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The Role of Individual Differences in Particular Autonomy-Connectedness in Women's and Men's Work-Family Balance

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Individual differences are increasingly considered important in the relationship between work-family balance and health. The present study examined the role of autonomy-connectedness in positive and negative work-family interaction and family-work interaction. We also investigated the relationship of work-family interaction and family-work interaction with positive and negative affect, coping patterns, and demographic characteristics. All variables under study were measured with questionnaires in a Dutch sample of 205 respondents. As expected, the individual difference factors were substantially associated with work-family interaction and family-work interaction; together they accounted for 10 to 39% of their variance. In particular, negative affect and the autonomy-connectedness components Sensitivity to others and Capacity for managing new situations appeared to be strongly related to work-family interactions. Health implications of the findings are discussed and recommendations for further research are presented.

KEYWORDS *autonomy, attachment, connectedness, sex differences, coping, work-family interaction, family-work interaction, multiple roles, positive affectivity, negative affectivity*

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, increasing attention has focused on the mutual influence of the work and the home domains, possibly because more and more

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Western women combine motherhood with a job (e.g., Gjerdingen et al., 2000). The role of individual differences in how individuals combine both domains is increasingly being acknowledged (e.g., see Chrouser Ahrens & Ryff, 2006), as this perspective might explain why some people experience adverse effects of multiple roles, whereas others enjoy “the best of two worlds” (Crosby, 1991). The most extensively studied individual difference factors here have been personality traits (e.g., Carlson, 1999; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Stoeva, Chiu, & Greenhaus, 2002), such as the “Big Five” (Costa & McCrae, 1985). Often, results have been mixed. For example, neuroticism appeared strongly positively associated with negative mutual effects of work and family (Bruck & Allen, 2002; Kinnunen et al. 2002; Rantanen, Pulkkinen, & Kinnunen, 2005; Van Rijswijk et al., 2004); but Wayne et al. (2004) failed to find such a relationship. Regarding openness, results are mixed too (e.g., Bruck & Allen, 2003; Rantanen, Pulkkinen, & Kinnunen, 2005; Wayne, Musica, & Fleeson, 2004).

A key aspect of combining the two worlds in a healthy manner might be the ability for self-governance, including social relationships in both domains, e.g., being able to set boundaries to the investments at home as well as at work. Therefore, we were particularly interested in the role of autonomy-connectedness in the work-family balance, which has, to date, not been examined. In addition, we aimed to examine simultaneously the relationships with certain other individual difference factors, to weigh their relative importance to each other.

Work-Family Balance: Positive and Negative Work-Family Interaction (WFI) and Family-Work Interaction (FWI)

Various concepts for work-family balance have been introduced, mainly emphasizing negative health effects like stress, conflict, and overload, such as work-family conflict (e.g., Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), spillover, linkages, and in-balance (e.g., Allen et al., 2000; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). All have indeed been found associated with work and family dissatisfaction as well as health problems, such as depression, burnout, stress, and somatic complaints (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000), although some studies failed to find negative health outcomes (e.g., Bekker et al., 2000).

The variation in study outcomes might be due to conceptual as well as measurement variety (e.g., Allen et al., 2000; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). Moreover, not solely negative aspects and consequences should be investigated, but also positive ones (e.g., Crosby, 1991; Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Kirchmeyer, 1993; Voydanoff, 2004; Geurts et al., 2005). The existence of *positive* home-work interaction yielded empirical support (e.g., Barnett, 1996, 1998; Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974). Thoits (1983) and Waldrone and Jacobs (1988), for example, found that working mothers (with partners) had better physical and psychological health than non-working mothers. Also, more

recent studies showed positive, healthy relationships between work and family labeled “work-family facilitation” and “work-family enrichment” (Wayne, Musica, & Fleeson, 2004; Hill, 2005; Carlson et al., 2006). To enable the study of negative *as well as positive* interaction, we chose the term work-home interaction (Geurts et al., 2005), or the process in which a person’s acting options and behaviors in one domain are influenced by the other domain. The implied bi-directionality (influence in both directions) and two influence types (negative as well as positive) results in four types of work-home interactions: positive and negative work-family (WFI) and family-work interaction (FWI).

Autonomy-Connectedness

To date, only scarce attention has been paid to the role of attachment-related factors in the interaction between work and home. However, problems people report about combining work and family, e.g., guilt feelings, loyalty, the need and desire for “being there” for their family members, but also the need for distancing, having a place for one’s own, and self-actualization, refer importantly to their *relationships with other people*, such as their children and colleagues (e.g., Crosby, 1991), thus to the domain of attachment (e.g., Bowlby, 1973). Sumer and Knight (2001) indeed found that individuals with a preoccupied attachment style more likely experienced negative WFI than those with a dismissive or secure attachment, whereas securely attached employees experienced more positive WFI as well as FWI than those with one of both other attachment styles.

