysis is not a fully defined technique. There is no one accepted clustering technique or criterion for determining the number of clusters (Aldenderfer and Blashfield, 1986). It is suggested that researchers use more than one technique. The second technique can act as a check on the first technique. This study has used cluster analysis, ordination and discriminant analysis,

The second finding of interest is that absence cultures may differ on the basis of age and tenure. There is strong evidence of a difference in absence perceptions in terms of age and tenure effects on significance of captured absence culture policies. Also, the clusters obtained from the analysis of the meaningful policy organizational ratings included a younger employee ( $M=33.54$ ) and older ( $M=38.00$ ) employee cluster.

At first, it may seem difficult to reconcile these two findings. The first finding, significance versus non significance, can be explained in terms of the absence culture

governing employee perceptions or the psychological contract governing employee perceptions. Younger employees would seem to use the absence culture in making decisions about the appropriateness of different absence behaviors. Older employees may be using the psychological contract to make decisions about the appropriateness of different absence behaviors.

The own opinion ratings are more likely to tap social norms than the organizational opinion ratings. In fact, the organizational opinion ratings may be in reality a measure of the psychological contract, which is concerned with what the organization expects of the employee (Nicholson and Johns, 1985). In general, older employees have non meaningful policies. The older employees who do have meaningful policies differ from the young employees only in terms of the organizational opinion ratings. Either the organizational opinion ratings are also measures of the psychological contract, or two absence cultures exist within the organization; one for older employees and one for younger employees. It is more likely the organizational opinion ratings tap into the psychological contract.

If the vignettes are modified to use unexcused absence as the stimulus behavior and to be more directly linked to the specific job situation, the age effect should be even more pronounced. These changes will make the technique a better measure of the absence culture. It is hypothesized that older employees are governed by the absence culture less than new employees. If a

better measure of the absence culture is used, older employees will be much more likely to get non significant policies. In this scenario, the organizational opinion ratings, being measures of the psychological contract, would be hypothesized not to produce significant policies.

For the most part, support was shown for the second hypothesis. Employees were not aware of the weightings they used except in two cases. Male employees were aware of the weightings they used in regards to the family responsibility dimension when making their own judgment. Females were aware of the weightings they used for family responsibility when making the organization's rating. While these are interesting findings, one must be wary of experimentwise error, which may plague any researcher doing a long series of statistical tests. Eighteen univariate t tests have been performed. The two significant ones may be due to chance. The important finding is that the three total comparisons were significantly different. This follows along the lines of the policy capturing literature.

Post hoc comparisons of the own opinion and organizational opinion relative weightings were undertaken. A combination score for each of the three variables was obtained by subtracting the absolute value of the organizational opinion weighting from the absolute value of the own opinion weighting. These three combination scores were compared against zero. The combination scores for family responsibility and stress relief were

significantly different than zero ( $p < .05$ ). It is only on the personal health weighting that the employees show congruence between their own opinion and what they believe their organization's opinion to be. Both are self report data. In the future it would be intriguing to obtain an objective measure of the "organization's" opinion and compare it to the employees' self report.

Absence culture research in the future should proceed in a definite direction. Unexcused absence should be specified as the stimulus in the vignettes. The effect of age on the absence culture should be examined. The role of gender in the absence culture is still unclear and should be further studied. A number of clustering techniques should be employed to make sure that any clusters that are found are not artifacts of the statistical procedure.

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Table 1  
Captured Policies for Females on own opinion

<u>ID</u>	<u>Stress</u>	<u>Personal Health</u>	<u>Family Resp.</u>	<u>R2</u>
3	58.74	31.99	11.07	.447
4	21.91	0.30	77.50	.610
5	2.09	14.82	82.70	.746
6	45.19	0.97	52.42	.921
9	0.94	41.53	56.83	.487
11	62.40	3.82	37.24	.543
12	79.51	8.19	9.93	.542
13	5.71	15.43	77.95	.608
15	63.10	6.88	28.86	.706
16	14.13	1.21	81.64	.726
19	40.73	2.36	53.58	.627
24	42.77	2.95	55.82	.542
25	54.88	4.79	41.55	.780
26	14.49	20.87	64.49	.444
28	63.38	23.54	9.29	.672
35	73.84	0.55	25.53	.632
36	17.55	8.08	76.16	.533
37	45.81	2.27	51.00	.529
38	90.36	4.73	4.73	.700
40	56.31	3.57	42.89	.449
41	14.15	32.61	50.33	.447
43	25.68	6.99	60.96	.637
46	7.13	7.13	85.62	.666
47	46.91	-0.31	65.65	.510
52	78.84	1.10	19.44	.731
53	17.91	2.76	84.25	.486
54	18.43	46.35	34.44	.479
55	19.27	1.69	76.54	.568
56	70.61	0.86	25.60	.526
58	13.77	29.80	54.27	.761
59	5.98	2.64	87.33	.902

N = 31

Table 2

Captured Policies for Females on organization's opinion

<u>ID</u>	<u>Stress</u>	<u>Personal Health</u>	<u>Family Resp.</u>	<u>R2</u>
2	29.81	0.0	73.51	.666
3	49.62	38.21	9.60	.486
4	12.69	-0.13	83.25	.561
6	35.42	0.44	60.28	.988
7	58.76	3.68	39.89	.528
9	0.94	41.53	56.83	.487
12	65.06	14.96	20.00	.666
15	43.78	12.26	50.06	.474
16	8.56	0.29	88.01	.797
17	1.22	81.28	6.91	.516
19	33.38	1.41	61.68	.613
22	44.74	2.70	52.76	.537
24	41.18	0.53	55.27	.594
25	33.75	0.49	64.50	.801
26	43.24	1.42	55.79	.605
27	94.28	2.89	1.66	.534
28	57.88	24.43	16.85	.808
35	51.48	5.54	42.33	.591
36	38.69	6.57	60.11	.572
37	35.32	3.75	63.01	.683
38	85.62	7.13	7.13	.666
41	34.53	27.42	34.53	.438
53	17.07	1.43	89.36	.453
55	10.71	0.52	85.21	.573
56	77.30	3.33	19.91	.578
58	7.10	33.61	57.57	.688
59	0.39	2.08	89.08	.969

N = 27

Table 3  
Captured Policies for Males on own opinion

<u>ID</u>	<u>Stress</u>	<u>Personal Health</u>	<u>Family Resp.</u>	<u>R2</u>
60	20.83	61.68	18.26	.621
61	90.04	1.35	7.95	.691
64	20.77	30.19	47.99	.636
68	8.15	6.48	81.96	.703
71	15.08	1.76	85.16	.483
73	53.40	11.83	33.93	.651
74	20.71	5.61	71.25	.603
75	25.15	3.22	72.39	.464
76	25.15	3.22	72.39	.464
80	47.16	1.30	46.65	.605
82	19.49	5.47	73.31	.628
83	6.28	32.06	56.62	.612
85	27.62	4.01	80.81	.529
87	50.54	0.26	50.54	.482
89	20.28	1.07	79.78	.700
92	50.30	9.40	37.41	.644
94	73.19	8.25	16.95	.694
95	20.48	15.46	62.26	.603
96	47.52	40.45	11.22	.442
98	3.39	9.52	87.90	.605
101	95.21	1.03	3.47	.784

N = 21

Table 4

Captured Policies for Males on organization's opinion

<u>ID</u>	<u>Stress</u>	<u>Personal Health</u>	<u>Family Resp.</u>	<u>R2</u>
60	26.03	29.23	45.11	.567
61	77.20	10.08	13.83	.530
64	15.66	32.35	49.54	.656
68	25.43	9.92	67.87	.567
74	5.80	0.65	96.91	.493
80	46.31	1.87	48.25	.654
82	14.74	0.89	84.88	.697
83	3.90	28.18	65.87	.522
84	4.30	4.31	90.25	.845
87	50.54	0.26	50.54	.482
89	25.86	0.10	74.20	.636
94	43.90	29.21	22.60	.522
95	15.60	20.28	62.09	.595
98	4.99	14.06	79.80	.857
101	85.30	4.33	6.86	.755

N = 15

Table 5  
 Objectively vs. subjectively derived dimensional weighting  
 comparisons for total significant policies (discrepancy scores  
 are reported)

Dimensions	Rating			
	Own Opinion_a		Company's opinion_b	
	M	SD	M	SD
Stress Relief	20.31*	3.71	19.54*	3.84
Family Respons.	9.34*	3.74	10.06*	4.96
Personal Health	-30.66*	2.47	-32.46*	3.09

a n=52

b n=42

\*  $p < .05$

Table 6  
 Objectively vs. subjectively derived dimensional weighting  
 comparisons for Male significant policies (discrepancy scores  
 are reported)

Dimensions	Ratings			
	Own Opinion a		Company's Opinion b	
	M	SD	M	SD
Stress Relief	21.84*	5.46	15.02*	6.23
Family Respons.	8.02	5.86	16.61*	7.21
Personal Health	-31.68*	4.34	-35.28*	4.59

a = 21

b = 15

\*  $P < .05$

Table 7  
 Objectively vs. subjectively derived dimensional weightings  
 comparisons for female significant policies (discrepancy scores  
 are reported)

