LIFE GOALS AND WELL-BEING: THE ROLE OF WORK-FAMILY INTERFERENCE

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Slow down and enjoy life.

It is not only the scenery you miss by going too fast

- you also miss the sense of where you are going and why.

-Eddie Cantor

Lastly, I extend my deepest thanks to my beloved parents, Meltem Ipek and Hüseyin Ipek, and my brother, Şafak Göktuğ Ipek, who have always believed in me and supported me in all my endeavors. Their unconditional love and support have been a constant source of inspiration throughout my life.

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List of Abbreviations

BCT: Behavior Change Techniques

FtWI: Family-to-Work Interference

HA_HC: High Agentic–High Communal Goal Endorsement

HA_LC: High Agentic–Low Communal Goal Endorsement

LA_HC: Low Agentic–High Communal Goal Endorsement

OECD: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

pairfam: German Family Panel Survey

WEF: World Economic Forum

WtFI: Work-to-Family Interference

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Executive Summary

The objective of this doctoral thesis is to empirically test theory-based hypotheses related to the role of work-family interference in the relationship between life goals and well-being. While the relationship between work-family interference and well-being is well-documented in the literature, the role of individual motivational function of life goals has been largely overlooked. Life goals are conceptualized as agentic, representing independence and success, and communal, representing interdependence and care. Additionally, while some studies have explored the relationship between life goals and well-being, little is known about how these life goals affect different life domains. The study draws on established theoretical frameworks, including the Work-Home Resources model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), Personal Resource Allocation framework (Grawitch et al., 2010), and the Strength Model of Self-Control (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), to highlight the critical role of managing personal and contextual resources in mitigating negative well-being outcomes while balancing work-family dynamics and pursuing life goals.

The overarching research question this thesis addresses is: What is the relationship between life goals, work-family interference, and well-being? Three empirical studies were conducted as part of this thesis, testing the following core hypotheses: (1) Life goals modify the impact of work-family interference on well-being; (2) Life goals act as antecedents to work-family interference, with effects varying across cultural contexts (Turkey and Germany) and levels of self-control; (3) Self-regulation interventions aimed at reducing work-family interference may have varying effects depending on individual differences in self-control.

The first study, utilizing secondary data from the German Family Panel (pairfam) with N=2656 participants residing in Germany, supports the hypothesis that life goals significantly moderate the relationship between work-family interference and life satisfaction. Specifically, individuals who prioritize agentic goals tend to experience lower life satisfaction when work

interferes with family (ß = –0.18, p ≤ 0.001), while those who prioritize communal goals may face a similar decline in life satisfaction when family interferes with work (ß = –0.07, p ≤ 0.05). These results underscore the importance of understanding the type of life goals individuals prioritize as they critically shape how work-family interference affects overall life satisfaction.

The second study, using primary data from N=1252 white-collar employees in Germany and Turkey, expands on the findings of the first study by providing further support for the hypothesis, showing that life goals not only moderate the relationship between work-family interference and well-being but also serve as antecedents to it. Specifically, focusing on agentic goals is positively associated with work-to-family interference (ß = 0.30; p < .001), while focusing on communal goals is positively associated with family-to-work interference (ß = 0.19; p < 0.001), both of which contribute to a decline in life satisfaction (ß = -0.12; p < .001; ß = -0.05; p < .001) and an increase in stress (ß = 0.16; p < .001; ß = 0.08; p < .001). Furthermore, cultural context and self-control levels significantly moderate these relationships. For example, Turkish women experience a greater positive impact on stress when their agentic goals conflict with societal gender role expectations (ß = .14; p < .05). Individuals with high self-control, despite higher life satisfaction (ß = .17; p < .01), often underestimate the demands of communal goals, resulting in increased family-to-work interference (ß = .29; p < .001). These findings highlight the complex interplay between life goals, cultural context, and self-control in shaping the experience of work-family interference and its impact on well-being, suggesting the need for targeted interventions that address the specific challenges posed by agentic and communal goals within different cultural contexts. To address these challenges, the third study implements action planning and action control interventions aimed at helping individuals better manage work-family interference and enhance well-being.

The third study assessed the effectiveness of self-regulation intervention designed to reduce work-to-family interference in N=662 white-collar employees residing in Germany.

Contrary to the hypotheses, the results showed no significant differences in work-to-family interference between the intervention and control groups ($F(1, 427) = .055$, $p = .82$), indicating that the intervention had no overall effect. However, further analysis revealed that changes in self-control were key. Participants in the intervention group who showed moderate improvements in self-control initially experienced an increase in WtFI, suggesting that high self-control may, under certain conditions, exacerbate rather than alleviate role interference. In contrast, those with greater self-control improvements experienced a decrease in WtFI over time, suggesting long-term benefits. This challenges the assumption that self-control always leads to better management of work-family demands and highlights the need for more nuanced interventions tailored to individual differences.