A concept highly rooted in attachment theory is autonomy-connectedness, the need and capacity for self-reliance and independence, as well as the need and capacity for intimacy and functioning in intimate relationships (Bekker, 1993; Hmel & Pincus, 2002; Bekker & Van Assen, 2006, 2008). From an attachment perspective, autonomy results from secure attachment experiences (Bowlby, 1973). The concept of autonomy-connectedness is based on insights into gender-identity development that integrate attachment theory (Bowlby, 1973) with feminist, neo-analytical object-relations theory (e.g., Chodorow, 1978). Problems with autonomy-connectedness were indeed related to insecure attachment (Bekker, Bachrach, & Croon, 2007; Bekker & Croon, in press). Its three components are *Self-awareness* (SA), the capacity to be aware of one’s own opinions, wishes, and needs, and to express these in social interactions; *Sensitivity to others* (SO), sensitivity to the opinions, wishes, and needs of other people; empathy; and capacity and need for intimacy and separation; and *Capacity for managing new situations* (CMNS) or (un-)easy dependences in new situations, flexibility, an inclination to exploration, and (in)dependence on/from familiar structures.

Autonomy-connectedness appeared relatively independent from personality factors (Van Assen & Bekker, 2009), and clinically relevant. For

example, high SO-levels together with low SA-levels were found to be a risk factor for psychopathology with a higher prevalence in women than in men, e.g., depression and anxiety (Bekker & Belt, 2006; Bekker & Croon, in press) and eating disorders (Van Loenhout, Bekker, & Kuipers, under review). Particularly these characteristics coincide with loyalty conflicts, stress and guilt feelings, relevant for problems with interaction between work and home. Simultaneously, SO might enable persons to enjoy the relationships with family members and colleagues, and to transmit these pleasures between work and home. For SA and CMNS, one might also expect a positive role in balancing the functioning between both domains.

Negative and Positive Affectivity

Particularly neuroticism, also labeled negative affectivity, appeared strongly associated with negative interactions between work and family. Positive affectivity is the tendency to feel enthusiastic, active, energetic, and alert. Positive relationships of Positive affectivity has been established with health (Petit et al., 2001), learning, and creative problem solving (Isen, Daubman, & Nowicki, 1987); its associations with negative WFI/FWI, as well as those of Negative affectivity with positive WFI/FWI are still unknown, at least to our awareness. One might reasonably expect negative relationships of Positive affectivity with negative WFI/FWI, and positive associations of Negative affectivity with positive WFI/FWI.

Coping Styles

Coping styles, the ways in which a person manages stressful events and as threatening appraised external demands (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), are commonly distinguished into problem-focused coping (involvement in activities aimed at dealing with solving problem); emotion-focused coping: focusing upon the emotional consequences of a stressful situation without solving it; and avoidance-focused coping, i.e., avoiding the problems (De Ridder & Van Heck, 2004). Research on coping and work-family interaction is still rather scarce, but some results are available. Problem-focused coping was found to be negatively related to negative FWI (Kirchmeyer & Cohen, 1999; Rotondo, Carlson & Kincaid, 2003), but the relationship with positive WFI/FWI is still unknown. However, the more capable a person is to actively solve a problem the more experiencing of positive WFI/FWI might be expected. Also, scant attention has been given to the role of emotion-focused coping in work-family balance (Aryee et al., 1999). Regarding avoidance-focused coping, Rotondo, Carlson, and Kincaid (2003) found a positive association with negative WFI/FWI, but here too, data regarding positive WFI/FWI are lacking. In the present study we chose to include the role of coping styles. Although debate has been ongoing regarding the degree of their situational versus

dispositional character (e.g., Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989; Folkman, 2009), the existence of individual differences in coping strategies concerning handling possible strain or conflicts between family and work is plausible. Also, these strategies might imply the (relative) absence of strain and conflict and therewith be related to a positive interaction between both domains in the present study. Problem-focused coping styles were, therefore, expected to relate positively to positive WFI/ FWI, and negatively to negative WFI/FWI; for emotion- and avoidance-focused coping styles, we expected opposite relationships.

Summary of Study Aims and Hypotheses

Our main study goal was to examine the relationship between autonomy-connectedness, PA, NA, and coping on the one hand, and the four work-family interaction types on the other, because the role of autonomy-connectedness had not been studied yet, and that of the other factors hardly in relation to positive W-F interaction. We expected that all of these individual difference factors would be related to negative as well as positive FWI and WFI and autonomy-connectedness most substantially (Table 1). We also obtain insight into the interrelations between the several independent factors. As autonomy-problems often coincide with low SA, high SO, and low CMNS, one might expect that low SA and CMNS and high SO would

TABLE 1 Expected Relationships Between Positive/Negative Work-Family Interference (WFI)/Family-Work Interference (FWI) and the Individual Difference Factors

	Negative WFI	Negative FWI	Positive WFI	Positive FWI
- Negative affectivity	+ (H1a)	+ (H1a)	(-) (H1a)	(-) (H1a)
- Positive affectivity	(-) (H1b)	(-) (H1b)	(+) (H1b)	(+) (H1b)
Autonomy-connectedness				
- Self-awareness (SA)	(-) (H2a)	(-) (H2a)	(+) (H2a)	(+) (H2a)
- Sensitivity to others (SO)	(+) (H2b)	(+) (H2b)	(-) (H2b)	(-) (H2b)
- Capacity for managing new situations (CMNS)	(-) (H2a)	(-) (H2a)	(+) (H2a)	(+) (H2a)
Coping styles				
- Active problem-focused coping	(-) (H3a)	(-) (H3a)	(+) (H3a)	(+) (H3a)
- (Seeking social support)	?	?	?	?
- Emotion-focused coping	(+) (H3b)	(+) (H3b)	(-) (H3b)	(-) (H3b)
- Avoidant coping	(+) (H3b)	(+) (H3b)	(-) (H3b)	(-) (H3b)

