The Role of Job and Family Involvement for Satisfaction in Job and Family

A Longitudinal Study

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Abstract: Job and family involvement have been shown to have important implications for job and family satisfaction. While most theoretical considerations and research imply that each type of involvement will be beneficial for participation and satisfaction in each particular domain, their joint impact is not well understood. Moreover, little is known of how overall involvement may predict changes in job and family satisfaction across time. This study empirically examines the effect of both involvement in job and family on job and family satisfaction trajectories. Self-report data were collected from 460 employees at three time points over a 12-month period. Using latent growth curve modeling, results demonstrate that people who are highly involved overall (i.e., have high levels in job and family involvement) show higher initial scores in latent job and family satisfaction trajectories, compared to people who have very little involvement. In turn, people who are highly involved overall show a decline in family satisfaction across time. Our results provide insight into the beneficial and detrimental effects that might arise when employees place high importance on both job and family involvement. The findings also suggest that research should address the joint operation of the two types of involvement in order to predict changes in job and family satisfaction over time.

Keywords: job involvement, family involvement, work–life balance, job satisfaction, family satisfaction, latent growth modeling, trajectories

Research in organizational settings suggests job and family involvement to be predictive of individuals’ well-being in the areas of work (e.g., Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001), family (e.g., Ford, Heinen, & Langkamer, 2007), and quality of life (e.g., Tait, Padgett, & Baldwin, 1989). Indicative of this research are studies which demonstrate job involvement to be positively related to job satisfaction (see Michel & Hargis, 2008, for meta-analytical results). Moreover, research has demonstrated that family involvement predicts individual well-being and family satisfaction (e.g., Michel & Hargis, 2008; Parasuraman, Purohit, Godshalk, & Beutell, 1996). Although considerable attention has been drawn to either job or family involvement, relatively few studies have empirically examined the joint operation of both types of involvement (e.g., Carlson & Frone, 2003). This is surprising, because multiple role involvement, which refers to the time spent in a role and the salience of the role in an individual’s life, has been conceptualized as either detrimental or beneficial to the individual (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; O’Driscoll, 1996).

Although considerable theory and research have linked job/family involvement to job/family satisfaction, this work suffers from two major limitations. First, most theories and research have neglected the influence of multiple role involvement. Accordingly, a fundamental goal of the present study is to adopt a more comprehensive and multidimensional view of these relationships by incorporating both job and family involvement in order to provide a more integrative approach to work–family research. Second, even though these theories suggest longitudinal relationships between involvement and satisfaction, they have not sufficiently explained how and when changes in involvement influence satisfaction. Thus, prior theory and research have not focused adequately on the dynamic of involvement and satisfaction. Additionally, although satisfaction is dynamic in its nature and varies with the experiences people have had in their job and family domains, it has typically been operationalized as a static variable (Lee, Gerhart, Weller, & Trevor, 2008; Liu, Mitchell, Lee, Holtom, & Hinkin, 2012). Thus, little is known about mean-level satisfaction development across time. Previous longitudinal studies on satisfaction provide only a little information, because they have seldom used more than two points in time, and this does not allow group-level and intra-individual trajectories to be modeled. Moreover, change in core variables has been rarely examined in the domain of work–family,
documented by a recent meta-analysis by Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, and Semmer (2011), as only 17% of the correlations included could be drawn from longitudinal studies. Accordingly, researchers have declared the need for longitudinal research with three points in time, as this allows one to identify latent trajectories which track changes at the within-person level across time (see Bollen & Curran, 2006). We argue that an employee’s job and family satisfaction trajectories reflect the actual trend of the employee’s overall perceptions of satisfaction over time and these perceptions are dependent on (multiple) role involvement and may explain people’s different responses to similar objective role demands.

