

## Office or kitchen? Wellbeing consequences of role participation depend on role salience



Lieke L. ten Brummelhuis\*, Brenda A. Lautsch

Simon Fraser University, Beedie School of Business, 8888 University Drive, Burnaby BC, V5A 1S6, Canada

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### ABSTRACT

In light of the emerging trend of men and women sharing work and family roles, the goal of this study is to investigate which individuals will experience a role as depleting or enriching their energy levels. We apply self-discrepancy theory and propose that role salience explains when a role will lead to exhaustion versus engagement. Exhaustion is likely when participating in a role for which salience is low, while engagement is likely when spending time on a role for which salience is high. We test this idea using a diary study whereby participants logged time spent on work and family tasks on seven consecutive days, while reporting feelings of exhaustion and engagement in the morning. For individuals with high work salience, time spent on work increased exhaustion less, and increased engagement more, as compared to individuals with low work salience. Spending time on family tasks increased exhaustion less, and increased engagement more, when work role salience was low as compared to high. Our findings suggest that wellbeing consequences of role participation depend on work role salience. We discuss how these findings advance theoretical thinking in the work–family literature and give leads for managerial practice.

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The work–family research field developed in response to the changing roles of men and women. The exponential increase of women participating in paid labor started around 1950 (Costa, 2000) and men soon after began to increase their participation in childcare and household tasks (Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, & Robinson, 2000). In early work–family studies, it was assumed that for women, the work role would add to their stress level while for men, participating in family tasks would cause more stress, because these roles would conflict with role participation as expected by traditional gender role norms (Pleck, 1977). However, research that has examined gender differences in wellbeing outcomes related to combining dual roles has been mixed in support of these ideas. For example, work hours do not increase exhaustion more in women than in men (Ten Brummelhuis, Van der Lippe, Kluwer, & Flap, 2008), and both men and women may gain energy from participation in multiple roles (Barnett & Hyde, 2001).

These findings may come as no surprise given the rise of more egalitarian gender roles worldwide (Cha & Weeden, 2014). Egalitarian roles consider women and men equally suitable for the work and family role. In societies with egalitarian norms, women do not feel that having a paid job conflicts with role expectations and men's participation in the family role is not frowned upon either. Egalitarian norms thus allow men and women to choose roles that align with their preferences. Hence, neither gender nor gender role norms, but the individual's preference for a role is likely to determine whether role participation has a positive or negative impact on wellbeing. The goal of this study is to test this idea. We investigate if the degree to which daily participation in a work or family role impairs or contributes to wellbeing depends on the individual's salience for that role. Role salience refers to the extent to which a role is an important means of self-definition and personal satisfaction (Amatea, Cross, Clark, & Bobby, 1986). Role salience, importance, role centrality and sometimes role involvement, are all terms that capture

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail addresses: [lttenbrum@sfu.ca](mailto:lttenbrum@sfu.ca) (L.L. ten Brummelhuis), [blautsch@sfu.ca](mailto:blautsch@sfu.ca) (B.A. Lautsch).

this idea of the psychological investment individuals make in particular roles and are used interchangeably in the literature (Bagger & Li, 2012; Powell & Greenhaus, 2010). We use a diary study to examine the daily effects of time spent on work and family tasks (i.e., household and care tasks) on next morning exhaustion and engagement. In such a design, we make within-person comparisons, testing for instance if a person who works more hours on Tuesday than usual (his/her daily average), feels more exhausted than usual on Wednesday morning. Next, we compare whether these relationships differ between individuals high and low on work and family role salience.

We contribute to theoretical models in the work–family literature in two ways. First, our assumptions regarding the effects of participation in a role are based on conflict and enrichment perspectives (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). According to these perspectives, role participation can drain employees' energy, leaving too little energy to perform optimally in the other role (depleting process), but on the other hand, role participation may also lead to gains in fulfillment and energy (enriching process; Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson, & Kacmar, 2007), facilitating performance in the other role. In this study, we focus on the first step, whereby a role affects the individual's energy levels. This step is crucial as it explains the mechanism by which one role can deplete or enrich the other role (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Little is known about the conditions that could diminish or fortify the impact of role participation on derivation or loss of energy (Greenhaus, 2008). We extend this line of research by investigating if role salience explains when role participation is more likely to increase exhaustion, thereby initiating a depletion process, versus engagement, eliciting an enriching process.

Second, we propose self-discrepancy theory as a useful lens to understand better when role participation leads to exhaustion versus engagement. Self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987) suggests that individuals compare their ideal self (e.g. hopes, aspirations), to their actual self (i.e., actual behavior). Exhaustion is particularly likely when the individual participates in a role for which salience is low, while engagement particularly occurs when spending more time on a role for which salience is high. We hope to increase our understanding of why some individuals derive energy from a role while others feel exhausted, by applying self-discrepancy theory to the work–family literature.

We solidify these contributions by using a daily diary design to examine the wellbeing consequences of role participation. A daily approach is more accurate than comparing the effects of average role participation (e.g., weekly work hours) on wellbeing (e.g., over the last month) between persons with high versus low salience, because memory loss or accuracy is less of an issue with daily reports as opposed to estimating how much time one spends weekly, on average, on a role. Our daily, within-person design fits in with the recent trend in the OB literature to examine phenomena at smaller units of analysis (Christian, Eisenkraft, & Kapadia, 2014; Dalal, Bhawe, & Fiset, 2014; Parker, 2014), as those smaller units of analysis (e.g., days) do more justice to what actually happens in daily life than between-person comparisons.