Explanation of Abbreviations:

- + = Positive relationship expected based on theoretical and empirical evidence.
- = Negative relationship expected based on theoretical and empirical evidence.
- (+) = Positive relationship expected based on theoretical studies (little or complete lack of empirical evidence).
- (-) = Negative relationship expected based on theoretical studies (little or complete lack of empirical evidence).

also be associated with high NA, low PA, low problem-focused coping, and high emotion-focused and avoidant coping.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

We used regression analyses as our focus of analyses for determining the necessary sample size as these analyses enable controlling for confounding among the various independent variables. To detect an effect size halfway between the range of small ($f^2 = .02$) to medium ($f^2 = .15$), thus $.09$, with a power of $.80$, we needed a sample size of 204. Note: with this sample size, the power to detect the slightly larger effect of $.11$ is $.90$ (Erdfelder, Faul, & Buchner, 1996).

Recruitment took place by contacting persons in institutions and work organizations reflecting the various professional categories (health care; administration; education; commercial sector including transportation, technical, and scientific sector). The contacting persons, who generally knew the personal living situation of the employees in their organization, searched primarily for employees with children living at home to increase the plausibility that they would have caring responsibilities, thus substantial family tasks. This aspect was later measured with a question regarding the number (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, or more) of children living at the participant's home; and the majority indeed had 1 or more children. As the contacting persons did not know the private situations of all employees, several participants without children at home were also included (see Results).

The eligibility rate was, thus, 100%; all persons who were requested to participate were given questionnaires (see below). All participants agreed with the (anonymous) use of their data by providing signed, written informed consent. A review board within the social faculty of our university approved the study protocol. About 50% of potential participants received a post-paid return envelope; the other half returned the envelope (without any name) directly to the contacting persons (as the envelopes were closed, anonymity of the data remained guaranteed). Participation rate was 85–90%. It was not possible to check exactly how many of the people who had been contacted did not participate, neither the reason for refusal or not returning the questionnaires in the end.

Measures

All concepts under study were measured by means of questionnaires. To measure *Work-Home- and Family-Work Interaction (WFI/FWI)* we used the "Survey Work-Home Interference Nijmegen" (SWING; Geurts et al., 2005).

The SWING has two negative work-home interference scales, WFI (9 questions) and FWI (6 questions). Respondents indicate on 4-points response scales (0 = never, 1 = sometimes, 2 = often, 3 = always) how often they experience a certain situation, as expressed by the items on the scale. Geurts et al. (2005) reported a good reliability; in the present study Cronbach's α was .82 for negative WFI, and .75 for negative FWI.

For measuring positive WFI and FWI, we used the *Work-Family-Enrichment Scale* (WFES; Carlson, 2006), for reasons of its better validity than the positive scales of the SWING. The WFES has a good reliability (Cronbach's α .92) as well as validity. Respondents indicate on a 5-points response scale (1 = do not agree at all, 2 = do agree a little, 3 = do not agree/do not disagree, 4 = agree somewhat, 5 = completely agree) to what extent they agree with a certain statement.

Positive Affectivity and Negative Affectivity were measured with the *Positive and Negative Affect Schedule* (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Its psychometric qualities appeared good (see also Crawford & Henry, 2004). The Dutch version consists of 20 descriptions (10 for PA, 10 for NA). Respondents indicate to what extent the emotional states generally apply to them: 0 = not or hardly, 1 = a little, 2 = average, 3 = rather, and 4 = very much. In the present study, Cronbach's α for Positive affectivity was .83, and .85 for NA.

To measure Autonomy-Connectedness we used the *Autonomy-Connectedness Scale* (ACS-30; Bekker & Van Assen, 2006) with subscales Self-awareness (SA), Sensitivity to others (SO), and Capacity for managing new situations (CMNS). Respondents indicate to what extent the statements apply to them on one of five answering categories: 1 = disagree, 2 = disagree somewhat, 3 = do not disagree/do not agree, 4 = agree somewhat, 5 = agree. The ACS-30 has good psychometric properties as shown in various studies (e.g., Bekker, 1993; Bekker, Hens, & Nijssen, 2001; Bekker & Van Assen, 2006) and a robust factor structure (Bekker & Van Assen, 2006, 2008). Agreeing with sex differences in connectedness reported in the literature, women on average have higher levels of SO (Cohen's $d = .90$, large effect), therefore different norm scores for women and men have become available (Bekker & Van Assen, 2008). In the present study, SA had a Cronbach's α of .77, SO .83, and CMNS .77.

For measuring coping styles, the *Utrecht Coping List* (UCL; Schreurs & Van de Willige, 1988) was used, consisting of 47 items with 7 subscales: Active approach/Confronting (i.e., problem-focused coping; 7 items); emotion-focused subscales being Depressive reaction pattern (7 items), and Expression of emotions/anger (3 items); avoidance-focused coping like Palliative reaction pattern (8 items), Avoiding/Waiting (8 items), Soothing and consoling thoughts (5 items); and Seeking social support (6 items), which can, in fact, be categorized under more than one category (e.g., see De Ridder, 2000) and for which we, therefore, did not develop any specific a priori hypoth-

esis. Respondents indicate how often they generally react in the manners expressed by the items in case of problems or unpleasant events. Evers, Van Vliet-Mulder, and Groot (2000) reported a good validity and Cronbach's α 's as varying between .64 and .84 for the various subscales. In the present study, Cronbach's α of the respective subscales was .82, .68, .72, .50, .75, .69, and .84.