Dimensions	Rating			
	Own Opinion a		Same as Opinion b	
	M	SD	M	SD
Stress Relief	19.24*	5.09	22.14*	4.89
Family Respons.	10.26*	4.95	6.28	6.61
Personal Health	-29.94*	2.96	-30.84*	4.12

a n=31

b n=27

\*  $p < .05$



Table 8

Reduction in composite R2 for own opinion ratings a

Iteration	# of clusters	R2	R2i - R2i - 1	df	F
1	51	1.000			
2	50	.999	.000	(3, 1254)	.00
.	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.	.
.	.	.	.	.	.
46	6	.904	.019	(3, 1386)	7.53
47	5	.869	.035	(3, 1389)	33.10
48	4	.765	.104	(3, 1392)	7.25
49	3	.647	.118	(3, 1395)	4.217
50	2	.521	.126	(3, 1398)	210.60
51	1	.000	.521	(3, 1401)	507.97b

a n = 52

b n = largest decrease in R2

Table 9

Reduction in composite R2 for company opinion ratings a

Iteration	#_of clusters	R2	R2i - R2i - 1	df	F
1	41	.999			
2	40	.999	.000	(3, 1014)	.00
.	.	.	.	.	
.	.	.	.	.	
.	.	.	.	.	
36	6	.911	.019	(3, 1116)	14.03
37	5	.855	.056	(3, 1119)	3.55
38	4	.790	.065	(3, 1122)	24.40
39	3	.664	.126	(3, 1125)	11.58
40	2	.511	.153	(3, 1128)	158.92
41	1	.000	.511	(3, 1131)	393.19b

a n = 42

b n = largest decrease in R2

Table 10  
Cluster\_demographics\_for\_own\_opinion\_clusters

	<u>Cluster_1_a</u>		<u>Cluster_2_b</u>	
	M	SD	M	SD
Age	33.79	6.54	33.96	8.48
Tenure	6.73	6.85	6.38	7.82
children at home	.91	1.13	.57	.90
total children	1.04	1.19	.73	1.00
Relative weight for Stress relief	59.37	19.73	15.66	7.51
Relative weight for Personal health	6.47	10.77	15.47	16.50
Relative weight for Family respons.	27.46	25.41	68.30	17.09
Subjective weight for Stress relief	17.29	9.20	14.84	8.16
Subject weight for Personal health	43.41	11.74	40.53	15.70
Subjective weight for Family respons.	39.29	11.58	44.61	16.30
<u>Frequencies Education</u>				
Some high school	0		4.0%	
High school diploma	0		4.0%	
Trade school	4.2%		8.0%	
some college	16.7%		12.0%	
college degree	33.3%		28.0%	
some graduate school	4.2%		28.0%	
Master's Degree	41.7%		12.0%	
Ph.D	0		4.0%	
<u>Marital_status</u>				
Single	16.7%		23.1%	
Married	70.8%		73.1%	
Separated	4.2%		0	
Divorced	8.3%		3.8	

a n = 25 (females = 16 males = 9)  
 b n = 26 (females = 14 males = 12)

Table 11  
Cluster demographics for company opinion clusters

	<u>Cluster 1_a</u>		<u>Cluster 2_b</u>	
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>
Age	33.54	6.74	38.00	7.46
Tenure	6.35	6.42	6.75	6.13
children at home	.87	1.14	0.80	1.03
total children	.93	1.18	1.10	1.10
Relative weight for Stress relief	23.01	16.19	67.98	19.34
Relative weight for Personal health	10.72	17.77	13.37	10.14
Relative weight for Family respons.	63.91	18.79	14.26	10.76
Subjective weight for Stress relief	13.73	8.99	17.50	9.50
Subject weight for Personal health	46.60	14.52	38.50	10.28
Subjective weight for Family respons.	39.66	14.49	44.00	10.74

Frequencies

Education

Some high school	0	0
high school diploma	3.2%	0
Trade school	6.5%	10.0%
some college	6.5%	20.0%
college degree	35.5%	0
some graduate school	16.1%	10.0%
Master's degree	25.8%	60.0%
Ph.d	6.5	0

Marital status

Single	12.9%	10.0%
Married	77.4%	60.0%
Separated	0	10.0%
Divorced	9.7%	20.0%

a n = 31 (females = 19 males = 12)

b n = 10 (females = 7 males = 3)