Our study addresses two critical gaps in work-family research and makes an important contribution to the literature. First, we add to the existing theoretical and empirical research on work-life integration by examining the influence of multiple role involvement on satisfaction. Second, at the same time, we know little about how involvement and satisfaction may change over time, and whether there are individual differences in satisfaction trajectories over time. Previous research on job/family satisfaction has used group means to examine dynamic effects, but ignored the interindividual heterogeneity. It seems, however, conceivable that we could usefully distinguish subgroups of employees who, because of their different involvement levels (job/family) or different baseline levels of job and family satisfaction, are able to adapt well to stressful events in their lives that arise from having multiple roles. Accordingly, the present study provides a longitudinal investigation of mean-level job and family satisfaction during a twelve-month period, as well as how involvement predicts changes across time.

Theory and Hypotheses

Involvement is a relatively stable attitude, which represents the importance or centrality that a person attaches to a particular issue, the perceived relevance of certain issues, and the extent to which he or she feels positive emotions (e.g., satisfaction). With regard to the work–family interface, job involvement and family involvement are of key importance. Job involvement refers to a cognitive belief state of psychological identification with one’s job (Kanungo, 1982, p. 80). It represents an internal or self-induced source of work–role pressure and is related to the degree to which the job situation is central for a person and the amount of energy invested in the work. Family involvement refers to psychological involvement with one’s family and the individual importance persons attach to their family (Parasuraman et al., 1996), and is – like job involvement – likely to motivate people to devote more time and energy to family activities and responsibilities. Accordingly, job involvement has been found to be positively related to job satisfaction (e.g., Parasuraman et al., 1996; Wegge, Schmidt, Parkes, & van Dick, 2007), whereas family involvement has been found to be related to higher family satisfaction and life satisfaction (Rothausen, 1999), but also to higher work–family conflict, than job involvement, that is, conflicts between work and family life roles (Parasuraman et al., 1996) (for meta-analytical results see Ford et al., 2007; Michel & Hargis, 2008).

Research on work–life integration has often used satisfaction with one’s job as an indicator of a person’s overall well-being. Job satisfaction, a “pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job as achieving one’s job values” (Locke, 1969, p. 317), has been shown to be positively related to job performance (Schleicher, Greguras, & Watt, 2004). Like job satisfaction, family satisfaction is also an important variable in work–life integration research but has received less consideration (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005). We define family satisfaction by applying Locke’s (1969) concept of job satisfaction as a pleasurable emotional state resulting from an appraisal of one’s family as achieving their goals.

Previous research has found positive relationships between job and life satisfaction (Burke, 2006; Parasuraman et al., 1996). Some models on the relationship between job and family satisfaction propose a positive and nourishing relationship (Wiersma, 1990; Zedeck & Mosier, 1990); others describe it as diametrically opposed or competitive (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991; Zedeck & Mosier, 1990). Research on the beneficial and detrimental effects of involvement and satisfaction in both domains has helped to develop different approaches by considering the relationship between job and family involvement and work–life integration and satisfaction (e.g., Parasuraman et al., 1996). O’Driscoll (1996) and Parasuraman and Greenhaus (2002) assumed that high involvement in both domains (i.e., job and family) can lead either to increased conflict or to satisfaction in terms of mutual enhancement between both domains. These contradictory perspectives are based on different theoretical approaches, which are referred to as the scarcity and the enhancement approach (O’Driscoll, 1996; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002).

In the following, we use the term “work–life integration” (Lewis, Rapoport, & Gambles, 2003), as compared to work–life balance. This expression implies that it is not necessarily an issue of an equal distribution across the work and nonwork domains, but more about the appropriate accommodation of an individual’s professional and private needs (Jones, Burke, & Westman, 2006).
According to the scarcity approach (Aryee, Srinivas, & Tan, 2005; O’Driscoll, 1996; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002), also known as the conflict hypothesis, an individual’s time and energy are limited resources, which can only be assigned once. Role stress theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) assumes that people with a greater number of roles are more likely to deplete their resources, resulting in role overload or role conflict. People who are highly committed to one type of role would necessarily have less time and energy left for other roles (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991), which gives rise to work-family and family-work conflicts and should result in lower levels of satisfaction. Accordingly, job satisfaction and family satisfaction should be lowest where there is high involvement in both domains, since it seems unlikely that an individual could sustain a high level of engagement in both over time.