Demographic variables measured in the study were adapted from standard demographic measurement in The Netherlands, by The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (e.g., Merens & Hermans, 2009), and included age (categories 21–35, 36–45, 46–60), sex (male/female), educational level (5 levels), number of children living at home, living with a partner or not, number of hours of paid work (3 categories) and unpaid work (such as looking after children, volunteer work etc.).

Statistical Analyses

Before testing the main hypotheses, several preliminary analyses were conducted. First, to describe the participants' main demographic characteristics, we computed their numbers and percentages per specific demographic variable. Second, to enable subsequent correlational analyses, we performed factor analysis to confirm the theoretical structure of our four work-family types measured with two different questionnaires (see *Measures*). After Oblimin rotation, four factors could clearly be distinguished explaining 54.06% of the total variance. The first nine WFES-items loaded highly on the first component, the last nine items on the fourth component. The first nine SWING-items loaded highly on the second component and the last six items on the third component. These results indicated that the use of the four types of negative and positive WFI/ FWI was justified.

Our third and fourth analyses were our main analyses, being, respectively, correlational analyses and hierarchical multiple regression analyses to examine the unique relationships with the various variables. Since the correlational data showed that the variable "not living with a partner" (true for 18 participants) correlated significantly with several other variables; we excluded the data for these 18 participants from the regression analyses. In each hierarchical multiple regression analysis, one of the WFI/FWI-types was included as the dependent variable. As sex and hours of paid work correlated significantly ($p < .05$) with at least three types of positive and negative WFI/FWI and with a majority of the individual difference factors, these demographics were included as independent variables (Model 1); because we included hours of paid work, we additionally included hours of unpaid work. Thereafter, all individual difference factors (PA, NA, and ACS-30 and UCL subscales scores) were added in the second model. Here, our main interest was to what degree an increase in explained variance as reflected in ΔR^2 would be observable. Sex correlated significantly with

most of the WFI/FWI types and the autonomy-connectedness, affectivity, and coping variables, possibly indicating an interaction-effect. The sample size did not allow adding product variables for each of these variables with sex. Therefore, we decided to conduct the aforementioned regression analyses for men and women separately.

RESULTS

Descriptives

Participants were 205 employed professionals, 77 men and 128 women, the majority (about 80%) were >36 years old, lived with a partner (>90%), had one or more children living at home (about 90%), and had a job within one of the following professional categories: health sector (25.9%), administrative sector (23.4%), educational sector (16.6%), commercial sector (including food, beverage, and transportation, 14.6%), technical and scientific sector (10.2%), others (9.3%) (Table 2). The educational level in about 50% of the cases was middle or lower, and higher in another 50%. The sample's relatively high rate of part-time employment, in women in particular, is quite representative for the general Dutch working population (Gjerdingen et al., 2000).

Correlations Between the Variables

Significant correlations appeared between negative FWI and all independent variables, positive ones with NA, Sensitivity to others (SO), and all coping styles except Active approach, and negative ones with Self-awareness (SA), Capacity for managing new situations (CMNS), and Active approach; and between negative WFI and Negative affectivity ($r = .35, p < .01$), SO ($r = .18, p < .01$), Palliative reaction ($r = .21, p < .01$), Depressive reaction pattern ($r = .19, p < .01$), Expression of emotions ($r = .25, p < .01$), and Soothing thoughts ($r = .12, p < .05$) (Table 3). Significant correlations were also observed of positive WFI with Positive affectivity ($r = .14, p < .05$), SO ($r = .26, p < .01$), Palliative reaction ($r = .14, p < .05$), and Social support seeking ($r = .14, p < .05$). For positive FWI, significant positive correlations appeared with SO ($r = .14, p < .05$) and with Soothing thoughts ($r = .15, p < .05$).

The independent variables were also moderately intercorrelated in the expected directions, i.e., SA and CMNS were positively interrelated, and both were negatively associated with SO (reflecting a robust pattern, see Bekker & Van Assen, 2008); SA and CMNS related negatively—and SO positively with NA, Avoiding and Depressive reaction, and in the opposite direction (SA and CMNS positively and SO negatively) with Positive affectivity (only