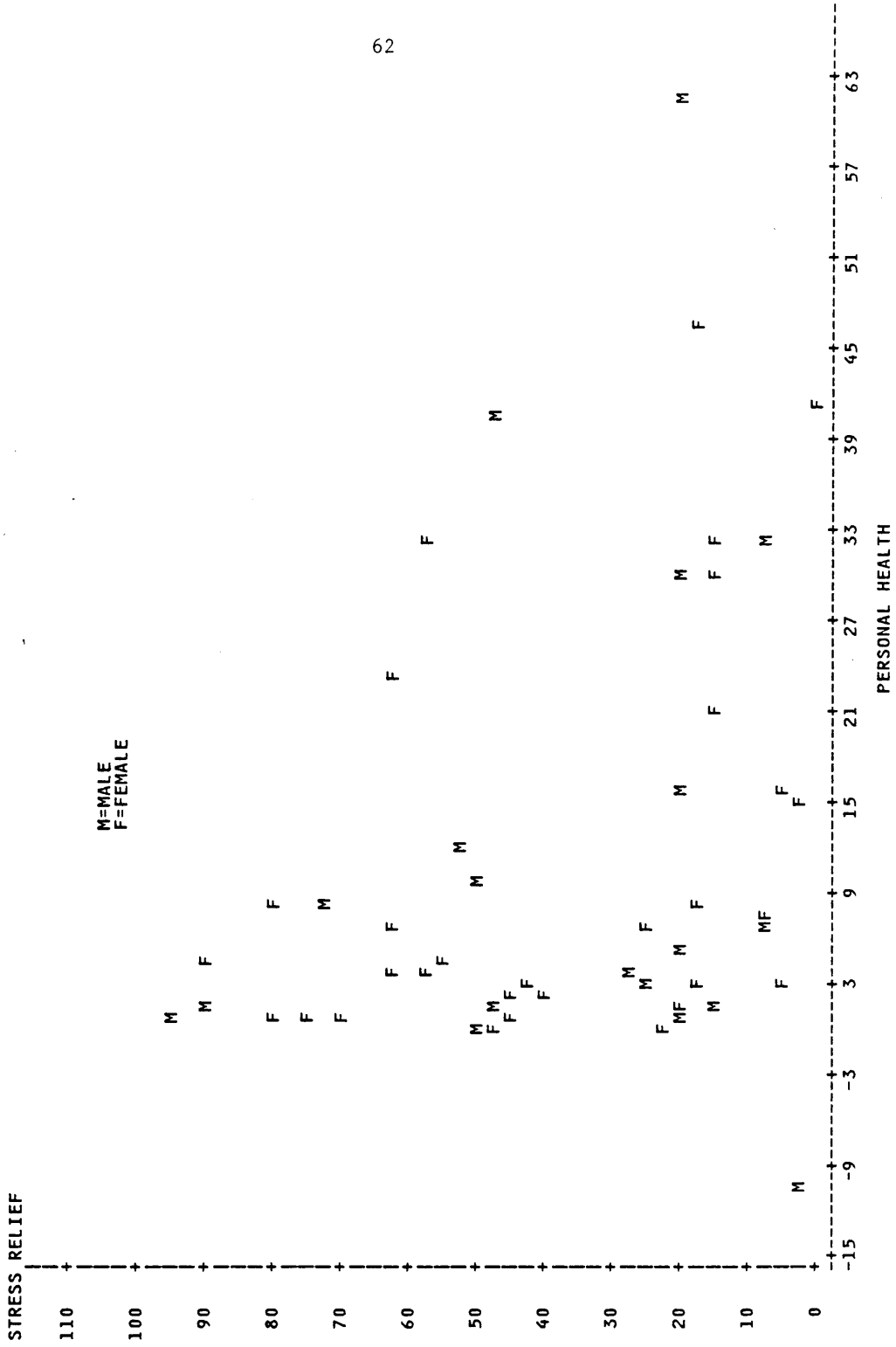


FIGURE 1: STRESS RELIEF VS. PERSONAL HEALTH ON GENDER FOR OWN OPINION

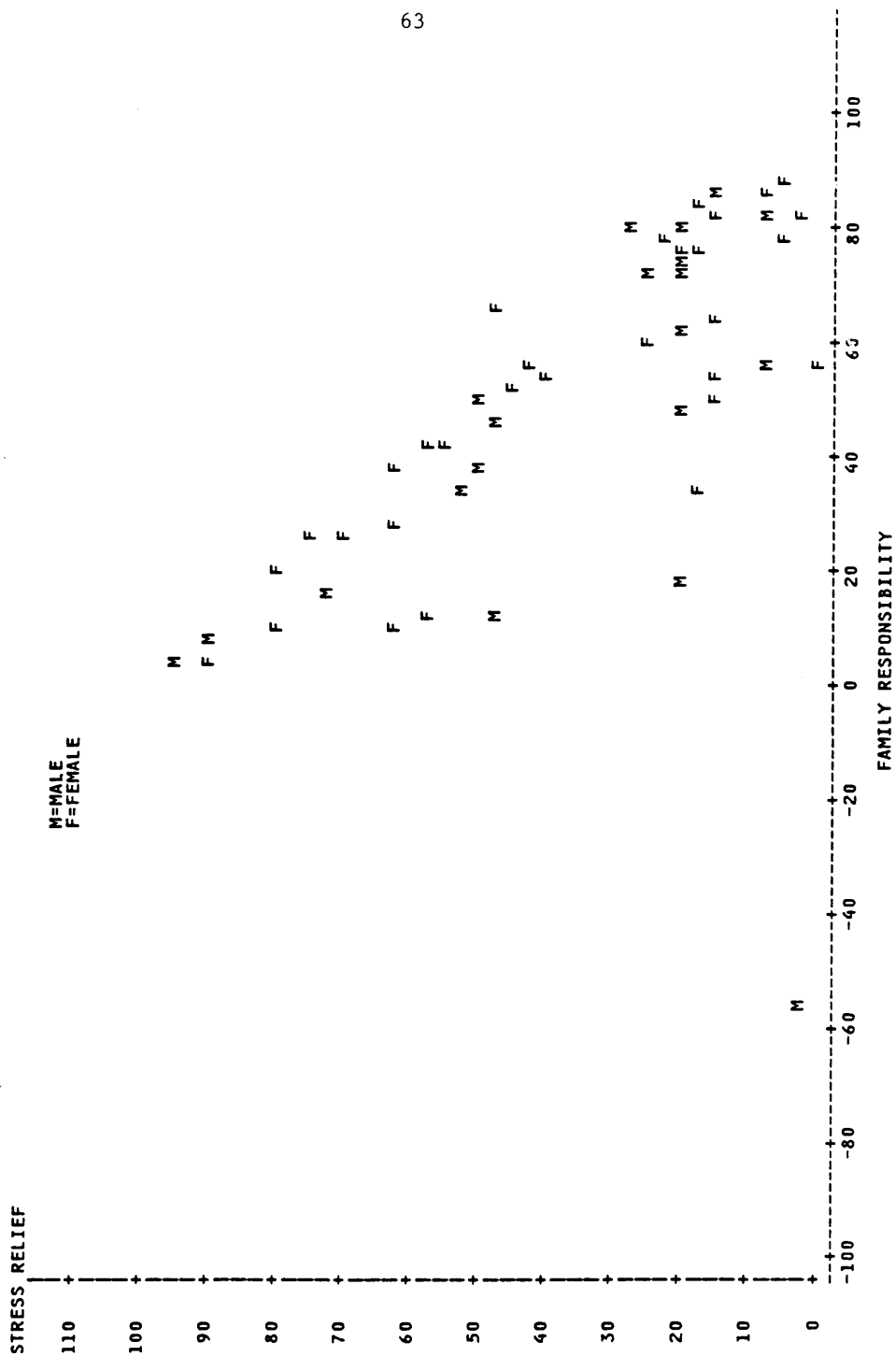


FIGURE 2: STRESS RELIEF VS FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY ON GENDER