Gaining more insight in the wellbeing consequences of role participation is important for employees and employers. Employees might benefit from this knowledge by adjusting their time allocation over work and family roles if they know which role increases their wellbeing most. Or, if time adjustment is not possible, they can seek extra support for roles that drain energy. Likewise, it is important for organizations to understand which time allocation helps employees to start the workday with plenty of energy. Happy and energetic employees are more committed and productive employees (Bakker, 2009) and they are less likely to call in sick, or get burnt out (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Van Rhenen, 2009).

## 1. Theoretical framework

### 1.1. Depleting and enriching role participation

The conflict approach (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) and enrichment approach (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) explain when role participation might deplete energy or might increase energy levels (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). These two models have been recently integrated in the Work-Home Resources (W-HR) model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). The W-HR model assumes that participation in a role can have advantages and disadvantages, because a role involves possible demands (e.g., task overload), while also entailing possible contextual resources (e.g., social support from the spouse). Therefore, participation in a role can induce a depleting as well as an enriching process. Depletion is described as a process whereby demands in a role drain personal resources such as physical energy and time, thereby limiting the personal resources that are left for optimal performance in the other role. An example is an employee who worries about family matters (Peeters, Montgomery, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005). Worries and ruminative thoughts consume emotional and cognitive energy, making it more difficult to focus on work (Nohe, Michel, & Sonntag, 2014). Another example is a complex task at work that requires so much cognitive energy and resilience that the employee may have too little energy left to participate actively in family activities after work (Ilies et al., 2007). These examples show that participation in a role, either work or family, can deplete employees' energy levels. We apply the insights on the depletion process as described by the W-HR model to daily role participation. Note that we focus on the first step of the W-HR model whereby domain characteristics affect personal resources. The second step would be to apply those personal resources in the other domain. Based on the depletion process described by this model, we assume that daily time spent on work and family roles costs personal resources. We focus specifically on depleted energy, indicated by increased feelings of emotional exhaustion, as this volatile personal resource is assumed to fluctuate from day to day (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

Enrichment, on the other hand, refers to the process whereby participation in a role is an opportunity to gain personal resources, such as skills, perspectives, and advice, which employees can use to improve performance in the other role (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). For instance, spending a relaxing day with family members may give the employee personal resources such as fulfillment and gratefulness (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002). When employees

apply those positive feelings from their family life to their work this may help them to be more collegial to others at work or have more energy to engage in work tasks (Rothbard, 2001). Consistent with the first step of the enrichment process as described by the W-HR model, we assume that employees can derive energy (e.g., vigor, enthusiasm) from daily participation in work and family roles.

### 1.2. Self-discrepancy theory

If spending time on a role can cause exhaustion (depletion process) but also engagement (enrichment process), how then, do we know which of these processes is most likely to occur? Self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987) provides a useful lens to help answer this question. According to self-discrepancy theory, individuals compare their actual attributes and behavior (the actual self), to images of their ideal selves. The ideal self refers to the representation of the attributes that someone would ideally possess. It reflects someone's hopes, aspirations, and wishes for the person the individual wants to be (Abelson, 1983). Discrepancies between the actual self and the ideal self-cause various negative emotions. The individual assumes that positive outcomes would result from acting in accord with the ideal self, and regrets the loss of those outcomes when actual behavior deviates from the ideal. By failing to meet the standards of the ideal self, the individual fails to obtain his or her hopes and desires. As a result, the individual experiences various negative psychological states, such as disappointment, dissatisfaction, de-motivation, and frustration (Carver & Ganellen, 1983).

The insights from self-discrepancy theory suggest that the psychological reaction to spending time on a role depends on the image the individual has about his or her ideal self. Spending time in the work role may lead to a positive psychological response (i.e., engagement), provided that this behavior is in accord with the image of the person he or she wishes to be. Spending time in a role is more likely to cause a negative psychological reaction (i.e., emotional exhaustion) when this actual behavior is contrary to one's ideal self.

We propose that the ideal self with regard to work and family roles can be assessed by an individual's salience for a role. Individuals who have high work (family) role salience regard their work (family) as the most important life goal and expect that their job (family life) will give them more real satisfaction than anything else. High salience for a role goes together with high satisfaction from the role and the derivation of personal resources (Amatea et al., 1986). This suggests that individuals who spend time on roles that they value will derive more benefit from those roles, while spending time in roles that they do not value will instead be harmful to wellbeing.

### 1.3. Role salience as moderator

The combination of insights from the W-HR model and self-discrepancy theory provides an answer to the question we posed above: When is participation in a role most likely to drain energy, and when is a boost in energy more likely? The depletion process suggests that an individual can get exhausted when spending a lot of time in a role because of the demands related to that role. However, when the role is highly salient for this individual, this negative process may be diminished. Because the role is so important to the individual, he or she may experience demands from this role as less stressful (Dewe, 1992). Depletion of energy and other personal resources is then less likely. Therefore, we expect that participation in a role will exhaust the individual to a lesser extent when he or she has a high role salience for this life role.

Conversely, when one spends time on a role that is less salient, feelings of exhaustion are likely to develop. In such cases individuals may feel that they have failed in the pursuit of their ideal selves. Feelings of frustration, guilt, and disappointment may then exacerbate the exhaustive effect of fulfilling this role. Such feelings may also result from participating in a role while highly valuing another role. Since time is a fixed resource, spending more time on family may mean that there is less time for work (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). For instance, helping a child with homework may prevent an employee from preparing for a work meeting in the evening. This may particularly lead to frustration and stress among individuals who highly value the work role.