On the other hand, other researchers have emphasized the benefits to be derived from involvement in multiple roles. The enhancement approach (O’Driscoll, 1996; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002) – also known as the expansion perspective (Aryee et al., 2005), work-family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), and facilitation (Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2007) – suggests that involvement in several roles may help to energize individuals and provide them with additional resources (Wiersma, 1990). Additionally, some authors have argued that engaging in multiple roles might stimulate people and thus may help to enhance their well-being (e.g., Piotrkowski, Rapoport, & Rapoport, 1987). Compared to engagement in a single role, multiple role involvement should enhance or facilitate, rather than detract from, an individual’s satisfaction (O’Driscoll, 1996), and this has been demonstrated in several studies (e.g., Allis & O’Driscoll, 2008; Boyar & Mosley, 2007).

In a cross-sectional study with working adults, Protass and Hyland (2011) examined whether high involvement in both job and family roles was related to negative or positive outcomes for individuals. They found that both job and family involvement hold positive relationships with positive spillovers, while the interaction terms between job and family involvement were unrelated to the dependent variables (i.e., time-, strain-, and behavior-based job-to-family and family-to-job conflict and positive affective and instrumental job-to-family and family-to-job spillover). Though the results are potentially restricted due to the research design, they were supportive of a more positive enhancement view of involvement in multiple domains. Findings from the study by Aryee et al. (2005) suggested that job involvement was significantly related to work-family facilitation, implying that experience or participation in one role increases the quality or performance in the other. Family involvement, by contrast, was found to be negatively related to work-family facilitation.

Facilitating cross-domain effects have also been examined by Ten Brummelhuis, van der Lippe, and Kluwer (2010). They found that family role involvement, conceptualized in its broadest sense, increased an individual’s sense of fulfillment, resulting in more helping behavior toward team members. While these results indicate an enriching mechanism (family skills, fulfillment) the authors also found that, due to time pressure and energy drain, family involvement can have a detrimental effect on work outcomes, supporting the idea that it can function as a depleting mechanism.

The scarcity hypothesis follows a *compositional approach*, in which it is assumed that each subsystem (i.e., type of involvement) is separate but interrelated. The overall effect of involvement is calculated as the algebraic sum of the convergent and divergent effects of each subsystem, which preserves their individual properties. Unlike the compositional approach, which focuses on the summative effect of elements, the *compilational approach* is based on the idea that interacting subsystems are transformed and produce structures of a higher quality (see Kozlowski & Klein, 2000, for a similar idea on teams). The compilational approach focuses on the structure as a whole and is different than a mere sum of the subsystems. With regard to the work-family interface, integration, which is grounded in spillover theory, follows a compilational approach which occurs “when attitudes in one role positively spillover into another role, or when experiences in one role serve as resources that enrich another role in one’s life” (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999, p. 407). Moreover, Ford et al. (2007) meta-analyzed 178 studies to determine the effect of cross-domain relationships between domain-specific constructs, work and family satisfaction, and conflict. The results from their meta-analytic path analysis revealed that work-domain-specific variables accounted for a considerable amount of variance in family satisfaction, as well as family-domain-specific variables accounted for a considerable amount of variance in job satisfaction.

Though cognitive appraisals and affective responses to work experiences evolve over time, satisfaction has been represented mainly as a static concept. Beyond static levels of satisfaction, the dynamics may be represented in trajectories, which track the intra-individual change as a function of latent baseline levels and latent growth. Trajectories capture information of previous and current levels of satisfaction, and have been found to influence employee attitudes (e.g., Hausknecht, Strumian, & Roberson, 2011). Sense-making theory can be drawn on, which emphasizes that employees have a strong need to make sense of events and experiences at work and family, and thus are likely to compare current working conditions with prior working conditions in order to create expectations about the future (Louis, 1980). To date, there has been no study that has examined job and family satisfaction trajectories. The integrating framework
of Chen, Ployhart, Thomas, Anderson, and Bliese (2011) offers a starting point.