TABLE 2 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variables	Number of participants			Percentages per group		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<i>Age groups</i>						
• 21–35 years	30	6	24	14.6%	7.8%	18.8%
• 36–45 years	73	27	46	35.6%	35.1%	35.9%
• 46–60 years	100	44	56	48.8%	57.1%	43.8%
<i>Sex</i>						
• Men	77			37.6%		
• Women	128			62.4%		
<i>Living with partner</i>						
• Not living with partner	18	4	14	8.8%	5.2%	10.9%
• Living with partner	187	73	114	91.2%	94.8%	89.1%
<i>Education</i>						
• Elementary school	2	1	1	1.0%	1.3%	0.8%
• Lower professional education	16	4	12	7.8%	5.3%	9.4%
• Middle or Secondary Education	42	10	32	20.5%	13%	25%
• Middle professional education	40	16	24	19.5%	20.8%	18.8%
• Higher professional education or University	101	46	55	49.3%	58.7%	43%
<i>Number of children living at home</i>						
• No children	23	8	15	11.2%	10.4%	11.7%
• 1 child	47	15	32	22.9%	19.5%	25%
• 2 children	105	41	64	51.2%	13.2%	50%
• 3 children	29	13	16	14.1%	16.5%	12.5%
• 4 or more children	1	0	1	0.5%	0%	0.8%
<i>Number of hours of paid work</i>						
• <25 hours per week	84	3	81	41%	4%	64%
• 25–40 hours per week	95	50	45	46.3%	65%	35%
• >40 hours per week	26	24	2	12.7%	31%	1.6%
<i>Number of hours of unpaid work</i>						
• <25 hours per week	144	73	71	70.2%	95%	57%
• 25–40 hours per week	36	2	34	17.6%	2.6%	27.2%
• >40 hours per week	22	2	20	10.7%	2.6%	16%

SO was unrelated to PA) and Active approach. Interestingly, particularly SO appeared related to nearly all other independent factors.

Multiple Regression Analyses

Positive and negative affectivity (PA and NA). Hypothesis 1a, predicting a significant positive relationship of Negative affectivity with both negative WFI-types, and a negative relationship with both positive WFI-types, was partly confirmed (a significant positive relation of Negative affectivity with negative WFI as well as FWI was observed ($\beta = .26, p < .01$ and $\beta = .24, p < .05$) (Table 4). Considering men and women separately (Table 5), the negative relationship of Negative affectivity with WFI remained significant for

TABLE 3 Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1. Sex													
2. Age	-.19**												
3. Number of children	-.06	-.28**											
4. Level of education	-.17*	.03	-.09										
5. Yes/no partner	-.10	-.20**	.23**	.03									
6. Hours of paid work	-.69**	.22**	-.03	.27**									
7. Hours of unpaid work	.47**	-.38**	.24**	-.16*	-.09								
8. Total work	.01	-.31**	.29**	-.01	.04	-.53**							
9. Profession	-.42**	-.06	.09	-.01	-.01	.15*	.76**						
10. Negative WFI	-.05	.06	.08	.05	-.06	.33**	-.25**	-.03					
11. Negative FWI	.12*	-.04	.02	-.03	-.15*	.17**	.04	.18**	.14*				
12. Positive WFI	.27**	-.10	.03	.07	-.10	-.09	.20**	.14*	-.01	.25**			
13. Positive FWI	.17*	-.17*	.09	-.03	.18**	-.24**	.09	-.08	-.18**	.04	-.05		
14. Positive affectivity	-.03	-.00	.10	.08	.10	-.19**	.12	.01	-.05	.16*	-.04	.61**	
15. Negative affectivity	.06	.03	-.03	-.06	-.13*	.12*	.03	.11	.02	.02	-.12*	.14*	.08
16. Self-awareness	-.24**	.04	.04	.12*	.09	-.02	-.00	-.01	.05	.35**	.25**	-.03	.05
17. Sensitivity to others	.40**	-.10	-.04	.11	-.01	-.26**	-.08	.10	.15*	-.09	-.15*	-.02	.05
18. Cap. managing NS	-.19**	.03	-.05	.09	.15*	-.29**	.11	-.08	-.19**	.18**	.16*	.26**	.14*
19. Active approach	-.21**	-.05	.08	.29**	.08	.16*	-.14*	-.05	.06	-.06	-.26**	.11	.11
20. Palliative reaction	.12*	-.05	.01	.03	-.04	.25**	-.06	.11	.15*	.02	-.12*	-.01	.04
21. Avoiding	.10	-.07	.03	-.08	-.16*	-.02	.05	.05	.08	.21**	.24**	.14*	.10
22. Seeking social support	.36**	-.16*	.10	.18**	.08	-.13*	.13*	.03	-.01	.06	.17**	.07	-.01
23. Depressive reaction	.09	.00	-.01	-.05	.28**	-.25**	.15*	-.06	-.19**	.05	.14*	.14*	.01
24. Expression emotions	-.02	-.04	.13*	.07	.09	-.08	.00	-.05	.06	.19**	.19**	.02	-.04
25. Soothing thoughts	.21**	-.08	.10	.01	-.06	-.00	.05	.07	.09	.25**	.18**	-.04	.05
Mean	.62	43.67	1.7	4.10	0.91	30.55	24.21	55.4	2.88	0.68	0.39	3.60	3.48
Standard deviation	.49	7.1	0.87	1.06	0.28	11.99	17.8	15.2	1.63	0.38	0.40	0.96	0.83

(continued)

TABLE 3 (Continued)