We are not aware of any studies examining the wellbeing impairments of work and family role participation, and whether such effects depend on role salience. In a study on a related topic, however, Livingston and Judge (2008) found that family-to-work interferences led to more feelings of guilt among men with traditional norms and among women with egalitarian norms. Both groups presumably have higher work role salience than men with egalitarian norms and women with traditional norms respectively (Moya, Exposito, & Ruiz, 2000). These results indirectly suggest that participation in the family role, at the cost of the work role, harms wellbeing more among individuals with high work role salience. Similarly, hours spent on care tasks have been related to emotional exhaustion among men with traditional gender role norms (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2008). We will explicitly test the influence of role salience on a daily level. More specifically, we examine if the effect of participation in work and family roles on next-morning exhaustion differs between individual with high and low work and family salience.

**Hypotheses 1.** *a/b: Daily time spent on work (family) tasks will increase morning exhaustion less strongly among individuals with high work (family) role salience as compared to individuals with low work (family) role salience.*

**Hypotheses 2.** *a/b: Daily time spent on work (family) tasks will increase morning exhaustion more strongly among individuals with high family (work) role salience as compared to individuals with low family (work) role salience.*

With regard to the enrichment process we follow the same logic. We expect that engagement is most likely on days in which the individual spends time on a role that is highly important to him/her. The actual behavior is then in accord with the life goal

the individual pursues, resulting in a positive psychological state (Higgins, 1987), boosting feelings of vigor, dedication and enjoyment even further. Participation in a role may not energize the employee as much if he or she does not value the role. The actual behavior is then not in line with the behavior seen as ideal. Moreover, spending time in this role also means that one has less time for another role that one might value more since time is a limited resource (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). For instance, as a consequence of working overtime, an employee may not be able to attend a child's soccer game. We suggest that the employee will particularly evaluate this situation as a missed opportunity for pleasure and fulfillment if the employee considers family life as highly important (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003). Any feelings of engagement the employee may derive from the work role will then be dampened. Again, we test these moderated relationships on a daily level, investigating to what extent work and family salience strengthen or attenuate the effect of role participation on next-morning engagement.

**Hypothesis 3.** *a/b: Daily time spent on work (family) tasks will increase morning engagement more strongly among individuals with high work (family) role salience as compared to individuals with low work (family) role salience.*

**Hypothesis 4.** *a/b: Daily time spent on work (family) tasks will increase morning engagement less strongly among individuals with high family (work) role salience as compared to individuals with low family (work) role salience.*

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Sample and procedure

This study was conducted among employees from various organizations in the Netherlands. Most employees were employed in the commercial services (57.1%), but other industries were covered as well (e.g. education, healthcare, government, construction and production). Employees were recruited through their organization. The email informed employees about the opportunity to participate, voluntarily, in an online daily survey on work–life balance. We informed participants that the study was about juggling work and family roles, and this resulted in the self-selection of employees with a partner and children. The recruitment process resulted in 123 employees willing to participate. In the week before the study, employees were informed per email by the research coordinator about the aim and the procedure of the upcoming survey.

On Sunday night or Monday morning, the respondents completed a general questionnaire that included questions about demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender), life role salience, and general levels of exhaustion and engagement. On Monday night, before going to sleep, respondents completed the first diary questionnaire, reporting the hours they had spent on work and family roles on that day. The second diary questionnaire was completed on Tuesday morning, assessing current feelings of exhaustion and engagement. The night and morning questionnaires were repeated Tuesday through Sunday (seven days). The web survey logged the days and times of when the respondent started and finished each questionnaire, allowing us to check whether they used the correct time slot for each measurement. The morning questionnaire could be filled in between 5 am and 10 am while the night questionnaire could be filled in between 9 pm and 2 am. Two reminders were sent daily per email, one at 5 am and one at 9 pm. We only included respondents who completed the general questionnaire and the daily questionnaire on at least two consecutive days. This resulted in a sample of 63 respondents. Cases that were not reported on the right day or day slot (e.g., morning questionnaire was filled in at night) were deleted. Some respondents randomly missed a morning questionnaire (missing cases = 58) or an afternoon questionnaire (missing cases = 41). We checked if we had selective attrition, for instance when people with certain characteristics would drop from the study. An ANOVA with post-hoc Bonferroni test showed no differences in the means on any of the model variables between the days. Also, when we compared the Sunday sample with the dropouts, we found no significant differences in work salience, family salience, general work engagement and general work exhaustion. Due to randomly missed questionnaires and the use of lagged variables, the sample size in our full models is 210.

Seventy-five percent of the respondents were female and the mean age of our sample was 39.39 years ( $SD = 5.20$ ; range 27 to 53 years). Average job experience was 15.61 years ( $SD = 4.95$ ). About half of the employees (42.9%) had a full-time contract (>36 h). The mean contractual weekly working hours were 33.21 ( $SD = 5.75$ ; range 18–40). A minority (12.7%) of the respondents had lower vocational education, 41.3% had a bachelor's degree, while 46.0% of the respondents had a master, PhD or MBA degree. All respondents had a partner and children and therefore, we refer to family in this study as employees with a partner and children.

### 2.2. Measures

#### 2.2.1. Morning exhaustion

The state variable of morning exhaustion was based on a shortened version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). We adjusted the work-related exhaustion items to measure context-free feelings. Respondents were asked to rate (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree) their current feelings of exhaustion using the three items, "I feel exhausted", "I feel emotionally drained", and "I feel used up" ( $\alpha$  ranging from .65 (Saturday) to .80, mean = .75).

#### 2.2.2. Morning engagement

We measured daily engagement in the morning with the state, context-free version of the work engagement scale (Schaufeli, Bakker, & Salanova, 2006). We only focused on the sub-dimensions vigor and enjoyment, excluding absorption, as we were



interested in the individual's energy level and those two dimensions reflect the core of engagement (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Example items of the five-item scale are: "Right now, I feel strong and vigorous", "Right now, I am enthusiastic", and "Right now, I am inspired by the activities I am going to undertake" (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The Cronbach's alpha varied between .87 and .95 (mean = .91).