Since there is, as far as we know, no previous research that offers a straightforward rationale with respect to the change in types of satisfaction, theory suggests that people high either in job or family involvement should show higher satisfaction. Transferring this to dynamics and latent satisfaction trajectories we thus hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 1:** Highly involvement across both domains (job and family) should show higher intercepts in latent job and family satisfaction trajectories.

Given the lack of research and the fact that there is no clear theoretical basis for predicting how involvement will affect satisfaction with respect to the dynamic development, we did not make any specific predictions, but rather posed the following research question:

**Research Question 1:** What is the relationship between job and family involvement and the change in job and family satisfaction across time?

Regarding the job and family satisfaction trajectories separately, the relationships between initial values (i.e., intercept) and change across time (i.e., growth factor), we argue that, due to ceiling effects, people who are initially highly satisfied will not be likely to become more satisfied over time, whereas people with much lower levels of satisfaction are able to do so. Besides this methodological point, sense-making theory (Louis, 1980) suggests that people need to interpret events that contrast with their prior experience in order to develop their expectations of future events (Chen et al., 2011). As all changes in family or work are likely to produce satisfaction losses (according to the ceiling effect), they may also be interpreted as a loss of important resources. According to the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), a decline in satisfaction might be very stressful, and protecting (or restoring) resources may require additional resources, which may lead to further loss. Thus, we hypothesize:

**Hypothesis 2:** Low initial satisfaction with job (family) is expected to be related to an increase in job (family) satisfaction across time.

### Method

#### Sample and Procedure

Following printed and radio recruitment advertisements, respondents registered online for participation in a 12-month survey on work-life integration and completed the survey online. Participants were required to be living in a partnership. Self-report data were collected over a 12-month period at three points in time: baseline (T1), 6 months (T2), and 12 months (T3) post-baseline. A total of 460 self-report data sets were completed in all three waves. Within our sample, 262 participants (58.3%) were male, with an overall mean age of 40.12 years ($SD = 8.90$). Of these, 216 (47.0%) had no children, 88 (19.2%) had one child below the age of eighteen, 140 (30.4%) participants had two or three children, and 16 (3.5%) had four or more children under 18. Participants had been working on average for 15.7 years ($SD = 10.3$) in the same job and had an average family income of about €40,400 per year ($SD = 30.3$).

#### Measures

Job involvement was measured with a shortened version of Kanungo’s (1982) questionnaire using three items (“The most important things that happen to me involve my present job,” “Most of my interests are centered around my job,” “Most of my personal life goals are job-oriented”), which were rated on a 5-point Likert scale that ranged from “totally disagree” (1) to “totally agree” (5). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ranged between .70 and .74.

Family involvement was measured similarly to the job involvement questionnaire with job-related expressions substituted with family-related expressions (e.g., “The most important things that happen to me involve my family”). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient was between .69 and .82.

Job satisfaction was measured with a 3-item scale adapted from Semmer’s Work Satisfaction Scale (1984) (“I am satisfied with my present work situation,” “There are hardly any complaints about my work,” and “After a day off, I am happy about going to work”). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ranged from .74 to .84.

Family satisfaction was assessed and coded similarly to the Work Satisfaction Scale with job-related expressions substituted with family-related expressions (e.g., “I’m satisfied with my present family situation”). Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ranged between .77 and .88.

