Work-Family Facilitation:
A Positive Psychological Perspective on Role Combination

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof mr. P.F. van der Heijden,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties
te verdedigen op woensdag 28 november 2007
klokke 13.45 uur

door

Elianne Florence van Steenbergen

geboren te Leiderdorp in 1980
Promotiecommissie:

Promotor: Prof. Dr. N. Ellemers (Leiden University)
Referent: Dr. S. A. E. Geurts (Radboud University Nijmegen)
Overige Leden: Prof. T. van der Lippe (Utrecht University)
Dr. E. S. Kluwer (Utrecht University)
Mr. A. Verheijden (ING, Human Resources Netherlands)
Prof. Dr. A. B. Bakker (Erasmus University Rotterdam)
Prof. Dr. E. van Dijk (Leiden University)
Prof. Dr. K. A. Jehn (Leiden University)

ING

I gratefully acknowledge the support and financial sponsorship provided by the Human Resources Netherlands department of ING, which enabled me to carry out this research.

Cover painting: M.C. Escher's "part of Metamorphosis II" © 2007 The M.C. Escher Company B.V. - Baarn - Holland. All rights reserved. Used by permission.
www.mcescher.com
Contents

Acknowledgements .......................... 1

1. Introduction .................................. 3
   1.1 Scarcity theory and work-family conflict ........ 6
   1.2 Expansion theory and work-family facilitation ..... 10
   1.3 Measurement and methodological issues .......... 15
   1.4 The organization in which this research took place .... 16
   1.5 Overview of the present dissertation ........... 17

2. How work and family can facilitate each other: Distinct types of work-family facilitation and outcomes for women and men 23
   2.1 Theoretical and empirical background ............ 24
   2.2 The current research .......................... 29
   2.3 Method qualitative pilot study ................. 32
   2.4 Results qualitative pilot study ................. 33
   2.5 Method quantitative study ..................... 36
   2.6 Results ...................................... 38
   2.7 Discussion .................................. 51

3. Combining work and family: How family supportive work environments and work supportive home environments can reduce work-family conflict and enhance facilitation 61
   3.1 Family supportive work environments and work supportive home environments ........ 63
   3.2 Conflict and facilitation ........................ 66
   3.3 Different types of conflict and facilitation .......... 67
   3.4 Method ...................................... 69
   3.5 Results ...................................... 74
   3.6 Discussion .................................. 78

4. Are successful role-combiners healthier and better performing employees? Relating work-family facilitation and conflict to objective health and performance indicators 87
   4.1 Previous research using self-reported outcomes .... 88
   4.2 Previous research relating conflict experiences to objective outcome measures .... 89
5. There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so: Social influence and cognitive appraisal of the work-family interface

5.1 Scarcity theory and work-family conflict
5.2 Role expansion theory and work-family facilitation
5.3 The transactional model of stress and cognitive appraisals of the work-family interface
5.4 Can cognitive appraisals be influenced?
5.5 The role of group membership in cognitive appraisals
5.6 Method
5.7 Results
5.8 Discussion

6. General discussion

6.1 Work-family facilitation experiences and their beneficial consequences
6.2 Antecedents and possibilities to increase the experience of work-family facilitation
6.3 Gender differences
6.4 Theoretical implications
6.5 Practical implications
6.6 Issues for future research
6.6 Conclusion

References
Appendix to chapter 2: Organizational statistics

Nederlandse samenvatting (Summary in Dutch)
Curriculum Vitae
Acknowledgements

This is a wonderful moment! Obviously because writing these acknowledgements means that my dissertation is completed. But also because it is a moment of reflection on four special years, and thinking about all the people that have been important to me. Here, I can finally thank them.

First of all, I would like to thank my colleagues at Leiden University, many of whom were already important to me as a student. Thank you all for creating an environment in which I felt both very much at home and very much inspired. Floor, Marijke, Colette, Erik, Astrid, Joyce, and Lindy, thank you for your feedback on my work and all the fun during working days, diners, and conferences. I especially want to thank Katherine and Belle, who have been my roommates and friends for nearly four years. Your support, humour, and encouragement have been very important to me. Although we are no longer immediate colleagues, I really hope we will keep seeing each other often to discuss everything that goes on in our work and personal lives. I also would like to thank my new colleagues at Utrecht University for giving me such a warm welcome (although singing was not necessary per se!).

Second, I am very thankful for having had the opportunity to collaborate with ING. The ING Human Resources department not only financially sponsored this 4-year PhD project, they were also actively involved in the project, supported it within the organization, assisted with practical issues, and were determined to use it’s findings to improve organizational practice, which in my opinion were factors that have greatly contributed to the quality of this research. At the same time, they gave me all scientific freedom that was needed. Fulfilling this (totally different!) work role was a great professional experience for me. Working alongside colleagues provided me with a valuable ‘inside perspective’. It gave me insights and taught me skills I would not have had from being in academia alone. For sure, it also stimulated me to use the time at university efficiently (and vice versa!). Best of all, it gave me the opportunity to meet great people. I specifically want to thank Alex Verheijden, Wilbert Buiter, Terry Bot, Rene Daselaar, Tanja Wilhelm, Antonine Pelgrim, and all colleagues from the Compensation & Benefits department. Naturally, I feel very grateful to all employees who participated in my research.

Outside work-life (but surely facilitating it), very valuable have been my friends, Saskia, Marieke, Angela, and Wieke - some of whom have been my friends for nearly my whole life - and my friends from Artemiss: Dineke, Elselien, Evelien, Huiberdine, Louise, Maaike, Marianne, Marieke, Mireille,
Suzanne, and Wendeline. Thank you all for the positive distraction from work, the fun, and your support. Besides our conversations about the big and smaller topics in life, I really valued discussing work. Your stories as hardworking doctors, teachers, consultants, practitioners in psychology etcetera, have been inspiring to me and have always been helpful to put my own work or work stress into perspective.

This brings me to my family. Herman en Paula, thank you so much for how you both fulfil the role of being a parent, with such incredible unconditional love, dedication, and encouragement from the day I was born. I couldn't have been born in a better family. Frank, thank you for being your older sister, and for letting me be your little sister as well sometimes!

Finally, of course, Armin. With your interest in my work, understanding, humour, advice, and love you embodied the concept of ‘partner support’ for me. I feel very lucky to have you next to me. Even more important, you simply make every aspect of my non-work life terrific! Armin, thank you for making me happy.