### 2.2.3. Work role participation

At the end of each day, respondents reported how much time they had spent on work. Work was described in the survey as "Time spent on work-related activities. It concerns contractual work hours as well as overtime. Do not include commuting time". Employees reported their answer in hours. We used the lagged time spent on work, meaning that time spent on work on Monday predicts exhaustion and engagement on Tuesday morning (and work time on Tuesday predicts Wednesday morning wellbeing etc.).

### 2.2.4. Family role participation

Family tasks were described as "Time spent on household chores and care for children, elderly and others in your network. Examples are: ironing, doing laundry, preparing dinner, buying groceries, dressing children, feeding children, care for elderly, bringing children to school or other activities." Again, respondents reported the hours spent on these tasks at the end of the day and we used the lagged measure to predict morning exhaustion and engagement.

### 2.2.5. Role salience

The measures for work and family role salience were based on the scales of Amatea et al. (1986). The original scales include sub-dimensions of salience for the work, parenting, marital, and home role. We used the adapted scales as proposed by Sanz-Vergel, Demerouti, Bakker, and Moreno-Jimenez (2011) using five items for work role salience and five items for family role salience with answer categories ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Sample items of work salience scale are: "Having a career that is interesting and exciting to me is my most important life goal", and "I expect my job to give me more real satisfaction than anything else I do". Sample items of the family salience scale are: "Having a successful relationship with my partner and children is the most important thing in life to me", and "I expect the major satisfactions in my life to come from my family". The reliabilities of both scales were adequate (work-role salience = .78, family salience = .81).

### 2.2.6. Controls

Even though egalitarian gender role norms are prevailing, men and women may still differ in their preference for a role (Cha & Weeden, 2014). Therefore, we first controlled for gender, coded as 1 (female) and 2 (male). Because it is possible that an individual attaches great importance to the work role, but also highly values the family role (Amatea et al., 1986), we controlled for salience for the other role when examining whether the importance employees attach to a role affects the wellbeing consequences of role participation. To control for the fact that some individuals may be more engaged or exhausted than others in general (Breevaart, Bakker, Demerouti, & Hetland, 2012), we controlled for general levels of work engagement and exhaustion. We used the nine-item version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES; Schaufeli et al., 2006). Example items are: "At my job I feel strong and vigorous", "I am enthusiastic about my job", and "I find my work inspiring". All items were scored on a seven-point rating scale ranging from 0 ('never') to 6 ('always'). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was .79. In the models predicting daily exhaustion, we controlled for the trait variable of exhaustion, measured in the general questionnaire with the subscale of the shortened Maslach Burnout Inventory (Schaufeli et al., 2002). The scale consisted of five items, such as "I feel used up at the end of my workday" and "I feel emotionally drained because of my work" (Cronbach's  $\alpha$  = .90). Answer categories ranged from 0 ('never') to 6 ('always').

We controlled for three other categories respondents logged in the daily diaries, because time spent on other activities may also affect wellbeing (Sonnentag, 2001). Quality time with family members was described as "the quality time spent with members of your household, such as talking, discussing, watching television together, playing a game, and reading to children." Time with extended family and friends was described as "the quality time spent with family and friends outside of your household such as having dinner together, going out, and having a conversation." Time for oneself was described as "time spent on activities you planned for your self during leisure time such as watching TV, reading a book and resting on the couch, physical exercise, as well as volunteering." We included the lagged daily time in hours spent on these activities. We also included weekly work hours as control variables in the analyses. Employees working more weekly hours may have higher work role salience and experience lower wellbeing (Brett & Stroh, 2003; Ng, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2007; Van der Hulst, 2003).

## 2.3. Analysis

Our repeated measures data can be viewed as multi-level data, with daily measurements nested within individuals. This leads to a two-level model with days at Level 1 ( $n = 210$  study occasions) and the individual persons at Level 2 ( $n = 63$  participants). Multi-level analysis with the MLwiN program (Rashbash, Browne, Healy, Cameron, & Charlton, 2000) was applied. Predictor variables at the day-level (Level 1, e.g., hours spent on work) were centered to the individual mean, while person-level (Level 2) predictor variables (e.g., work role salience) were centered to the grand mean (Enders & Tofghi, 2007).

In order to test the interaction effects we used cross products composed of centered components, and added this cross product, along with its components, as predictors in the model. We calculated the significance of the simple slopes using the

calculators developed by Preacher, Curran, and Bauer (2006). The simple slope estimates indicate whether the relationship between role discrepancy and next morning wellbeing is significant for respondents with high role salience (+1SD) and low salience (−1SD) for a life role.

We tested all models with and without the control variables (gender, trait exhaustion, trait engagement, quality time with family, quality time with extended family and friends, time for self, weekly work hours). As the control variable weekly work hours had no effect on the relationships under study, and did not significantly relate to the outcome variables we dropped this variable from the models to create more parsimonious models (Spector & Brannick, 2011).

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Descriptive statistics

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the study variables. Daily time spent on work and family tasks are not significantly correlated to next morning exhaustion or engagement.

In order to examine the proportion of variance that can be attributed to the different levels of analysis, we calculated the intra-class correlation for each day-level variable. The findings are reported in the null-models of Table 2. Results showed that about half of the variance (48%) in morning engagement could be attributed to within-person variance. For engagement in the morning, 62% was attributable to variations within persons, between days, while 38% of the variance in morning exhaustion was due to between-person variance. Thus, there were significant amounts of variance to be explained by within-person fluctuations as well as between-person differences, justifying our multi-level approach.