#### Overall Involvement

To represent the simultaneous influence of both types of involvement, overall involvement was taken as being the product of the centered scores in both involvement measures. We operationalized overall involvement as a continuous variable because dichotomizing continuous variables has been shown to have a severe negative impact on data analyses, including loss of information and loss of power (e.g., Irwin & McClelland, 2003; MacCallum, Zhang, Preacher, & Rucker, 2002). Mean overall involvement was 10.97 ($SD = 6.02$; range: 3.37–17.50).
Controls
There is ample evidence that socio-demographic variables may contribute to an individual’s job and family satisfaction (e.g., Huebner, Drane, & Valois, 2000; Kavanaugh, Duffy, & Lilly, 2006). As we sought to conduct conservative tests of the hypotheses, we acknowledged the potential role of these factors in influencing outcomes. Age, gender, and number of children were included in the analysis as time-invariant covariates at the satisfaction level. As the inclusion of these additional variables had no impact on either the significance levels or the direction of our hypotheses, we do not discuss them further.

Analyses
To examine the factorial validity of our data, separate confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) procedures were carried out with: (1) a single-factor model in which all items loaded to a single factor; (2) an alternative model, in which items from job and family satisfaction were specified as a single construct, as were the items from both types of involvement; and (3) a hypothesized four-factor model, in which both types of satisfaction and involvement items all loaded accordingly. The single-factor model ($\chi^2(816, N = 460) = 8,975.64, p < .001, \text{CFI} = .34, \text{RMSEA} = .15$ (90% CI [.14, .15]), SRMR = .18) and the two-factor model ($\chi^2(804, N = 460) = 7,284.91, p < .001, \text{CFI} = .47, \text{RMSEA} = .13$ (90% CI [.13, .14]), SRMR = .18) were a poor fit to the data. The hypothesized four-factor model provided a closer fit to the data: ($\chi^2(753, N = 460) = 2,808.54, p < .001, \text{CFI} = .83, \text{RMSEA} = .08$ (90% CI [.07, .08]), SRMR = .07). Based on the four-factor model, we additionally tested two models to validate our research model. In the first model all the family-related constructs were related across time (i.e., family involvement and satisfaction) and so too were the job-related constructs (i.e., job involvement and satisfaction). In the second model we added cross-domain relationships (i.e., job involvement and family satisfaction; family involvement and job satisfaction). Both models provided a good fit to the data. Furthermore, the cross-domain model showed no better fit to the data than the original model ($\chi^2_{\text{Diff}}(11, N = 460) = 5.86, p = .64$).

To inspect the severity of common method variance due to self-reports, we added an unmeasured method factor in the hypothesized model with all items (cf. Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). A comparison of explained variance of the substantive factors and the method factor revealed that the average substantively explained variance of the common method factor (.25) was lower than the substantive factor explanation of variance for each factor (between .53 and .81), indicating that common method bias is unlikely to be a concern.

The power of the SEM model was assessed using the procedure for growth modeling and CFA described by Muthén and Muthén (2002) with Monte Carlo simulations. Analyses revealed a power of .88 for a sample size of 460, indicating a sufficient power.

Data analysis was conducted using mean-level latent growth curve modeling (LGC; Bollen & Curran, 2006) with Mplus 7.2 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2013). Age, gender, and number of children were included as time-invariant controls at the satisfaction level. A Bayesian estimator was used because of its advantages over the traditional frequentist approach in statistical modeling and data analysis (e.g., Muthén & Asparouhov, 2012; Zyphur & Oswald, 2013). Following a three-step procedure, we initially analyzed separate univariate latent growth curve (LGC) models for job satisfaction and family satisfaction in order to examine the functional form of change in the focal variable; we did so by comparing two possible trajectories: (1) free form with loadings from the slope at T1 is fixed to 0, at T2 are free, and at T3 is fixed to 1, and (2) fixed linear model (cf. Chan & Schmitt, 2000). A well-specified model fit was indicated by (1) the posterior predictive $p$-value (PPP), indicating a good fit when equal to or higher than 0.05; and (2) a posterior predictive checking (PPC) 95% credibility interval (CI) for all estimated effects in the structural equation model in which a negative lower limit is considered to be one indicator of good model fit. The deviance information criterion (DIC) was used to compare the models, with small DIC values indicating a better fit. In step 2, an unconditional bivariate LGC model was examined, in which we allowed the intercept and slope of job satisfaction to covary with the intercept and slope of family satisfaction. In step 3, a conditional LGC model was used to determine the predictive power of overall involvement on estimates of satisfaction trajectories (i.e., intercept and growth). All estimates reported in the following section are standardized.