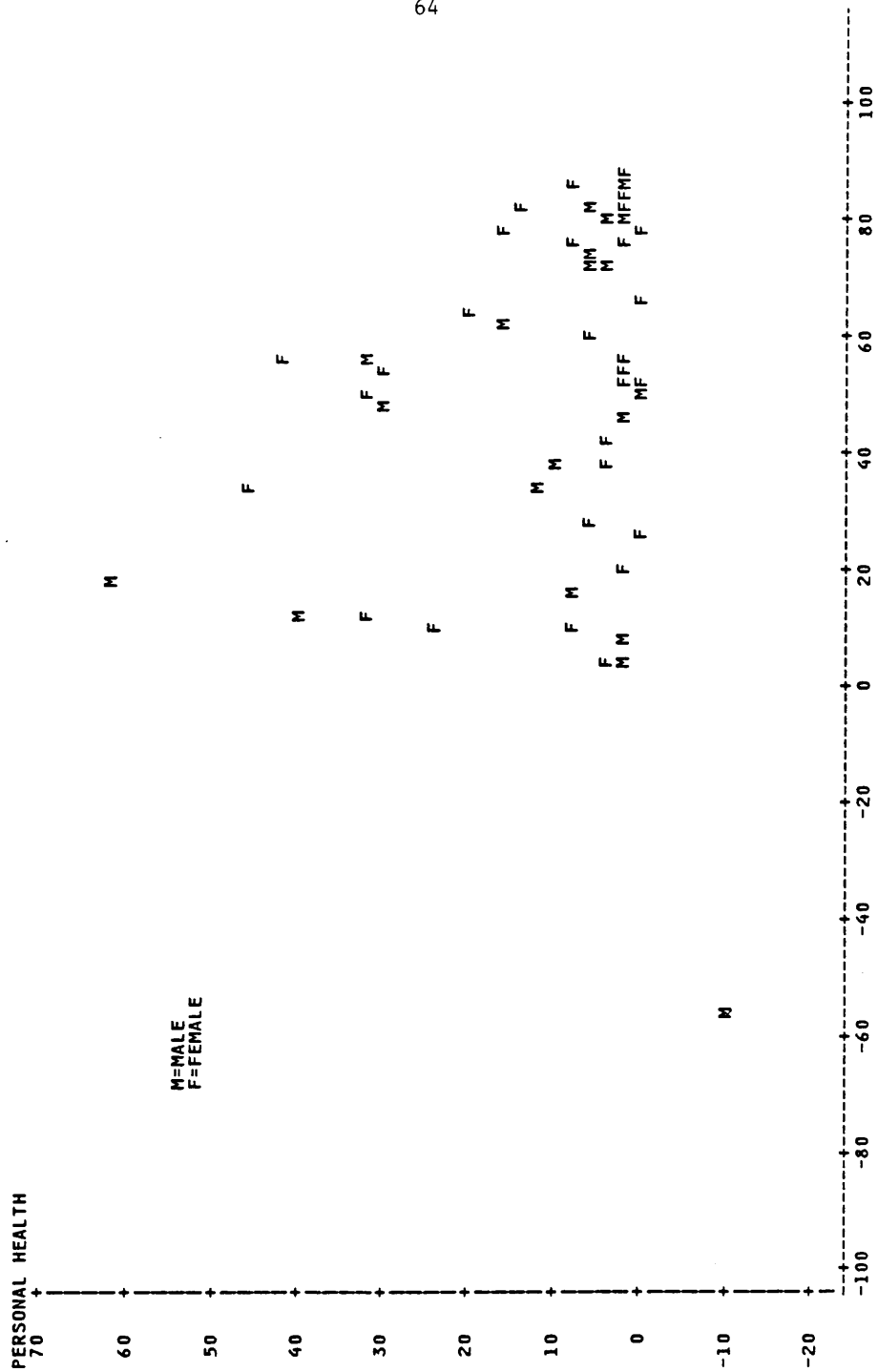


FIGURE 3: PERSONAL HEALTH VS. FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY ON GENDER FOR OWN OPINION

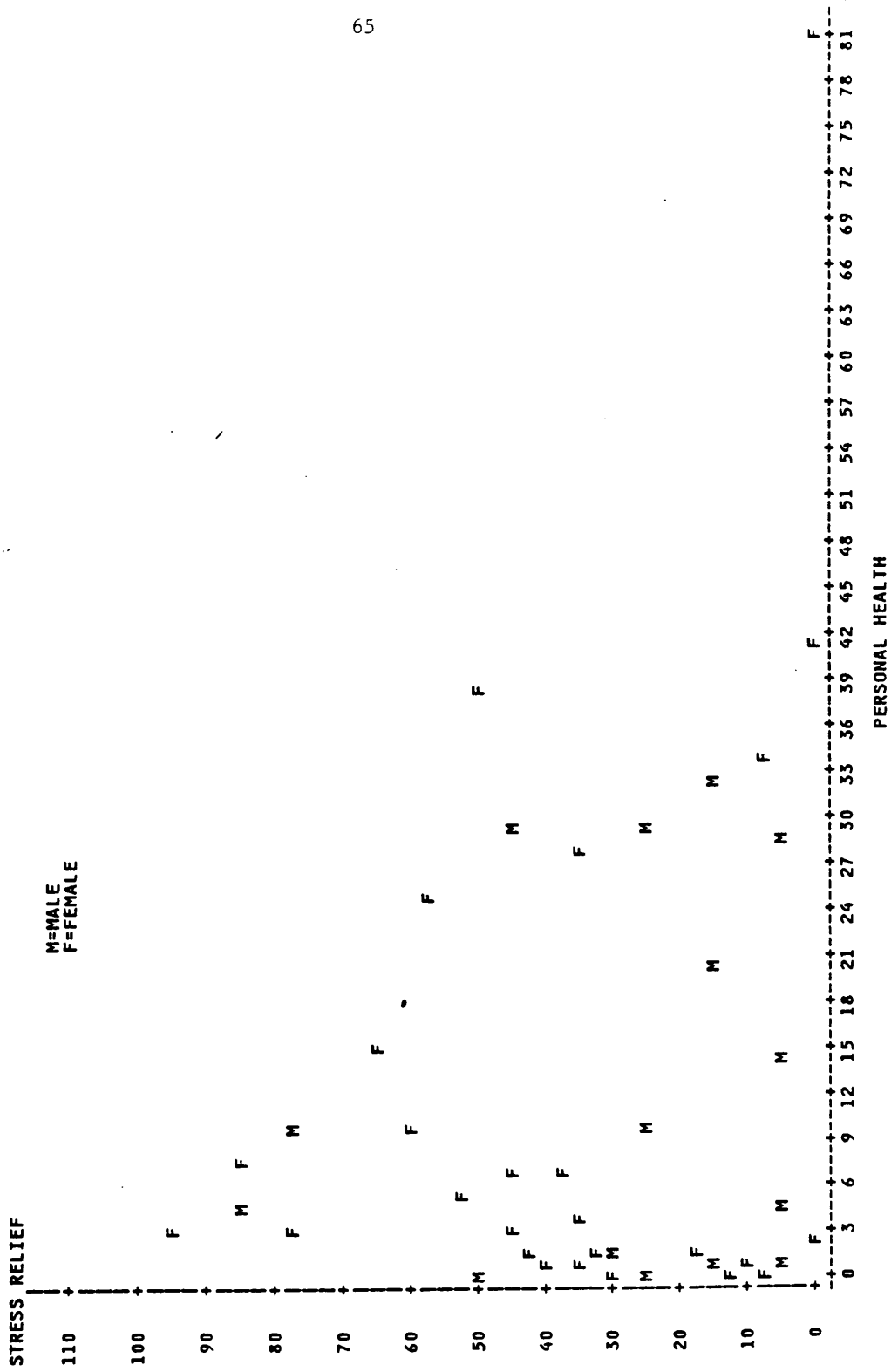


FIGURE 4: STRESS RELIEF VS. PERSONAL HEALTH ON GENDER FOR ORGANIZATIONAL OPINION



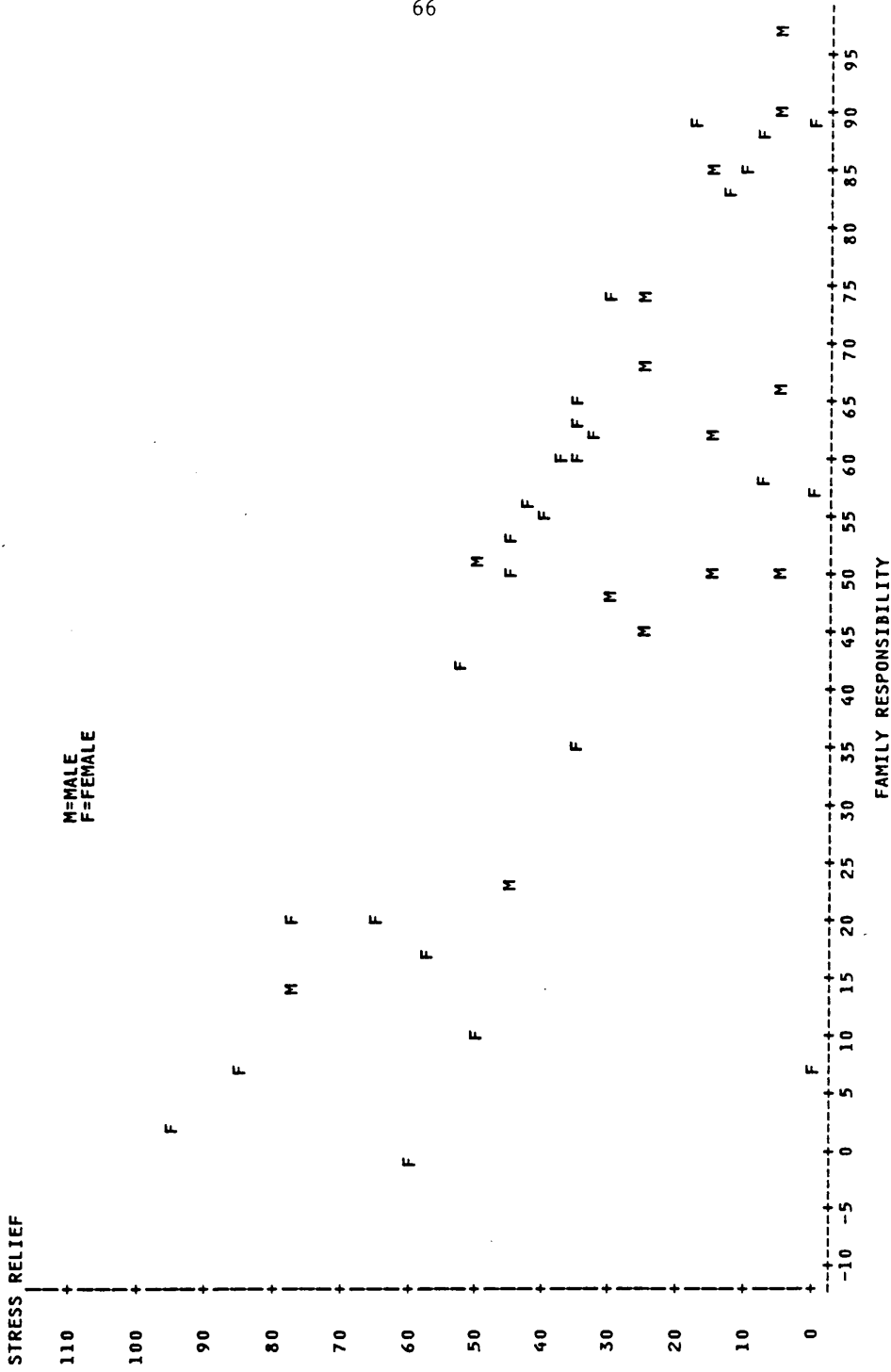


FIGURE 5: STRESS RELIEF VS FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY ON GENDER FOR ORGANIZATIONAL OPINION

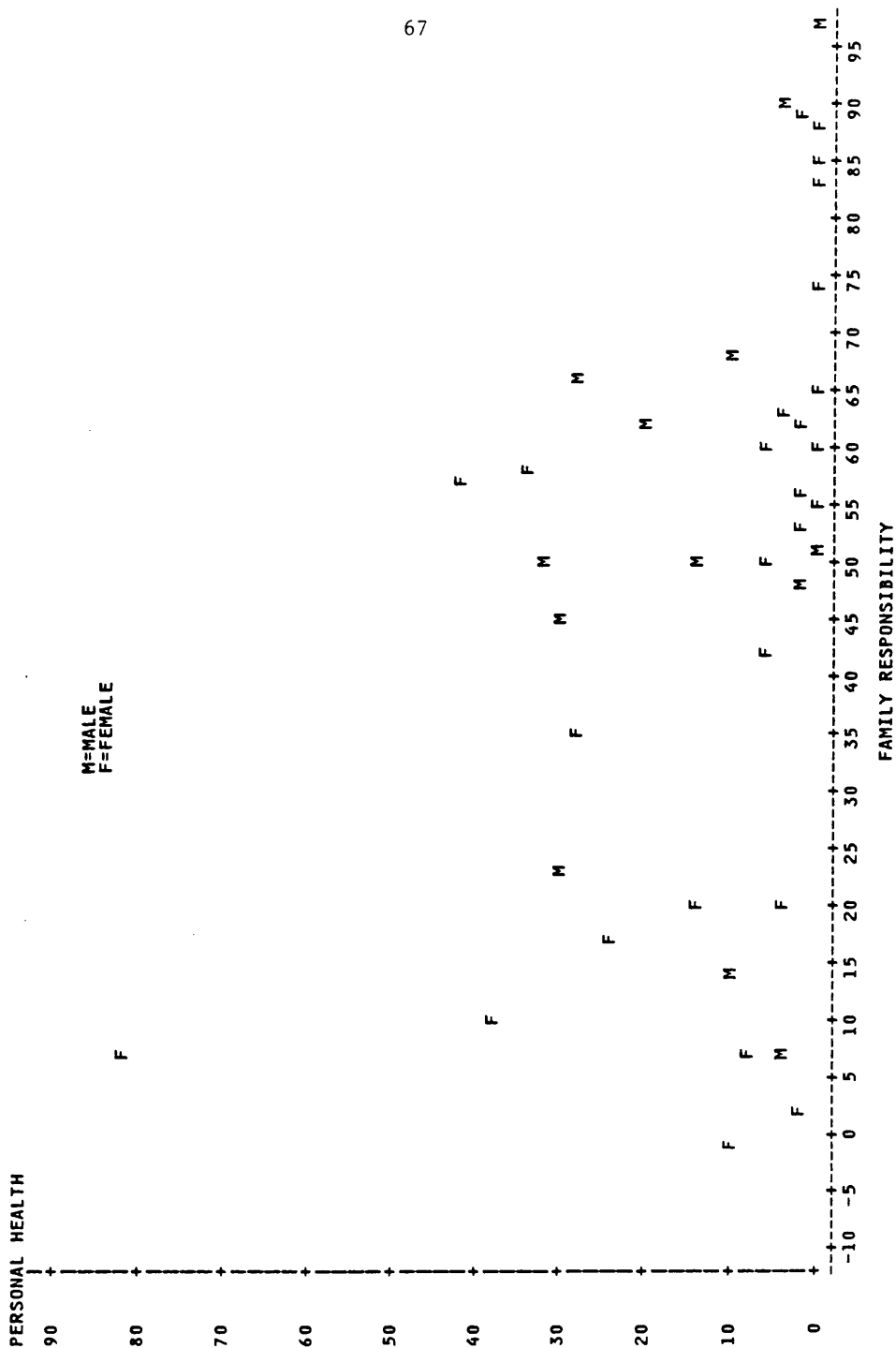


FIGURE 6. PERSONAL HEALTH VS. FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY ON GENDER