We also estimated the main-effects models (see Table A in the appendix), with time spent on work and family tasks as predictors of exhaustion and engagement in the morning. Time spent on either role did not significantly relate to exhaustion or engagement in the morning.

#### 3.2. Hypothesis testing

Table 2 reports the findings of the hypothesized interaction effects with role salience. In Hypothesis 1, we expected that time spent on a role would increase exhaustion to a lesser extent when salience for this role would be high. Table 3, first column, shows that this is indeed the case for time spent on work ( $B = -.072$ ,  $SE = .033$ ,  $p < .01$ ). We depicted all significant interactions in the appendix. This interaction effect is depicted in Fig. 1, showing that the relationship between time spent on work and morning exhaustion is positive among individuals with low work salience (simple slope  $B = .06$ ,  $SE = .019$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while this is not the case among individuals with high work salience (simple slope  $B = -.03$ ,  $SE = .05$ , ns). As shown in Table 3 (first column), the interaction effect between time spent on family and family role salience on exhaustion is not significant. Therefore, we found support for Hypothesis 1a but not for Hypothesis 1b.

The same models also show the interaction effects between time spent in a role and salience for the other role, testing Hypothesis 2. Table 2 shows that the relationship between time spent on work and morning exhaustion is not affected by the individual's family role salience. Hypothesis 2a is therefore not supported. We did find support for Hypothesis 2b, given the significant interaction effect of work role salience ( $B = .190$ ,  $SE = .063$ ,  $p < .01$ ) on the relationship between time spent on family tasks and morning exhaustion (Table 3, first column). This interaction effect is depicted in Fig. 2, showing that time spent on family tasks is positively related to morning exhaustion when work role salience is high (simple slope  $B = .154$ ,  $SE = .055$ ,  $p < .01$ ), while this is not the case when work role salience is low (simple slope  $B = -.074$ ,  $SE = .055$ , ns).

**Table 1**

Means, standard deviations and correlations of model variables.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Exhaustion next morning	2.63	1.20		-.60**	.04	.09	-.02	-.12	-.11					
2. Engagement next morning	5.03	1.05	-.62**		-.03	-.06	-.06	.07	-.07					
3. Daily work hours (lagged)	5.84	3.88	-.06	.04		-.55**	-.58**	-.45	-.15*					
4. Daily hours family tasks (lagged)	3.23	2.43	.15*	-.07	-.55**		.12	.10	-.04					
5. Daily hours with family (lagged)	3.11	2.54	-.01	-.09	-.58**	.12*		.29**	.22**					
6. Daily hours with family & friends (lagged)	1.17	1.83	-.04	.04	-.45**	.12	.29**		-.01					
7. Daily hours for self (lagged)	2.02	2.30	-.11	-.09	-.15*	-.04	.22**	-.01						
8. Gender (male)	1.26	0.44	-.17**	.07	.18**	-.23**	-.00	-.23**	.07					
9. Work role salience	3.50	0.60	-.02	.15*	.14	-.07	-.15*	.08	-.02	-.06				
10. Family role salience	4.20	0.64	-.03	.04	-.02	.01	.09	-.04	.03	.25**	-.21**			
11. Trait exhaustion	2.78	1.23	.33**	-.21**	-.17**	.09	-.11	.14*	.02	-.15**	-.02	.16**		
12. Trait engagement	5.65	0.98	-.16**	.31**	.15**	.04	-.19**	-.16*	-.08	-.05	.30**	-.20**	-.41**	
13. Weekly work hours	33.21	5.75	-.07	.054	.28**	-.34**	-.16**	.12	-.09	.43**	.41**	-.16**	-.00	.08

Note: N = 210 cases (63 respondents, 6 lagged days). Lower diagonal presents between-person correlations; Upper diagonal present within-person correlations.

\*\* p < .01.

\* p < .05.

**Table 2**  
Multi-level analyses for hours, work and interaction effects of role salience.

	Morning exhaustion		Morning engagement	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Constant	2.74***	.12	5.01***	.10
Trait work exhaustion/engagement	.36***	.10	.34***	.10
Hours spent on work	.01	.04	-.03	.06
Hours spent on family tasks	.04	.04	-.03	.04
Hours with family	-.02	.05	-.05	.04
Hours with family and friends	-.02	.05	-.01	.05
Hours for self	-.02	.06	-.04	.05
Work role salience	-.03	.21	.02	.18
Family role salience	-.32*	.19	.28*	.16
Work hours * work role salience	-.07**	.03	.08**	.03
Work hours * family role salience	-.00	.04	-.03	.03
-2xLOG (df)	602.13		552.31	
Level 2 variance (between persons)	.56***	.15	.33***	.10
Level 1 variance (between days)	.72***	.08	.60***	.07

Note: N = 210 cases (63 respondents, 6 lagged days). Unstandardized estimates.

\*\*\* p < .001.

\*\* p < .01.

\* p < .05.

In **Hypothesis 3**, we expected that time spent on a role would increase engagement more strongly when salience for this role would be high. As shown in **Table 2** (second column) the interaction term between time spent on work and work role salience significantly predicts morning engagement ( $B = .077, SE = .030, p < .01$ ). **Fig. 3** shows that time spent on work tasks is positively related to work engagement when work role salience is high (simple slope  $B = .28, SE = .12, p < .05$ ), while being negatively related to work engagement when work role salience is low (simple slope  $B = -.08, SE = .04, p < .05$ ). We did not find a significant interaction effect for time spent on family tasks and family salience (**Table 3**, second column) and therefore only **Hypothesis 3a**, and not **Hypothesis 3b**, was supported.