Results
Table 1 summarizes descriptive statistics of the two time-varying variables (i.e., job satisfaction and family satisfaction) across three waves, plus descriptive statistics of baseline predictors and controls. Univariate linear slope models were a good fit to the job satisfaction data (PPC 95% CI = [−19.126 | 13.859] and PPP = 0.629), and the family satisfaction data (PPC 95% CI = [−16.543 | 17.171] and
Posterior SD CI [Posterior SD CI] were significant, indicating interindividual differences in initial values and slope. The covariance between the intercept and slope was negative, which may be interpreted as a positive sign, but they were a better fit than models with the second time point freely estimated (the DICs were 2815.54 vs. 2819.12, and 2785.54 vs. 2789.11, respectively). The fit of the unconditional bivariate LGC model was satisfactory (PPC CI = [-19.533 | 30.711] andPPP = 0.301). The model showed that the average random intercepts of job satisfaction, of family satisfaction and slope for family satisfaction were significantly different from zero (mean = 4.48, 5.25, and -0.94, respectively, all p < .01), indicating significant interindividual differences in initial values and slope. The covariance between the intercept and slope was negative for job and family satisfaction (mean = -0.44, and -0.38, all p < .001), indicating that people with high (low) initial levels of satisfaction experience a significant decline (increase) in satisfaction over time. Additionally, people high in initial family satisfaction show a greater increase in job satisfaction (mean = 0.16, p < .01).

A conditional LGC model was examined to determine the predictive power of overall involvement on estimates of satisfaction trajectories (i.e., intercept and growth), which was an adequate fit to the data (PPC 95% CI = [-23.555 | 33.306] andPPP = 0.308). Hypothesis 1, which stated that high overall involvement should be positively related to intercepts in latent job and family satisfaction trajectories, was supported (β = .17, Posterior SD = 0.05, CI [0.001 | 0.062], p < .001, and β = .33, Posterior SD = 0.05, CI [0.239 | 0.412], p < .001, respectively). Next, following our research question we examined the relationship between overall involvement and change in job and family satisfaction across time using a conditional LCG model. Overall involvement was a significant predictor of initial job satisfaction (β = .13, Posterior SD = 0.05, CI [0.006 | 0.030], p < .01) and family satisfaction (β = .33, Posterior SD = 0.048, CI [0.000 | 0.235], p < .001), but predicted only growth in family satisfaction (β = -0.18, Posterior SD = 0.112, CI [-0.511 | -0.031], p < .01). Results indicated that highly involved people (i.e., those with high levels of job and family involvement) showed higher initial scores in latent job and family satisfaction trajectories, compared to people who were much less involved. In turn, highly involved people showed a decline in family satisfaction across time. Finally, in support of Hypothesis 2, baseline and growth estimates of trajectories are significant covariates for job satisfaction (mean = -0.43, p < .001) and family satisfaction (mean = -0.35, p < .01).

### Discussion

The current study extends the literature in work-life integration in several ways. First, we establish a relationship between involvement both in job and family, referred to as overall involvement, that determines changes in job and family satisfaction across time, something that has not been examined before. Our results demonstrated that highly involved people showed higher initial scores in latent job and family satisfaction trajectories, compared to those with little involvement, but they then, showed a decline in family satisfaction over time. A second main contribution of our study is that we demonstrated that models which do not analyze interactions among involvement constructs are underspecified, which is the case in nearly all previous researches on work-life integration. Third, we demonstrated that intra-individual variation across time is important for describing relationships between involvement and satisfaction.