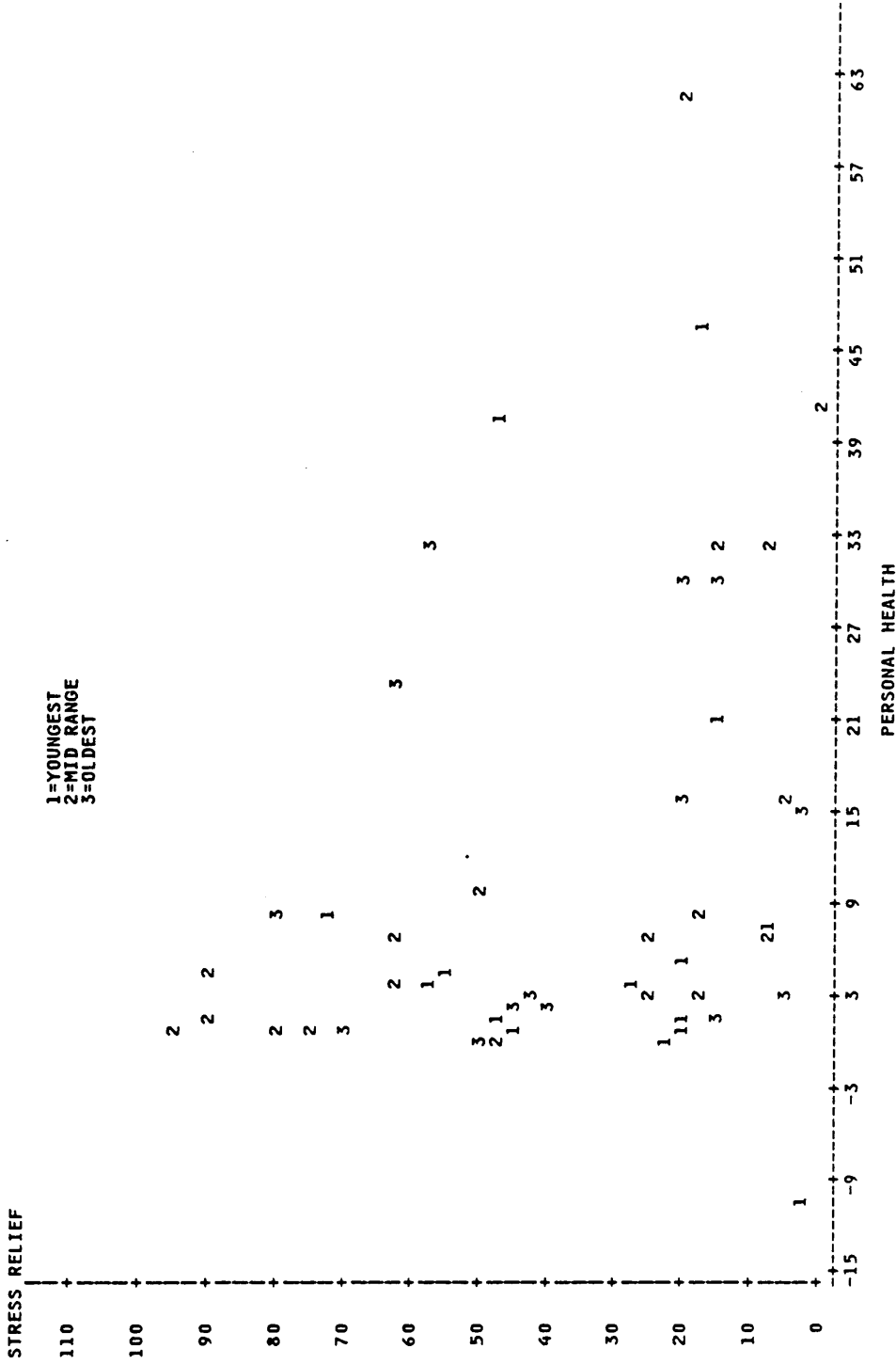


FIGURE 7. STRESS RELIEF VS. PERSONAL HEALTH ON AGE FOR OWN OPINION

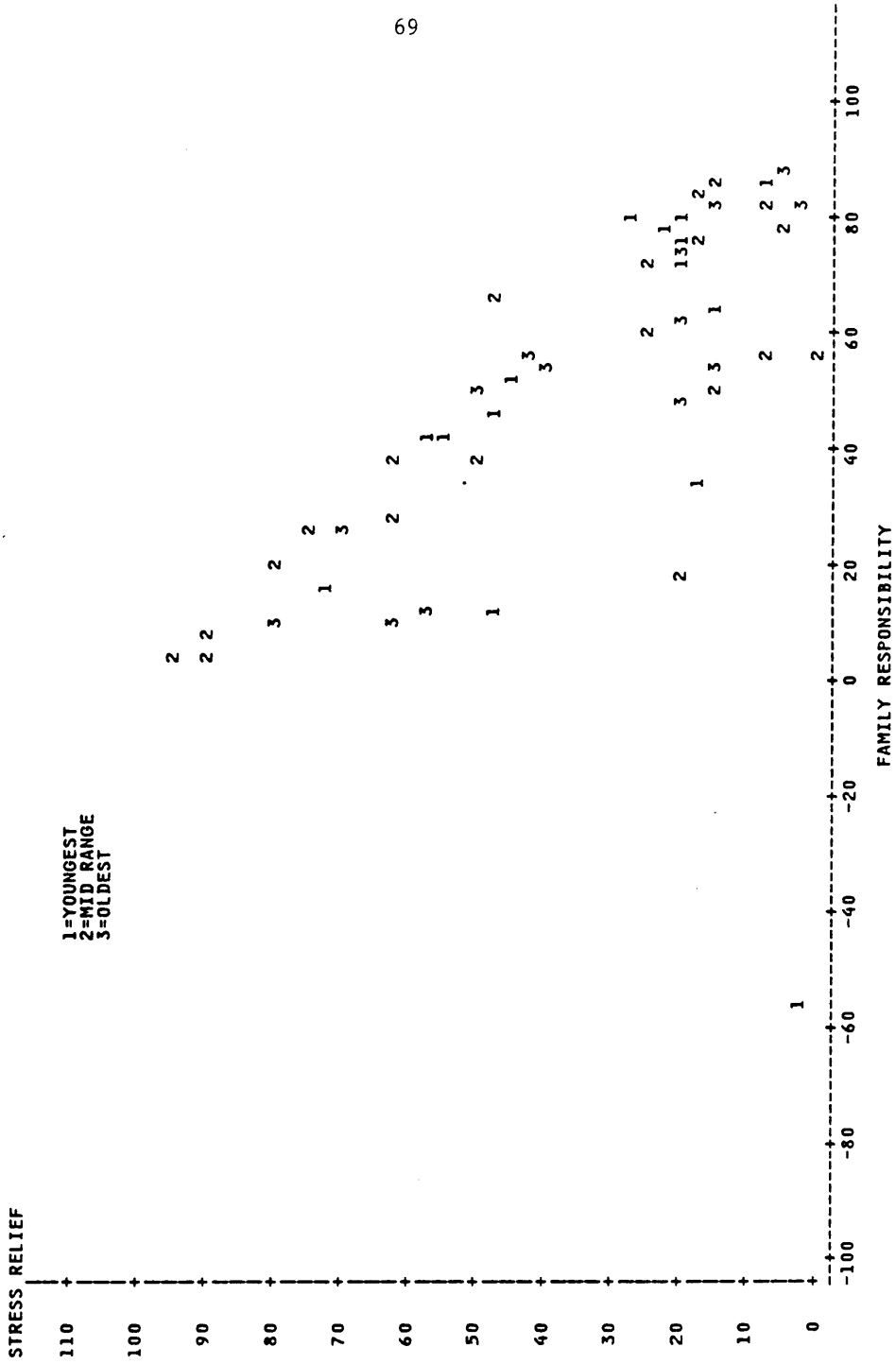


FIGURE 8. STRESS RELIEF VS FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY ON AGE FOR OWN OPINION

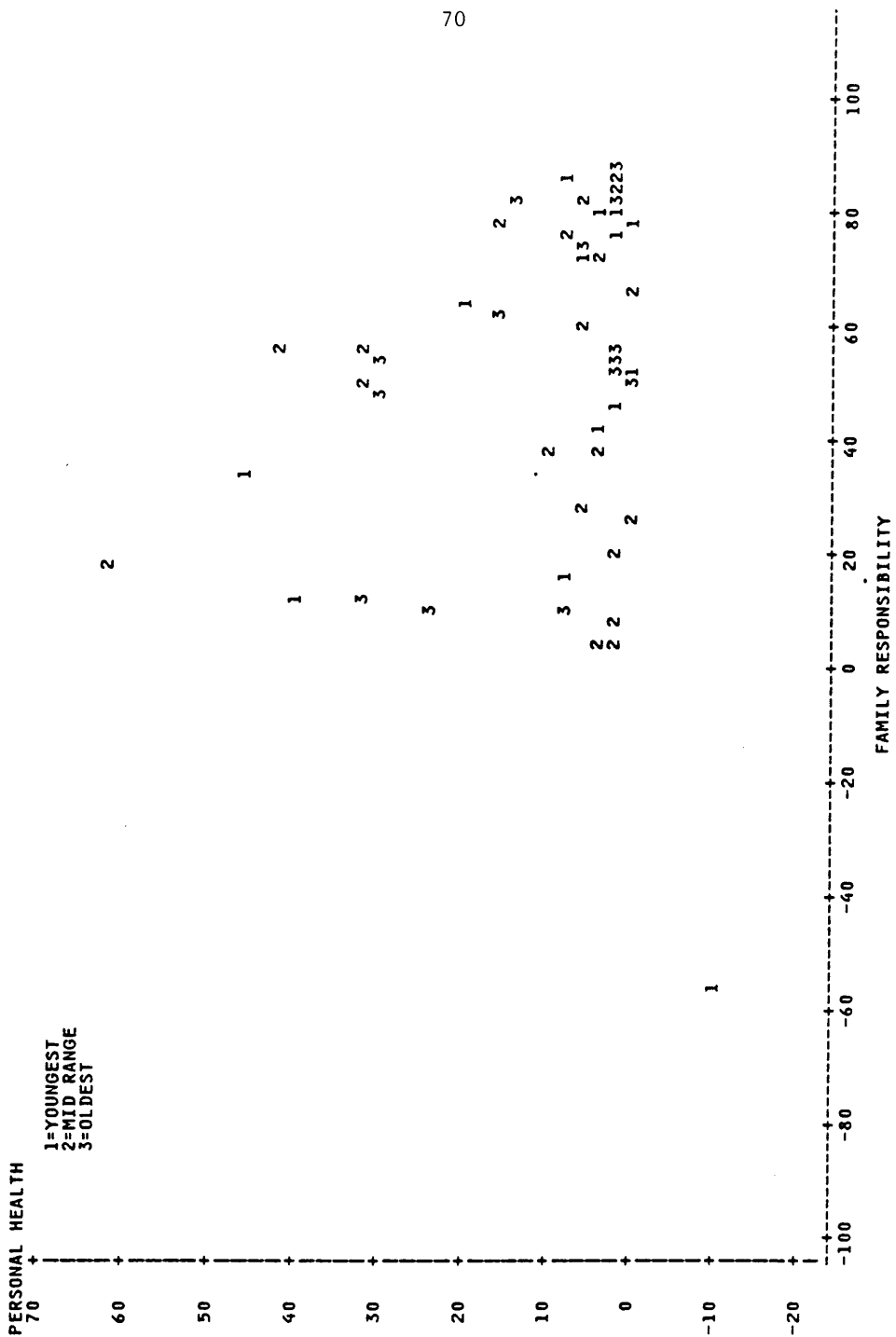


FIGURE 9: PERSONAL HEALTH VS. FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY ON AGE FOR OWN OPINION

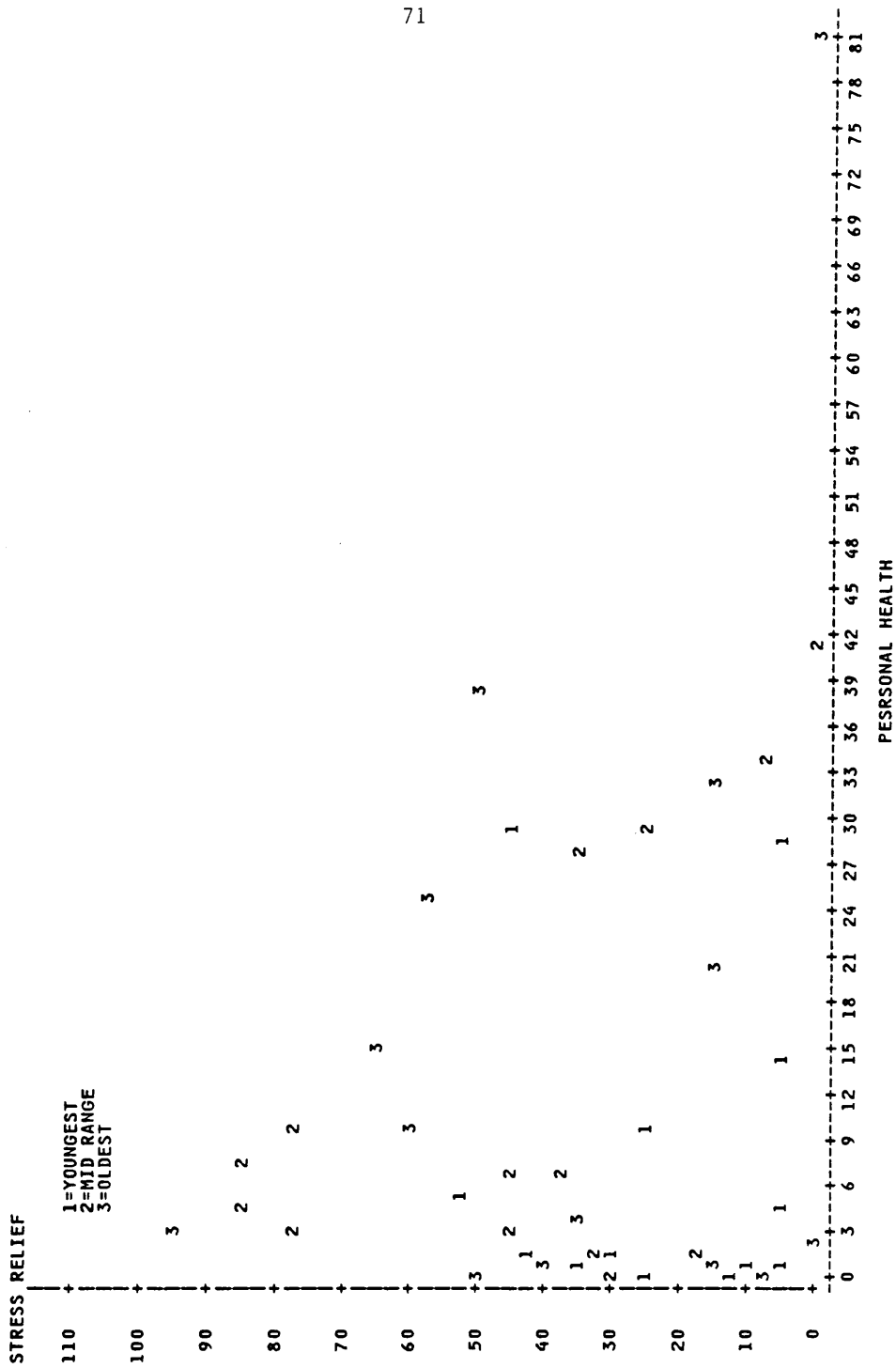


FIGURE 10. STRESS RELIEF VS. PERSONAL HEALTH ON AGE FOR ORGANIZATION OPINION

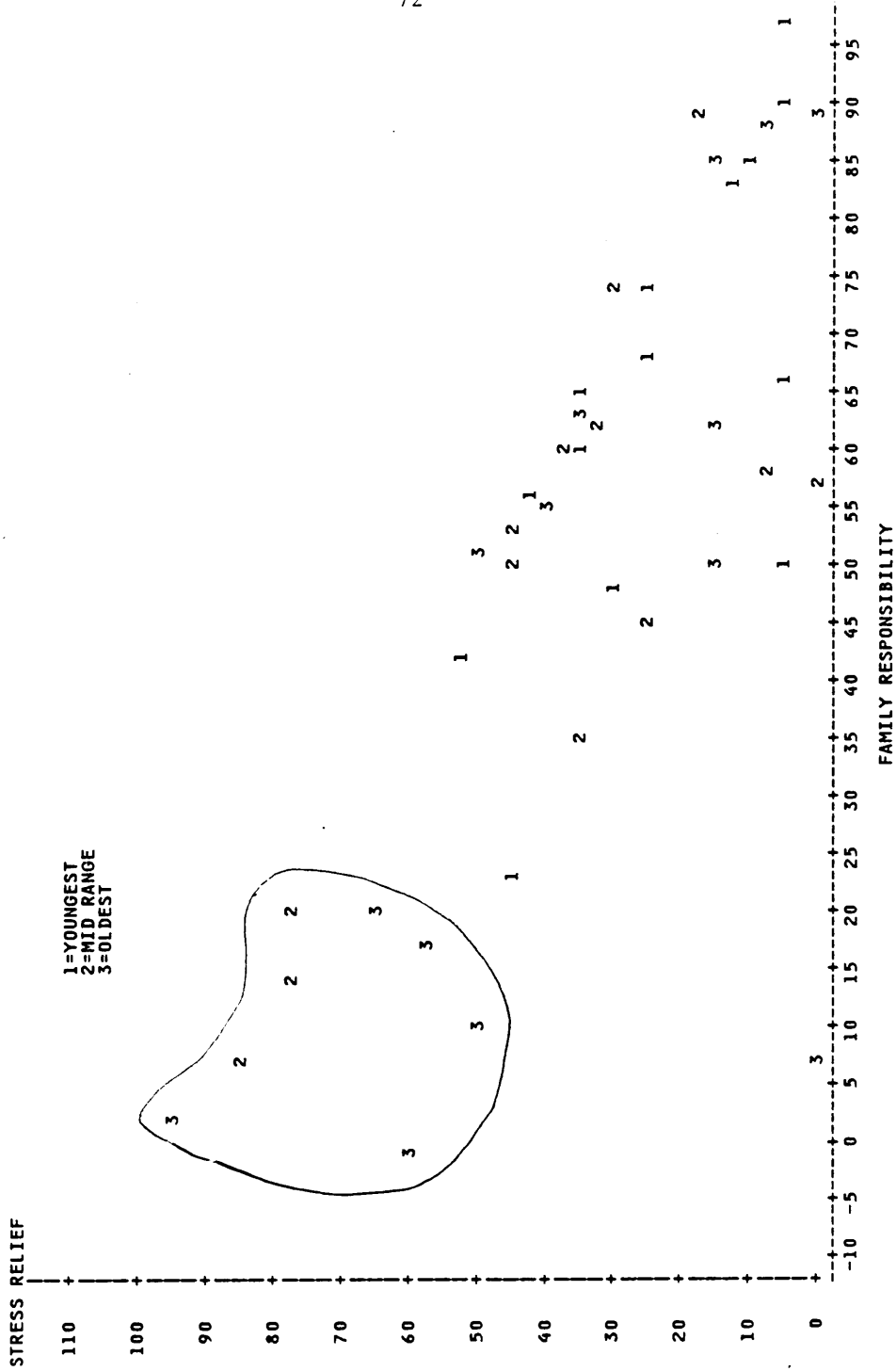


FIGURE 11. STRESS RELIEF VS FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY ON AGE FOR ORGANIZATIONAL OPINION

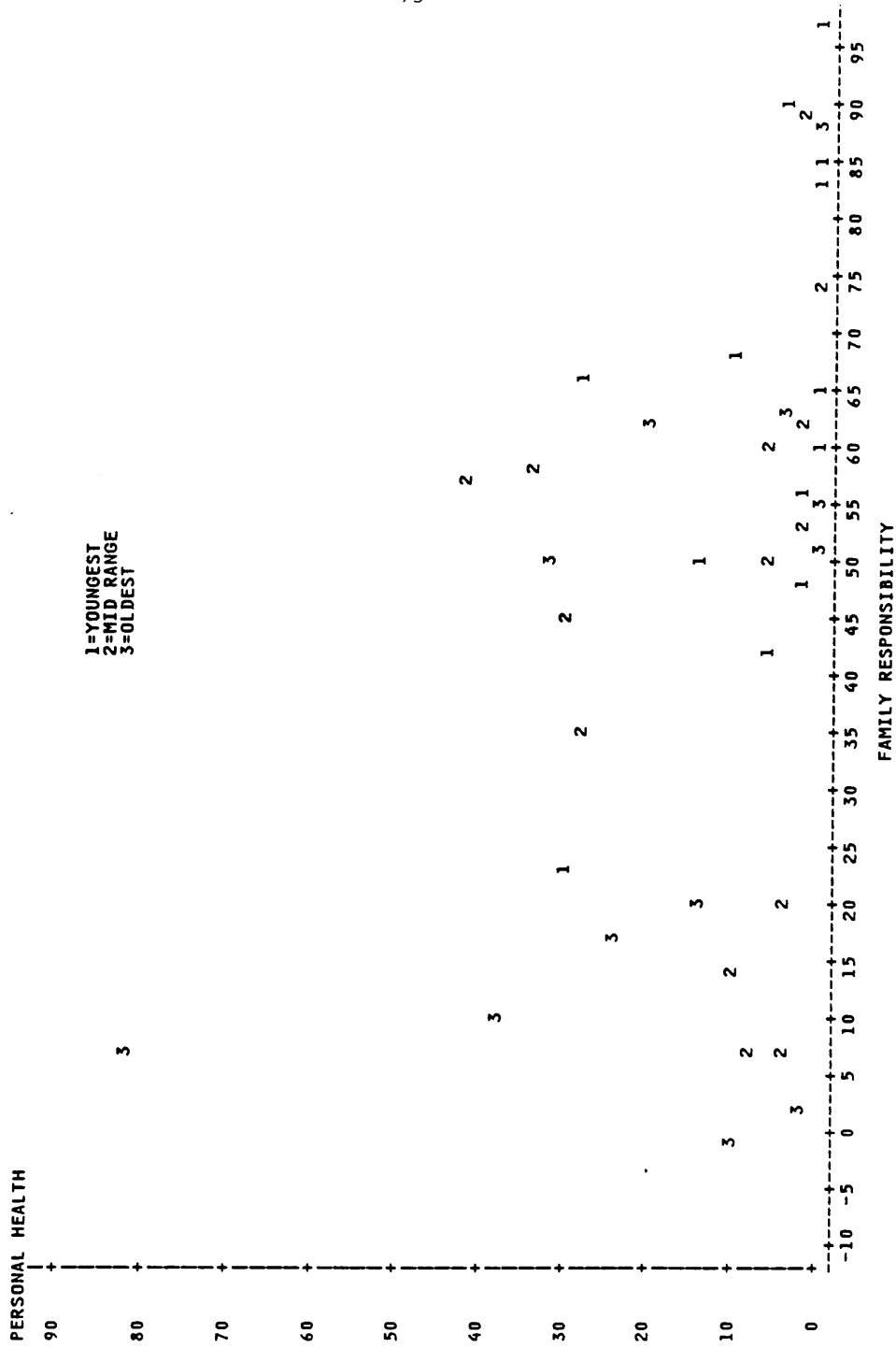


FIGURE 12: PERSONAL HEALTH VS. FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY ON AGE FOR ORGANIZATIONAL OPINION



Appendix A  
Pretest Questionnaire

Reasons for Absenteeism Questionnaire

Below is a list of reasons that employees give for being absent. For each reason, decide how inappropriate/appropriate that reason is in causing an absence from work. When making your decision about how inappropriate/appropriate the reason for the absence was, consider each reason independent of the other reasons listed on the questionnaire. In other words, don't make your judgment of one reason based on comparison with the other reasons. For the purpose of this study, assume that all the following are reasons for an absence period of the same duration and frequency.

The continuum of inappropriate to appropriate is from 1 to 9. Mark your answers on the accompanying opscan. Zero is not being used for this questionnaire. When you are through with this questionnaire, please return the opscan with your consent form to my mailbox in the journal room.

Thanks, Stuart Greenberg

- |                      |               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |             |
|----------------------|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|
| 1. head cold         | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 2. allergies         | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 3. sniffles          | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 4. headache          | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 5. chronic headache  | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 6. migraine headache | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 7. broken arm        | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 8. broken leg        | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 9. broken wrist      | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 10. broken ankle     | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 11. chest pains      | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 12. heart attack     | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 13. diarrhea         | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 14. constipation     | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 15. runny nose       | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |
| 16. sinuses          | inappropriate | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | appropriate |

17. sprained wrist	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
18. sprained ankle	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
19. sore neck	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
20. backache	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
21. toothache	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
22. feeling "worn out"	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
23. feeling "stuffed up"	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
24. flu	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
25. common cold	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
26. virus	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
27. medical appointment	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
28. dental appointment	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
29. sunburn	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
30. allergic reaction	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
31. strep throat	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
32. poison ivy	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