Finally, in **Hypothesis 4**, we expected that spending time in a role would increase engagement to a lesser extent when salience for the other role was high. As **Table 2** (second column) shows, we did not find that family salience affected the relationship between time spent on work and engagement and therefore, **Hypothesis 4a** was not supported. The interaction effect of work salience on the relationship between family hours and engagement was significant (**Table 3**, second column,  $B = -.24, SE = .06, p < .001$ ). This relationship is depicted in **Fig. 4** and shows that time spent on family tasks is positively related to morning engagement for individuals with low work role salience (simple slope  $B = .13, SE = .05, p < .05$ ) while being negatively related to engagement for individuals with high work role salience (simple slope  $B = -.16, SE = .05, p < .01$ ). This result supports **Hypothesis 4b**.

**Table 3**  
Multi-level analyses for hours, family tasks and interaction effects of role salience.

	Morning exhaustion		Morning engagement	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Constant	2.74***	.12	5.02***	.09
Trait work exhaustion/engagement	.36***	.10	.32***	.10
Hours spent on work	.01	.04	-.03	.04
Hours spent on family tasks	.03	.04	-.02	.04
Hours with family	-.02	.05	-.05	.04
Hours with family and friends	-.02	.05	.00	.04
Hours for self	-.04	.06	-.01	.05
Work role salience	-.03	.21	.04	.18
Family role salience	-.31	.19	.27*	.16
Family hours * work role salience	.19**	.06	-.24***	.06
Family hours * family role salience	.07	.06	-.04	.06
-2xLOG (df)	598.55		543.92	
Level 2 variance (between persons)	.55***	.15	.32***	.09
Level 1 variance (between days)	.70***	.08	.58***	.07

Note: N = 210 cases (63 respondents, 6 lagged days). Unstandardized estimates.

\*\*\* p < .001.

\*\* p < .01.

\* p < .05.

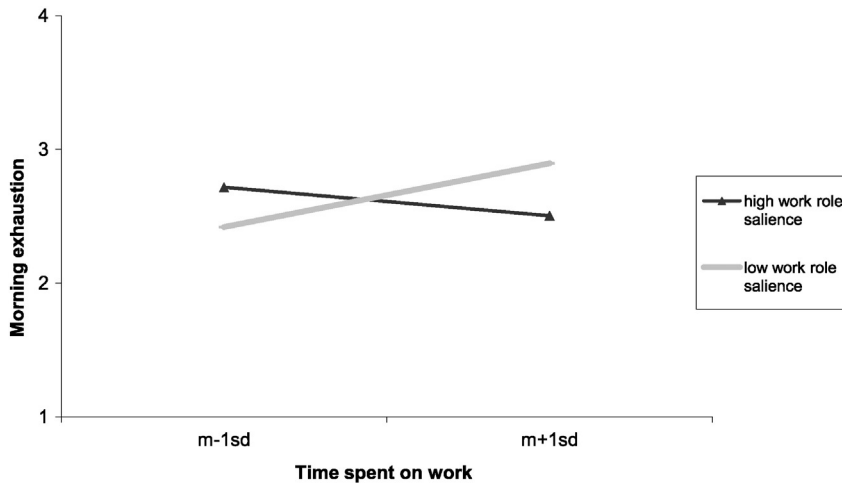


Fig. 1. Moderation effect of work role salience on the relationship between work time and next morning exhaustion.

3.3. Three-way interaction

To investigate the possibility that wellbeing outcomes of time spent on work or family tasks depend on a combination of work role and family roles salience, we calculated a three-way interaction term from group-mean centered time spent in a role, grand mean centered work role salience and grand mean centered family role salience. The three way interactions of work time and the two role saliences on next morning exhaustion ( $B = -.037, SE = .058, ns$ ) and on next morning engagement ( $B = -.013, SE = .053, ns$ ) were not significant. Similarly, the three way interaction terms with family time were not significantly related to morning exhaustion ( $B = .178, SE = .126, ns$ ) and morning engagement ( $B = -.118, SE = .114, ns$ ).

4. Discussion

Our main objective was to examine whether the enriching or depleting effects of devoting time to a role are influenced by how salient that role is to an individual. Our results indicated that role salience, in particular work role salience, explains when role participation is most likely to drain versus boost energy levels. Spending more time on the work role than on other days was less likely to lead to exhaustion and more likely to enhance engagement among individuals with high as compared to low work role salience. Spending more time in the family role than usual was less likely to lead to exhaustion and more likely to enhance engagement among individuals with low as compared to high work role salience.

It is quite remarkable that only work role salience affected the relationship between daily role participation and wellbeing, while this relationship did not depend on family role salience. A possible explanation may be that for all respondents, the family role was at least moderately important while respondents were more likely to place either high or low value on their work role. The relatively high mean of 4.20 (range 2.40–5.00, mode 5.00 on a 1–5 scale) on family salience, as compared to a mean of 3.50