Variable	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
14. Positive affectivity												
15. Negative affectivity	-.12*											
16. Self-awareness	.41**	-.28**										
17. Sensitivity to others	-.04	.30**	-.35**									
18. Cap. managing NS	.33**	-.20**	.39**	-.40**								
19. Active approach	.38**	-.23**	.35**	-.20**	.36**							
20. Palliative reaction	.07	.18**	-.11	.28**	-.15*	.10						
21. Avoiding	-.30**	.11	-.43**	.22**	-.39**	-.12*	.35**					
22. Seeking social support	.22**	.04	-.03	.44**	-.07	.20**	.26**	.16*				
23. Depressive reaction	-.25**	.55**	-.32**	.29**	-.32**	-.21**	.21**	.30**	.07			
24. Expression emotions	.14*	.30**	.12*	.11	.03	.06	.26**	.03	.27**	.19**		
25. Soothing thoughts	.07	.02	-.14*	.29**	-.10	.24**	.48**	.33**	.29**	.12*	.14*	
Mean	2.57	0.61	2.89	3.47	3.27	2.73	2.05	1.89	2.42	1.50	2.12	2.40
Standard deviation	0.56	0.55	0.68	0.60	0.85	0.48	0.40	0.40	0.54	0.39	0.45	0.49

Note: N = 186-205; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; 1 = Sex; 2 = Age; 3 = Number of children; 4 = Level of education; 5 = Yes/no partner; 6 = Hours of paid work; 7 = Hours of unpaid work; 8 = Total work; 9 = Profession; 10 = Negative WFI; 11 = Negative WFI; 12 = Positive WFI; 13 = Positive WFI; 14 = Positive affectivity; 15 = Negative affectivity; 16 = Self-awareness; 17 = Sensitivity to others; 18 = Capacity for managing new situations; 19 = Active approach; 20 = Palliative reaction; 21 = Avoiding; 22 = Seeking social support; 23 = Depressive reaction; 24 = Expression emotions; 25 = Soothing thoughts.

TABLE 4 Negative and Positive WFI/FWI Associated with Individual Difference and Demographic Characteristics

Independent variables	Neg. WFI	Neg. FWI	Pos. WFI	Pos. FWI
Model 1				
- Sex	.10	.03	.23*	.11
- Hours of paid work	.33**	.03	-.10	-.10
- Hours of unpaid work	.19*	.22*	-.08	.00
R^2 Model 1	.06*	.05*	.08**	.04
Model 2				
- Sex	-.02	-.06	.17	.09
- Hours of paid work	.38**	.04	-.15	-.12
- Hours of unpaid work	.25**	.23*	-.06	.01
- Positive affectivity	-.08	-.14	.19*	.05
- Negative affectivity	.26**	.24*	-.05	.07
- Self-awareness	-.13	-.06	.10	.13
- Sensitivity to others	.26**	-.16	.31**	.23*
- Capacity for managing new situations	.09	-.14	.29**	.18
- Active approach	.06	-.04	-.02	.02
- Palliative reaction	.11	.16	.13	.02
- Avoiding	-.10	-.11	.17	.06
- Seeking social support	-.05	.16	-.12	-.19
- Depressive reaction	.03	-.06	.08	.03
- Expression emotions	.16*	.08	-.11	.01
- Soothing thoughts	.01	.08	-.09	.15
- R^2 Change	.27**	.16**	.16**	.10
- R^2 Model 2	.32**	.21**	.24**	.14

Notes.

1. The results of four hierarchical multiple regression analyses are given, with the introduction of one of the WFI-types as a dependent variable; in Model 1 the demographic variables sex, number of hours of paid work per week, and number of hours of unpaid work per week are the independent variables, whereas in Model 2 the individual difference factors were introduced as independent variables. Also the standardized regression coefficients (β) and the amount of explained variance (R^2) are given.

2. $N = 174$ – 187 ; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

both ($\beta = .28, p < .05$ and $\beta = .28, p < .05$, respectively), but the relationship with negative FWI was significant only for men ($\beta = .56, p < .05$). Thus, for both men and women, Negative affectivity was substantially associated with negative interaction between the work and the home domain. However, women who scored highly on Negative affectivity reported only interaction from the work domain to the home domain. The expected negative relationships with positive WFI and FWI were not found. Support for hypothesis 1b was that Positive affectivity was positively related to positive WFI ($\beta = .19, p < .05$): people with high Positive affectivity levels reported more positive WF interaction. When considered for men and women separately, however, the relationship did not remain significant.

Autonomy-connectedness (ACS). Significant positive relationships were expected for Self-awareness (SA) and Capacity for managing new situations (CMNS) with positive WFI and FWI, and negative relationships of both

TABLE 5 Negative and Positive WFI/FWI Associated with Individual Differences and Demographics; Men and Women Separately

Independent variables	Neg. WFI		Neg. FWI		Pos. WFI		Pos. FWI	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Model 1								
- Hours paid work	.25*	.23*	-.07	.07	-.17	.00	-.25*	.03
- Hours unpaid work	-.01	.24*	.14	.23*	-.06	-.05	.13	.02
R ² Model 1	.07	.07*	.02	.04	.03	.00	.08	.00
Model 2								
- Hours paid work	.17	.32**	-.06	.09	-.18	-.07	-.31*	.04
- Hours unpaid work	.09	.34**	.24*	.21	-.09	-.08	.16	.04
- Positive affectivity	.02	-.13	-.14	-.21	.17	.23	.03	.01
- Neg. affectivity	.28*	.28*	.56**	.06	-.10	.02	.21	-.02
- Self-awareness	-.03	-.14	-.04	-.03	.11	.04	.00	.22
- Sens. to others	.26	.22	-.02	-.22	.42*	.16	.10	.26*
- Cap. managing NS	.06	.12	-.09	-.18	.47**	.16	.26	.14
- Active approach	.22	-.05	.14	-.08	-.15	.16	.07	.06
- Palliative reaction	.16	.04	.10	.21	.03	.16	-.02	.05
- Avoiding	-.01	-.15	.05	-.13	.24	.11	.08	.07
- Seeking social support	.06	-.05	.24	.11	-.12	-.20	-.05	-.29*
- Depressive reaction	.15	-.06	-.13	-.01	.10	.07	-.02	.10
- Expression emotions	.24	.16	.00	.17	-.05	-.14	.12	.01
- Soothing thoughts	-.20	.21	-.02	.12	-.13	-.07	.12	.13
- R ² Change	.39**	.26**	.33*	.18	.27	.17	.14	.15
- R ² Model 2	.45**	.33**	.36*	.22	.31	.18	.22	.15