33. sore throat	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
34. ear ache	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
35. feeling dizzy	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
36. stomach ache	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
37. pink eye (conjunctivitis)	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
38. stomach cramps	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate

39. leg cramps	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
40. muscle aches	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
41. mild nausea	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
42. severe nausea	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
43. coughing	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
44. sneezing	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
45. chronic cough	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
46. parent teacher conference	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
47. child's cold	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
48. child's allergies	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
49. child's sore throat	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
50. child's strep throat	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
51. child's chicken pox	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
52. child's ear ache	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
53. child's medical emergency	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
54. child's disciplinary problem at school	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
55. child's medical appointment	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
56. child's dental appointment	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
57. legal appointment (like buying or selling a house)	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate

58. family emergencies	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
59. errands	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
60. waiting for cable repair personnel	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
61. waiting for telephone repair personnel	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
62. waiting for plumber	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
63. waiting for electrician	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
64. taking car in for repairs	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
65. funeral for a family member	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
66. Visiting a sick relative	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
67. fight with supervisor	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
68. fight with fellow workers	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
69. fight with subordinates	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
70. sporting event	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
71. felt like taking time off	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
72. feeling depressed	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
73. need to rest after a period of intense work	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate
74. bored with job	inappropriate	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	appropriate

75. job pressure too  
severe                      inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 appropriate
76. event of local  
interest  
(party, etc.)                inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 appropriate
77. want a break in  
routine                      inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 appropriate
78. job hunting              inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 appropriate  
74
79. overslept                inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 appropriate
80. conflict over new  
equipment                    inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 appropriate
81. conflict over  
new work  
assignment                    inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 appropriate
82. conflict with  
employees in  
other areas                    inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 appropriate
83. attending a  