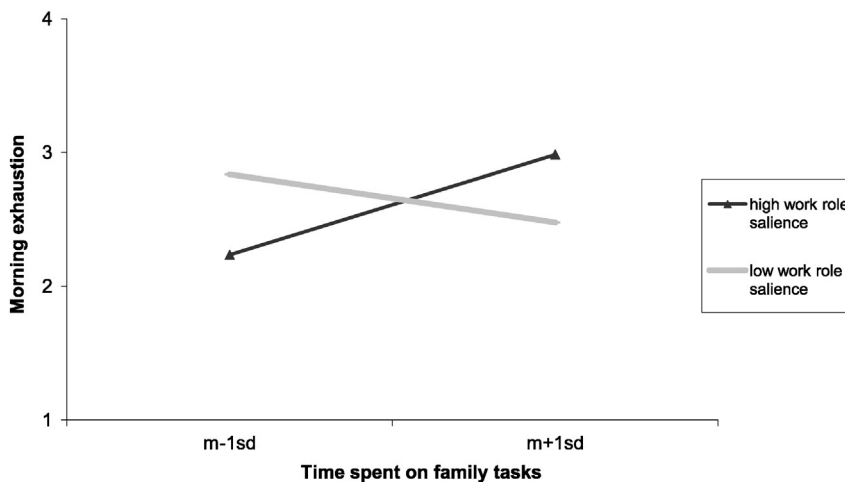


Fig. 2. Moderation effect of work role salience on the relationship between hours spent on family tasks and next morning exhaustion.



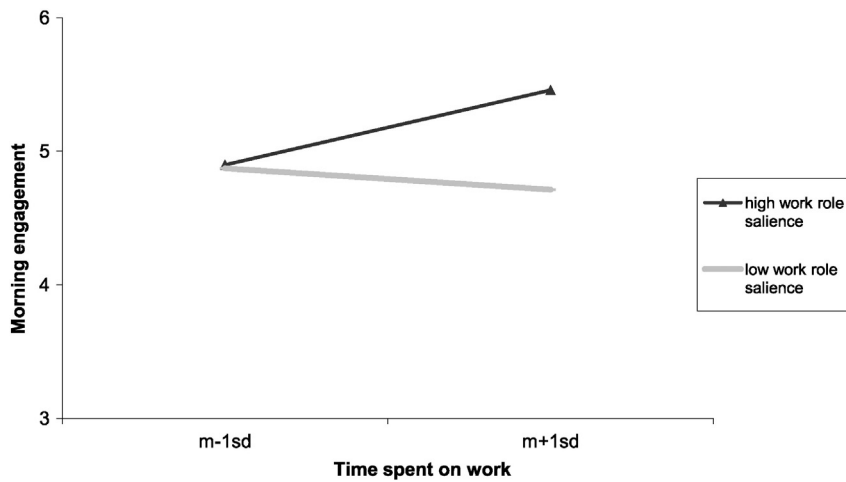


Fig. 3. Moderation effect of work role salience on the relationship between hours spent on work and next morning engagement.

on work salience (range 1.83–4.50, mode 3.50) supports this speculation. It thus seems that even respondents with the lowest score on family salience still find this role relatively important. It may be difficult to differentiate the effect of role participation on wellbeing between individuals who find family life moderately important versus highly important. Other studies have similarly found higher average values, and more restricted effects, for family salience than work salience (e.g. Greenhaus & Powell, 2003). We also point to the finding that family salience was negatively related to exhaustion and positively related to engagement (in the main effect in the interaction models). Individuals who find the family role highly important felt less exhausted in the morning and more engaged than individuals who find the family role less important. We speculate that individuals with high family salience may have certain characteristics (e.g., life satisfaction, optimism, feelings of gratefulness) or make certain life choices (e.g., focusing on the meaning of life or long-term life goals) that help them avoid feeling exhausted regardless of the time they spend in a role. Future research is needed to test this idea.

4.1. Theoretical contribution

Gender used to be a logical categorization to explain how individuals would respond to combining work and family roles, and which role would be beneficial or harmful for wellbeing. The assumption behind gender role theories (e.g., Pleck, 1977) was that role salience for work and family would strictly differ between men and women. With the blurring of typical female and male

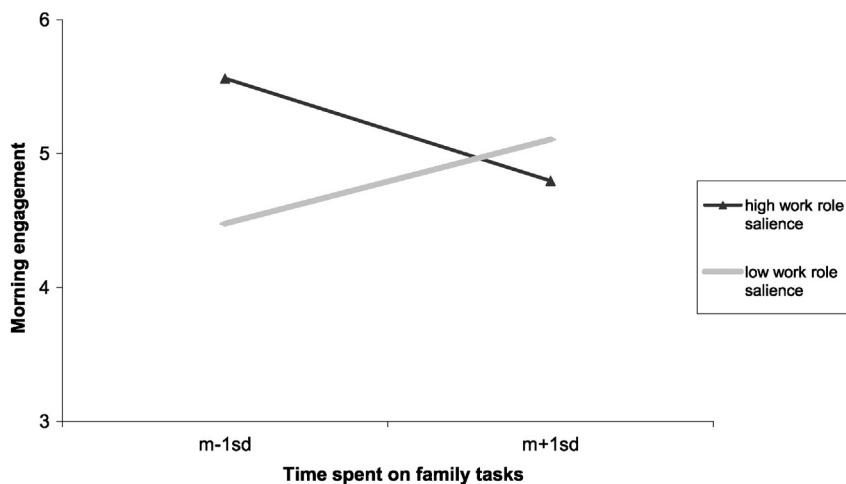


Fig. 4. Moderation effect of work role salience on the relationship between time spent on family tasks and next morning engagement.

roles, however, the importance men and women place on those roles seems to have become more similar as well (Cinamon & Rich, 2002). Therefore, a theory that assigns a key role to role salience seems to be better suited to explaining whether an individual's wellbeing will flourish or perish when participating in work and family tasks. We proposed that self-discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987) could function as a starting point for such a theory. Self-discrepancy theory posits that individuals strive to align the image they have of their ideal self with their actual behavior. In situations in which actual behavior does not match the ideal self, feelings of guilt, stress and anxiety develop, while a match between the ideal self and actual behavior is thought to result in positive feelings including pride, self-esteem, and positive affect (Higgins, 1987). This basic tenet of self-discrepancy theory can be applied to the work-home literature to explain when role participation is likely to lead to positive feelings, and thereby enhance wellbeing, or lead to negative feelings, impairing wellbeing. Although we encourage more studies that compare the impact of family versus work role salience, our results suggest that work role salience plays a particularly crucial role. Given our findings, a theoretical advancement that combines work-family models with self-discrepancy theory seems promising, indicating that a match between the ideal self, represented by how important the work role is to the individual, and the actual self, represented by actual time spent on work and family tasks, is predictive of wellbeing.