Notes.

1. The results of four hierarchical multiple regression analyses are displayed, each with one out of Positive or Negative WFI/FWI as a dependent variable; in Model 1 the demographic variables number of hours of paid work per week and number of hours of unpaid work per week are the independent variables, whereas in Model 2 the individual difference factors are introduced as independent variables. Also the standardized regression coefficients (β) and the amount of explained variances (R^2) are given.

2. N (men) = 68–73; N (women) = 102–114; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

subscales with negative WFI/FWI (hypothesis 2a). For Sensitivity to others (SO) the hypothesis (2b) was in the opposite direction. The expectations were partly confirmed. CMNS did indeed relate positively to positive WFI ($\beta = .29, p < .01$; see Table 4). When analyzed for men and women separately (Table 5), this relationship remained significant for men only ($\beta = .47, p < .01$). However, the expected positive associations of SA with WFI and FWI were not found. Also, in line expectations, SO was significantly positively related to negative WFI ($\beta = .26, p < .01$). Interestingly, higher SO levels were associated with positive as well as negative WFI, the latter not remaining significant when considered for men and women separately.

Remarkably, SO *also* was positively related to both positive WFI and FWI ($\beta = .31, p < .01$ and $\beta = .23, p < .05$). When examined for men and women separately (see Table 5), the relationship with positive WFI remained significant only for men ($\beta = .42, p < .05$), whereas that with positive FWI

only for women ($\beta = .26, p < .05$). Thus, SO was positively associated with positive WFI for men, and for women with positive FWI.

Coping styles. The expectation (hypothesis 3a) that a significant positive relationship would appear between problem-focused coping (Active approach) and positive WFI/FWI, and a negative association between the same coping style and negative WFI/FWI, was not confirmed (see Tables 4 and 5). Partial support was found for hypothesis 3b. Expression of emotions was significantly positively related to negative WFI ($\beta = .16, p < .05$). Neither the other emotion-focused coping style Depressive reaction pattern, nor avoidant coping (Avoiding, Palliative reaction, Soothing thoughts) showed any relationship with WFI. For women a negative relationship appeared between Seeking social support and positive FWI ($\beta = .29, p < .05$).

Associations Between Positive/Negative WFI/FWI and Individual Difference Factors

The individual difference variables appeared to be strongly related to WFI. Adding the individual difference variables to the model (Table 4) resulted in extra explanation of 27% of the variance [$F(12, 148) = 4.86, p < .01$] next to the demographic variables. Analyzing both sexes separately, these percentages increased to respectively 39% and 26% extra explained variance [$F(12, 52) = 3.06, p < .01$ and $F(12, 82) = 2.70, p < .01$]. For negative FWI and positive WFI this was 16% more [$F(12, 148) = 2.57, p < .01$ and $F(12, 148) = 2.67, p < .01$]. For men the amount of explained variance for negative FWI and positive WFI increased to 33% and 27%, the latter not being significant anymore. For women the percentages remained about the same (18% for negative FWI and 17% for positive WFI), these values being not significant anymore.

DISCUSSION

This study's main goal was examining the associations of positive and negative affectivity, autonomy-connectedness, and coping, to positive and negative WFI and FWI. Negative affectivity appeared to be strongly related to both. When considered separately for men and women, the relationship with negative affectivity was for women no longer significant, but the other relationships remained unchanged. Thus, people with high negative affectivity seem to experience more negative interaction between family and work, which agrees with previous results (e.g., Brief et al., 1988; Bruck & Allen, 2003; Carlson, 1999; Stoeva, Chiu, & Greenhaus, 2002). Remarkably, in women, negative affectivity was not related to FWI, but solely to WFI, possibly due to the traditional role division prescribing that for women, family not career, comes first. Additionally, positive affectivity appeared to

be significantly related to positive WFI. Thus, people with higher positive affectivity seemed more able to transmit positive feelings from work to home, maybe due to acquired capacities or positive feelings.

Also, autonomy-connectedness showed significant relationships with work-family interaction. Particularly, sensitivity to others appeared to be significantly associated with both positive WFI and FWI, as well as with negative WFI. Maybe people who are sensitive to others are better capable of building up interpersonal relationships and, therefore, to transmit more positive experiences between both domains. On the other hand, they might also be more sensitive to other people's (e.g., colleagues') judgment, evaluation, and criticism. This could explain the negative work-family interaction and agrees with the finding by Sumer and Knight (2001) that a preoccupied attachment style (i.e., having a desire to merge with a partner and possessing a deep sense of unworthiness together with a positive image of others) is associated with such negative spillover. We would like to add here some recently found correlations of .40 ($p < .01$) between preoccupations with relationships (an Attachment Style Questionnaire subscale, ASQ; Feeney, Noller, & Hanrahan, 1994) and SO (Bekker, Bachrach, & Croon, 2007; Bekker & Croon, in press).