convention                    inappropriate 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 appropriate
84. Your gender              1 - Male  
   2 - Female

Appendix b

Absence Culture Questionnaire

Dear Participant,

I am a Master's candidate in Industrial/ Organizational Psychology here at Virginia Tech. I am currently conducting my thesis research which is concerned about employees' perceptions about what kind of reasons for absence behavior are appropriate. I have obtained permission from the office of Employee Relations to poll a select group of Virginia Tech employees about their opinions about absenteeism. Your assistance and participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. If you complete and return the enclosed questionnaire packet along with the participation reward form by November 9th, 1989, you will be eligible to win one of the participation rewards. Three prizes (\$75.00, \$50.00 and \$25.00) will be awarded to three random selected participants.

This study consists of 27 personnel profiles you will rate, a short category rating question and a background information questionnaire. It should take approximately 25 minutes of your time to fill out this packet. The results of this study are confidential and your name will not be associated with your data. Before you begin to answer this questionnaire, please carefully read the instructions on the following page. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 231-6581, or my advisor, Dr. Neil Hauenstein at 231-5716

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Stuart E. Greenberg



Instructions

**First:** Please read over the informed consent form and sign it in the appropriate place.

**Second:** Please evaluate the 27 personnel profiles listed in the attached questionnaire. Assume that the absence behaviors in all 27 profiles have occurred over a 12 month time period.

1. First review the contents of the first profile.

2. At the end of the profile, there are two questions about the appropriateness of the overall absence behavior described in the profile. The first question asks how appropriate you personally felt the overall absence behavior was. The second question asks you to judge how appropriate you think your organization (Virginia Tech) would feel the overall absence behavior in the profile was. The scale is from inappropriate (which counts as 1) to appropriate (which counts as 9). Circle the number that best reflects your rating of the inappropriateness/appropriateness of the overall absence behavior.

3. Repeat the process for the remaining 26 profiles.

**Third:** When you are finished rating the 27 profiles, please fill out the attached Category Rating Question. Instructions are given at the top of the question.

**Four:** Please fill out the attached Background Information questionnaire. This information is confidential and your name will not be associated with your data.

**Fifth:** Please fill out the Participation reward form and enclose it, along the questionnaire packet and the statement of informed consent in the inter campus mail envelope these materials originally came in. Mail this through inter campus mail to:

Stuart Greenberg  
Department of Psychology

In approximately 1 month you will receive notification of who won the participation rewards.

Profile\_1 J. Jones had to run errands one day and was absent for that day. He/she had a headache another day and was absent for one day. Another time, J. Jones was feeling depressed and was absent one day.

1. In your opinion, how appropriate was J. Jones' overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

2. According to your organization, how appropriate was J. Jones' overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_2 M. Carter worked very hard to finish a project on deadline, and took a day off to rest. Another time M. Carter was absent one day because of a runny nose. He/she took one day off to run errands.

3. In your opinion, how appropriate was M. Carter's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

4. According to your organization, how appropriate was M. Carter's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_3 C. Luch's mother was not feeling well and he/she took a day off to visit her. Another time, C. Luch was feeling stuffed up and missed a day of work. C. Luch attended a professional baseball game and missed work on the day after the game.