Our study also furthers theory on work-family conflict and enrichment by identifying individual differences that explain for whom depleting and enriching work-home processes are most likely to occur. The W-HR model (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) specified various conditions under which the work or home domain would most likely lead to a gain or loss in personal resources (e.g. energy). Both factors at the macro level (e.g. culture, wealth) and micro level (e.g. social power, optimism) are included in this model, but role salience is not mentioned. To understand the conditions under which enrichment or depletion from a domain are most likely to occur, we believe it is crucial to look at the importance the individual places on a domain. Notably, the main model in our study did not reveal any effects of time spent in a role on next morning wellbeing. It was only when we examined the interaction model, that we discovered that exhaustion from the work (family) role is most likely when work role salience is low (high), while engagement due to the work (family) role is most likely when work role salience is high (low). Our findings therefore further inform work-family theories, more specifically that work-family models can be expanded by including role salience as an individual trait that influences when role participation is most likely to deplete versus enrich personal resources.

#### 4.2. Limitations, future directions, and practical implications

A strength of our study was the use of a diary design with measurements in the afternoon and the next morning, which enabled us to study lagged effects of role participation on wellbeing. Such a design diminishes causality issues that are common in cross-sectional studies. However, some limitations need to be mentioned. The use of self-reports may have led to bias because of common method variance (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986). Momentary circumstances (e.g., mood) may have affected the predictor and outcome variables similarly. We note, however, that this type of bias is less likely in multi-measurement studies like ours (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986, p. 540), because we measured our predictor in the afternoon, while the outcome variable was measured on the next morning and the moderator variable was measured before the start of the daily surveys. In addition, common method variance is less of an issue when testing interaction effects as we did in our study. Another limitation is that we did not measure variables that are likely to impact morning exhaustion and engagement, such as sleep. However, since sleep happened after the measurement of our predictor variables, it is unlikely that not including sleep biased our results as sleep cannot have affected time spent on a role.

Our findings provide various leads for future research. A logical follow up study would be to examine the second step in the work-family process, that is, whether employees' energy levels in the morning affects work and family outcomes. Another suggestion for future research is to test the mechanism of self-discrepancy theory in more detail. This theory assumes that individuals feel negative emotions, such as guilt and frustration when their behavior is not in line with their ideal self, while they experience positive emotions, such as fulfillment and pride when they meet their self-expectations. Although our study revealed wellbeing outcomes (i.e., exhaustion, engagement), it would be worthwhile to zoom in on the emotions underlying those outcomes. Future studies could unravel for instance if spending little time in a role leads to negative emotions when role salience for that role is high.

Our study can be insightful for employees who are juggling work and family roles and employers who want to support those juggling employees. Our findings clearly show that employees who find their work extremely important seem to start the workday most energetic when they spent ample time at work while limiting time spent on family tasks on the previous day. We do not recommend, however, making very long workdays, as excessive work hours are related to various severe health complaints and impaired family relationships (Ng et al., 2007; Van der Hulst, 2003). The average actual daily workhours of employees in our sample was 7.87, and therefore, our results suggest that within reasonable limits, spending more time on work can generate energy provided that employees find their work important. Outsourcing family tasks is another possibility for this group. Household chores are generally perceived as less pleasant (Poortman & Van der Lippe, 2009) and our results add to this that employees who find work important might particularly benefit from help at home, by for instance a cleaning service, cook or grocery service. Organizations might help here by facilitating these services. For employees with low work role salience, however, the advice is opposite. Limited work hours may actually help those employees to avoid starting the workday exhausted. In addition, spending more time on family tasks seems to boost the energy among members of this group, so making sure there is enough time for tasks at home after work, might actually help those employees to start the workday with plenty of energy.

## Appendix A

Table A

Main effects multi-level analyses with exhaustion and engagement in the morning as dependent variables.

	Morning exhaustion				Morning engagement			
	0-model		Main model		0-model		Main model	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Intercept	2.72 <sup>***</sup> , *	.12	2.71 <sup>***</sup>	.12	4.99 <sup>***</sup>	.10	5.02 <sup>***</sup>	.09
Trait work exhaustion/engagement			.32 <sup>***</sup>	.10			.31 <sup>***</sup>	.10
Hours work			.01	.04			-.05	.04
Hours family tasks			.04	.04			-.04	.04
Hours with family			-.01	.05			-.07	.04
Hours with family and friends			-.02	.05			-.03	.05
Hours for self			-.02	.06			-.03	.05
-2xLOG (df)	766.50		619.74		731.59		576.56	
Level 2 variance (between persons)	.77 <sup>***</sup>	.17	.59 <sup>***</sup>	.15	.42 <sup>***</sup>	.11	.31 <sup>***</sup>	.10
Level 1 variance (between days)	.72 <sup>***</sup>	.07	.75 <sup>***</sup>	.08	.69 <sup>***</sup>	.07	.67 <sup>***</sup>	.08

Note: N = 210 cases, N = 63 respondents. Unstandardized estimates.

\*\*\* p &lt; .001.

\*\* p &lt; .01.

\* p &lt; .05.

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