Analyzing men and women separately revealed that the relationship of SO with positive WFI was much stronger for men, whereas for women the positive FW-relationship was much stronger. Increased SO was for men associated with transmitting positive effects from work to home, whereas in women the opposite was true. Maybe also here the traditional role division played a role.

The autonomy-connectedness component capacity for managing new situations showed a significant positive relationship with positive WFI, which—as expected—appeared stronger for men than for women. The better people can manage new situations, the more positive is the interaction from work to home. This might be due to acquired capacities and knowledge (Carlson et al., 2006). Its opposite, however, happened less, maybe because managing new situations is better learned within work than within home.

Regarding coping styles, a significant positive relationship was found between expression of emotions and negative WFI, which agrees with expectations. For women a significant negative relationship was found between seeking social support and positive FWI; regarding this association, we had no a priori hypotheses. A close inspection of the expression of emotion items (e.g., “show your irritation,” “show you are angry with the person responsible for the problem”) revealed these items to reflect the expression of *negative* emotions. Thus, the more negative WFI the more (expression of) negative emotions. The significant negative relationship between social support seeking and positive FWI might be somewhat surprising. Apparently, the more women seek social support, the less positive interaction they experience from home to work. These items appeared to primarily refer

to seeking consolation, discussing problems, and showing preoccupation. That people might seek social support primarily when they cannot solve problems on their own could explain the negative relationship with positive interaction. The remaining coping styles, analyzed for both sexes separately, were not associated with negative or positive WFI/FWI, possibly indicating that coping is less relevant for work-family interaction than the other individual difference factors were. Also, the UCL—although suitable for measuring coping in general—might be less appropriate for coping assessment in, the more specific, work-family situation.

We were also interested in the extra amount of variance explained by the individual difference factors after that explained by the demographic variables (sex, number of hours of paid and unpaid work). For the various types of work-family interaction the individual difference factors, examined for men and women separately, explained 15 and 39% of the variance, respectively. In short, our results indicated that the individual difference variables included in this study played an important role in experiencing negative or positive work-family interaction variation, much more important than that of the demographic variables, e.g., the number of work hours per week, which explained 0 to 8% of the variance. This finding partly agrees with previous results. In a study by Wayne, Musica, and Fleeson (2004) the Big Five personality factors explained between 8 and 13% extra variance of positive as well of negative work-family interaction, whereas their control variables explained only 1 to 8%. Bruck and Allen (2003), who examined the relationship between the Big Five, Type A, negative affect, and negative WFI, found values between 12 and 16% for personality factors against 5 to 8% for their control (demographic) variables.

One of the present study's limitations was, that we, although including important demographics, did not investigate *all* possibly relevant variables, e.g., care for other people besides that for children living at home. This implies the additional limitation of the potential for uncontrolled confounding. Second, as we lacked information regarding non-response and largely used a non-randomly selected, convergence sample, the potential for selection and participation bias may have possibly affected the sample's representativeness and, thus, the generalizability of the study's findings. Third, it would have been interesting to find out how work-stress, work satisfaction, and family satisfaction might be related to experiencing work-family conflict. A fourth limitation was the relatively small sample size, possibly providing inadequate statistical power to detect some differences as statistically significant and the inability to examine interaction effects. Future research targeted at larger samples and interaction affects might also include the aforementioned variables. Other limitations were the potential for social acceptability (desirability) bias due to self-reported responses and the study's cross-sectional design that did not allow us to draw any conclusions regarding the temporal relation of the variables.

Despite these limitations, we obtained strong indications that the individual difference factors under study played an important role in experiencing both negative and positive work-family interaction. Particularly negative affectivity and the autonomy-connectedness components sensitivity to others and capacity for managing new situations appeared important. We, therefore, recommend investigating further the precise effects in a more process-targeted approach in future research. Since also related, attachment factors might affect WFI (Cassidy & Belsky, 1994; Hazan & Shaver, 1990; Mikulincer & Orbach, 1995), it might be interesting to include these factors in future research. A longitudinal, prospective research design could give more insight into the temporal and causal effects of attachment in work-family interaction.

That both negative affectivity and autonomy-connectedness are important factors in work-family interaction may have implications for clinical interventions and prevention. Adapting working-conditions alone is not sufficient to decrease work-family interaction, because attachment-related personal characteristics play a very important role, as this study has shown. To decrease negative and increase positive interaction between work and home, a more person-centered approach might be suitable. One's capacity for managing new situations can be improved substantially by work-stress prevention training (Bekker, Hens, & Nijssen, 2001). Various types of training have been developed that can help people to combine work and family in a more effective way. Gender-specific autonomy-groups (Bekker et al., 2008; Bekker, Vossen, & Van Houten, submitted) might also help people finding a healthy balance between over- and under-sensitivity to others, such as children, colleagues, managers, and to increase their capacity for managing new situations.

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