5. In your opinion, how appropriate was C. Luch's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

6. According to your organization, how appropriate was C. Luch's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_4 M. Branch had new equipment introduced at work and he/she was absent for a day because of the stress it produced. M. Branch's son had a sore throat on another day and he/she missed work on that day. Another day, M. Branch had a stomach ache and was absent from work for one day.

7. In your opinion, how appropriate was M. Branch's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

8. According to your organization, how appropriate was M. Branch's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_5 S. Flinder had muscle aches and was absent for one day. Another time, S. Flinder was assigned some new job duties and missed work for one day because of the stress the job change produced. On a third occasion, S. Flinder's home telephone did not have a dial tone and He/she missed work for a day waiting for the repair personnel.

9. In your opinion, how appropriate was S. Flinder's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

10. According to your organization, how appropriate was S. Flinder's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_6 One day R. Smith woke up feeling mildly nauseous, and missed work on that day. On another day, R. Smith missed work to run some errands. Another time R. Smith had a disagreement with employees in a different department that disturbed him/her and he/she was absent the next day.

11. In your opinion, how appropriate was R. Smith's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

12. According to your organization, how appropriate was R. Smith's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_7 M. McCoy missed work on one day because the telephone repairman was coming to fix his/her home phone. Another time, M. McCoy's department switched to a new software package and M. McCoy missed work for a day because the switch made him/her anxious. On another occasion, M. McCoy missed a day of work because of a stomach ache.

13. In your opinion, how appropriate was M. McCoy's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

14. According to your organization, how appropriate was M. McCoy's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_8 P. Gerber attended a big party one evening and missed work the following day. Another day, P. Gerber had a head ache and missed work on that day. On another occasion, P. Gerber's father was not feeling well and P. Gerber missed a day of work to go visit him.

15. In your opinion, how appropriate was P. Gerber's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

16. According to your organization, how appropriate was P. Gerber's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_9 On one occasion, L. Brown was absent for one day to run errands. Another day, L. Brown experienced some muscle aches and took that day off. L. Brown was feeling depressed another day and took that day off.

17. In your opinion, how appropriate was L. Brown's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

18. According to your organization, how appropriate was L. Brown's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_10 S. Pauly was assigned some new job duties and felt anxious about this and missed work on one day. Another day, S. Pauly missed work because of a runny nose. S. Pauly missed work for one day on another occasion to run errands.

19. In your opinion, how appropriate was S. Pauly's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

20. According to your organization, how appropriate was S. Pauly's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_11 K. Hastings felt mildly nauseous and missed work for one day. Another time, K. Hastings' home phone was not working properly and he/she missed work for one day to wait for the repair personnel. On another occasion, K. Hastings worked very hard at work to complete a complex project and was absent one day to rest up after its completion.

21. In your opinion, how appropriate was K. Hastings' overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

22. According to your organization, how appropriate was K. Hastings' overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_12 On one occasion, S. Walker's daughter had a sore throat and he/she missed work on that day. Another time, S. Walker attended a professional football game and the travel time caused him/her to miss a day of work. Another day, S. Walker had a stomach ache and missed work on that day.

23. In your opinion, how appropriate was S. Walker's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

24. According to your organization, how appropriate was S. Walker's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_13 J. Thayer was out late at a concert one evening and could not attend work the following day. Another day, J. Thayer was feeling stuffed up and missed work for one day. J. Thayer's home phone was not working on another day and he/she missed one day of work waiting for repair personnel.

25. In your opinion, how appropriate was J. Thayer's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

26. According to your organization, how appropriate was J. Thayer's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_14 On one occasion, J. Randall had to run some errands and missed one day of work. Another time, J. Randall had a runny nose and was absent for one day. On a third occasion, J. Randall attended a professional basketball game a good distance away from Blacksburg and could not make it to work on the following day.

27. In your opinion, how appropriate was J. Randall's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

28. According to your organization, how appropriate was J. Randall's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_15 M. Bittle was feeling depressed and took a day off from work. Another day, M. Bittle experienced muscle aches and was absent for that day. On another occasion, M. Bittle's home phone went dead and he/she was absent from work for one day to wait for repair personnel.

29. In your opinion, how appropriate was M. Bittle's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

30. According to your organization, how appropriate was M. Bittle's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_16 R. Brill's mother was ill and he/she missed work for a day to visit her. Another time, R. Brill had a disagreement with an employee in another department and was very annoyed by this situation; consequently, R. Brill missed work for one day. Another day, R. Brill woke up with a head ache and missed work on that day.

31. In your opinion, how appropriate was R. Brill's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

32. According to your organization, how appropriate was R. Brill's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_17 L. Becker missed work on an one day to run errands. Another time, L. Becker had muscle aches and was absent on for one day. On another occasion, L. Becker took a day off of work to travel to a party that was a good distance from Blacksburg.

33. In your opinion, how appropriate was L. Becker's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

34. According to your organization, how appropriate was L. Becker's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_18 M. Hall went to a professional baseball game and missed work on the next day. Another day, M. Hall experienced mild nausea and was absent that day. Another time, M. Hall's home phone was not dialing out, so he/she missed work on that day to wait for repair personnel.

35. In your opinion, how appropriate was M. Hall's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

36. According to your organization, how appropriate was M. Hall's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_19 P. Crockett got back late from a concert and missed work the following day. Another day, P. Crockett had a head ache and missed work on that day. On another occasion, P. Crockett's home phone was working sporadically and he/she missed work for one day to wait for repair personnel.

37. In your opinion, how appropriate was P. Crockett's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

38. According to your organization, how appropriate was P. Crockett's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_20 N. Jenkin had a stomach ache and could not attend work on one day. On another occasion, N. Jenkin missed work for one day to run errands. Another time, N. Jenkin went to a professional football game in another city and could not attend work the following day.

39. In your opinion, how appropriate was N. Jenkin's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

40. According to your organization, how appropriate was N. Jenkin's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_21 B. McGuire took one day off to run some errands. B. McGuire's department switched to a new filing system and the anxiety this produced caused him/her to be absent for a day. Another day, B. McGuire experienced muscle aches and was absent from work for one day.

41. In your opinion, how appropriate was B. McGuire's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

42. According to your organization, how appropriate was B. McGuire's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate



Profile\_22 R. Peterson worked very hard to finish a project on deadline and took a day off to rest after the project was completed. Another day, R. Peterson had a head ache and missed work on that day. R. Peterson's son had a sore throat another time and he/she took one day off to care for him.

43. In your opinion, how appropriate was R. Peterson's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

44. According to your organization, how appropriate was R. Peterson's absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_23 One day M. Cook woke up feeling stuffed up and took the day off. M. Cook's father was sick on another occasion and he/she took a day off to visit him. On another occasion, M. Cook was concerned because his/her department bought some new hardware for their computer system and because of this concern he/she took a day off.

45. In your opinion, how appropriate was M. Cook's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

46. According to your organization, how appropriate was M. Cook's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_24 D. Burke felt depressed and took one day off from work. Another time, D. Burke had a runny nose and took one day off from work. On a third occasion, D. Burke wanted a telephone extension added at home and took the day off from work to wait for the repair personnel.

47. In your opinion, how appropriate was D. Burke's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

48. According to your organization, how appropriate was D. Burke's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_25 S. Myer had a heated argument with an employee in another department and took the next day off from work to relieve stress. Another time, S. Myer took one day off to visit his/her sick father. A different time, S. Myer felt stuffed up and took a day off.

49. In your opinion, how appropriate was S. Myer's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

50. According to your organization, how appropriate was S. Myer's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_26 D. Lacy's daughter had a sore throat and he/she took that day off to care for her. On a different occasion, D. Lacy had a runny nose and took that day off. On a third occasion, D. Lacy felt depressed and took one day off.

51. In your opinion, how appropriate was D. Lacy's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

52. According to your organization, how appropriate was D. Lacy's absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Profile\_27 R. Clooney worked very hard organizing a move from one office to another and took a day off to relax after the move was complete. On a different occasion, R. Clooney felt mildly nauseous and did not go into work on that day. Another time, R. Clooney's mother was ill and he/she was absent from work on day to visit her. 53. In your opinion, how appropriate was R. Clooney's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

54. According to your organization, how appropriate was R. Clooney's overall absence behavior?

inappropriate 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 appropriate

Category Rating Question

Family responsibility, stress relief, and personal health were several of the employee reasons for absenteeism that were given in the preceding 27 profiles. Please indicate how important these categories of reasons were to you in making YOUR overall rating of each employee's absence behavior by allocating 100 points among these three categories. The most important category would receive the most points, the middle category would receive a medium amount of points and the least important category would receive the least amount of points. Remember, the points given to the 3 categories must total 100 points.

Family Responsibility: \_\_\_\_\_ points

Stress Relief: \_\_\_\_\_ points

Personal Health: \_\_\_\_\_ points

-----  
= 100 total points

Background Information Questionnaire

Age \_\_\_\_\_

Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Educational Background (please circle one):

Some high school

B. A or B.S.

High school diploma

some graduate school

Trade school

Masters' degree

some college

Ph.d

Marital status (please circle one):

Single

Married

separated

divorced

Number of Children at home \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of Children \_\_\_\_\_

Job title \_\_\_\_\_

Job tenure (in years) \_\_\_\_\_

Participation\_Reward\_Form

By completely filling out the accompanying booklet, you become eligible for a chance to win the participation award. Three winners will be chosen randomly from the select group of participants of this study. The rewards will be 75 dollars, 50 dollars and 25 dollars. It is my way of thanking you for taking the time to fill out this survey. All participants will be receive a list of the three winners.

Please fill out the following information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Campus Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Business Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

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