Our results provide insight into the beneficial and detrimental effects that may arise when employees place high importance on both job and family involvement. Employees who are highly involved showed greater initial satisfaction, which may be interpreted as a positive sign, but they...
were also not able to sustain their satisfaction over time. Drawing on Greenhaus, Collins, and Shaw’s (2003) conception of balance, our results indicate that high engagement in work and family roles represents a balance which is rather unstable and turns to diminish over time. Furthermore, Greenhaus et al. propose three components of balance, including (1) time balance (i.e., time is divided equally between roles); (2) involvement balance (i.e., the individual has equal psychological involvement in both roles); and (3) satisfaction balance (i.e., equal satisfaction is gained from both roles). Our results showed that involvement and satisfaction were dynamically related, and the meta-analytic results provided evidence that involvement and time spent in the specific domain were also closely related (Ford et al., 2007). As a consequence of these relationships, an imbalance in one of the three components should induce an imbalance in the other two components. However, the concept of “balance” might be inaccurate, as an equal distribution (of time, satisfaction, and involvement) may not be reasonable. The concept of “work-life integration” (Lewis, Rapoport, & Gambles, 2003) implies that it is not necessarily an issue of an equal allocation between work and family domain, but is more about the appropriate accommodation of an individual’s work and family needs (Jones, Burke, & Westman, 2006).

Our results also suggest gains which might be interpreted in the form of facilitation, positive spillover, and enrichment. These theories suggest that experiences or involvement in one domain provides individuals with increased resources which can be beneficial in the other domain. For instance, family support as a consequence of higher resources which can be beneficial in the other domain. Similarly, coworker support and family-friendly work environments are associated with greater family and job satisfaction and increased organizational commitment (Allen, 2001).

A second main contribution of this study is that work-life integration research should address the simultaneous impact of both types of involvement in order to predict changes in job and family satisfaction, as has also been suggested by other scholars (e.g., Wegge et al., 2007). Considering how different types of involvement take effect simultaneously is important both for theoretical and practical reasons. It seems reasonable that different types of person’s involvement are interrelated and thus might intensify or attenuate any effect on outcomes. Ignoring one form of involvement would thus suggest that biased estimates (either over- or underestimation) would be produced and give inconclusive results. From a theoretical point of view, it seems moreover plausible to assume that, rather than single processes provoking effects, a vast number of processes are taking part simultaneously in the human cognitive and affective system at any given time. The results of our study show that examining both involvement types simultaneously provides a more comprehensive account of individuals’ work-life integration and may contribute to and refine current theory and research by adding relevant processes and integrating mini-theories across domains (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Wayne et al., 2007). Taking into consideration processes which are related theoretically would allow more valid and complex models to be built. Finally, this would also open a way to examine the relative influence of two or more processes, offering possibilities for building higher level measures, such as structures (e.g., ambivalence, consistency) and conflicts. This applies particularly to psychological domains, such as work-life integration, which inherently constitute interferences. Additionally, the research supports simultaneous effects. Wegge et al. (2007), for instance, found evidence that the interaction between job satisfaction and job involvement could be a predictor of absenteeism. They argue that examining how the interactions between attitudes impacted on outcomes might open a new avenue for gaining a deeper understanding of absence behavior.

A third, and most important, contribution of this study is that it shows that, in work-life integration research, the time factor (i.e., the dynamic) in psychological processes is important in describing relationships. Along with various scholars in organizational behavior research (e.g., Mitchell & James, 2001; Ployhart & Vandenberg, 2010), we believe that psychological variables are inherently dynamic, and that organizational theory and research must take dynamic processes into account. Trajectories are important both for the description and understanding of work and family behavior. As a result, theoretical and empirical models are underspecified, yielding inaccurate inferences about outcomes and inconsistent results.

**Practical Implications**

The results of this study contribute to the work-life literature and impact the field in at least three ways. Knowledge of satisfaction paths enhances our understanding of people’s attitudes and helps us to offer supporting activities. Understanding patterns of involvement and satisfaction over time may present opportunities for interventions that aim to increase individual resources and to sensitize for deteriorating events. Typical change trajectories may also be used as summaries of what has occurred in the last months that can be used to help foster realistic expectations about expected progress during treatment. If the progress of treatment is slow, parents who expect quick results might get discouraged and terminate treatment prematurely.
According to our results, organizations should foster their employees’ multiple role involvement (leading to higher initial satisfaction), but this was also linked to a decrease in family involvement. Thus, organizations should concentrate principally on ways of increasing their employees’ family satisfaction, such as family-supportive activities. However, our results also demonstrate that this type of balance is rather unstable across time: An imbalance in one particular aspect (i.e., time, satisfaction, or involvement) that occurred across domains might also affect those other aspects. In general, organizations should provide an environment that is supportive of families. At the same time they should monitor and adapt to the working conditions.

Moreover, knowing the patterns of involvement and satisfaction can help organizations to identify which kind of support is needed. House (1981), for instance, distinguished four types of support (i.e., emotional, instrumental, appraisal, and informational). A continuous decrease in family involvement (and thus in family satisfaction) may be best handled with emotional support (e.g., empathy, trust, and care) by the family, whereas a decrease in job involvement should be treated with appraisal support from colleagues or supervisors that can enable the individual to get information for his/her personnel development. Thus, organizations should encourage their employees to ask for support and encourage their leaders to offer different kinds of support.

Limitations and Future Research

There are several limitations and corresponding directions for future research for this study that have to be acknowledged, and these include data collection technique, sample, and design. First, because the data were obtained via self-reports, biases might have occurred due to social desirability or nonrealistic self-appraisal (e.g., Holtgraves, 2004). To avoid such potential biases, future research should incorporate a multi-informant and multi-method approach. Also, as with every study, the sample characteristics may restrict the generalizability of our results. Our sample consisted mostly of professionals with a relatively high average income, which imposes specific conditions on work and family. Future research should thus test the generalizability of our findings against more diverse samples covering a broader and more representative population range, as suggested by O’Driscoll (1996) and Tetrick and Buffardi (2006). Further examination of the hypotheses across different jobs, lengths of tenure, and organizations will not only help to address these limitations, but will also contribute to the development of more differentiated models and better adapted organizational practices. In addition, future research should also differentiate between different stages of one’s career (e.g., early vs. middle vs. late) and between different generations (e.g., generation x vs. y vs. z). In our study demographic variables had no impact on our results but besides the possible influence of child care in early stages, the growing number and arrangements of home care for people in middle and late stages may have an important influence on involvement and satisfaction. Moreover, it is necessary to examine whether social arrangements for work-life integration are useful. As the generation z grow up with an awareness of better work-life integration, they may differ in their expectations and attitudes (e.g., satisfaction). Thus, comprehensive cross-generational panel studies are essential to draw valid conclusions which could have a significant impact on organizational arrangements.

One of the strengths of this study is its longitudinal design, which improved the precision of the estimates, and allowed to explicitly model within-subject changes over time. Empirical research with such a rigorous design has been rare in the work-family literature. Nevertheless, the validity of our results is potentially limited by the time frame we used. Because time used to measure relevant relationships should correspond to the time frame of the variables of interest but theory does not allow appropriate time frames to be concluded, we used an arbitrary frame with equidistant intervals of six months. Consequently, this raises a number of questions regarding whether: (1) results would be valid if shorter (or longer) time frames were used; (2) time is only a proxy representing more meaningful events of particular significance in an individual’s life; and (3) more situational and stronger varying measures of involvement, such as work involvement and work engagement, should be used. We place considerable emphasis on clarifying the metric of psychological variables, including when they start, how they proceed (immediate, delayed, slow, and fast effects), and their fade-out.

Finally, though our study design enables us to model trajectories across time, it does not allow us to model nonlinear trajectories. Research provides clear evidence of either excessive focus on work (“workaholism”; McMillan, O’Driscoll, & Burke, 2003) or the experience of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), suggesting there are nonlinear relationships between involvement and time spent in a domain. Future research should investigate nonlinear trajectories (e.g., quadratic and piecewise) that require at least four measurement points in time.

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References


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