These three studies collectively draw on and extend the theoretical frameworks introduced earlier. The findings demonstrate that life goals play a pivotal role in both moderating and predicting the relationship between work-family interference and well-being, highlighting the importance of resource allocation between work and home, the preservation and enhancement of resources, as well as the role of life goals in guiding resource investment across different life domains. Additionally, the findings challenge the strength model of self-control by revealing that, under certain conditions, high self-control can exacerbate rather than alleviate role interference. These insights underscore the need for tailored interventions that consider personal and cultural differences in life goals and self-control to effectively manage work-family interference and improve well-being, providing actionable insights for future research and practical interventions.

Chapter 1: General Introduction

1.1. Background and Outline of the Dissertation

Imagine individuals striving for a doctoral degree, which requires them to spend long hours at their desks while also being responsible for the daily care of their elderly parents. Picture a person who yearns for regular contact with friends but is challenged by a demanding six-day workweek. Such scenarios are commonplace in daily life, where personal goals, professional commitments, and family responsibilities intertwine. The effort to balance these aspects has not only been a significant concern from academic and professional viewpoints for decades but failing to achieve such balance can also have harmful effects on well-being.

Particularly with technological advancements and the increasing prevalence of remote work options, the boundary between life domains has become increasingly blurred. For instance, for white-collar professionals who predominantly work via computers, seamlessly checking emails at home with a click of a button or swiftly shifting focus to their children's situation in the kindergarten with a phone call from the office has become effortless. According to the American Psychological Association's 2023 Work in America Survey, employees lacking the flexibility to balance work and personal life were significantly more prone to report negative impacts on their mental health (67%) compared to those with such flexibility (23%). Thus, it is understandable that employees were attracted to their current positions more because of the work-life balance opportunities (41%) than their salary (36%; Aviva, 2022). Economic reasons also appear to play a role in the need to improve the health and well-being of employees. In the McKinsey Report, it was stated that improving the health and well-being of employees on a global scale has the potential to generate economic value ranging from $3.7 trillion to $11.7 trillion (Brassey et al., 2024). Thus, exploring avenues for achieving a balance between work and personal life becomes increasingly crucial, particularly considering their profound implications for individual well-being.

Taking all these situations/conditions into consideration, the purpose of this thesis is to understand how the interference between different life domains, such as work and family, impacts the well-being of white-collar employees. It also aims to understand the role of life goals as factors that may both contribute to or modify these effects, as well as how these life goals themselves may influence individual well-being. In doing so, it considers not only the importance of individuals' life goals but also their ability to pursue them with the ability of self-control. Additionally, this thesis takes into account the influence of the cultural context in which individuals live, as it can either support or burden them in their efforts to achieve their life goals while also affecting their ability to cope with the work-family dynamics. By addressing both the personal and cultural dimensions, the thesis aims to provide an understanding of the factors influencing employee well-being.

The relationship between work-family interference and well-being has been frequently addressed in academic literature (Mullen et al., 2008; Obrenovic et al., 2020; Reimann & Diewald, 2022) and in various theories and models, such as the Conservation of Resources Theory (Hobfoll, 1989), Boundary Theory (Ashforth et al., 2000), and Job Demands-Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In fact, Amstad et al. (2011) conducted a meta-analysis that revealed work-family interference has the greatest impact on individuals' overall well-being, compared to its effects on work- or family-related outcomes such as job satisfaction and marital performance. This finding highlights how work-family interference can substantially affect the quality of life. However, the effect on well-being can still vary significantly among individuals. For instance, factors such as spousal support and personality traits can either buffer or exacerbate the impact of work-family interference (Aycan & Eskin, 2005; Kinnunen et al., 2003). Researchers have also focused on identifying antecedents to understand the emergence of work-family interference, highlighting both domain-specific factors, such as workload and family responsibilities, and dispositional factors, such as stress management and personality

traits (Allen et al., 2012; Michel et al., 2011). While these studies have provided valuable insights, there appears to be a need for further exploration into the role of individual-related and particularly motivational factors in the work-family interference literature. Despite numerous calls from scholars (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Hauser et al., 2018; Senecal et al., 2001; Shaffer et al., 2011; Xanthopoulou et al., 2007), the existing literature largely overlooks how individuals' life goals (motivational factors) might influence their experience of work-family interference across diverse contexts. This thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of how individuals' life goals, which influence decision-making and purposive actions (Emmons, 1996; Gollwitzer & Bargh, 1996), shape work-family dynamics.

Life goals are internal representations of desired states (Austin & Vancouver, 1996) that individuals strive to achieve, preserve, or avoid (Emmons, 1996, p. 314), and they can directly impact individual well-being as the process of achieving them provides personal meaning and satisfaction (Deci & Ryan, 2000). However, individuals pursuing specific life goals may be more sensitive to the interaction between work and family domains and thus may be more negatively affected by this interaction, which suggests a moderating role for life goals in shaping well-being. Additionally, while some studies have explored the relationship between life goals and well-being (Macleod, 2012; Saragovi et al., 2002; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999), little is known about how these life goals affect different life domains. This thesis investigates the moderating and predecessor roles of life goals in the relationship between work-family interference and well-being, underscoring the need for further research on how to manage work-family boundaries, effectively achieve life goals, and maintain well-being in this process.

When considering the relationship among life goals, work-family interference, and well-being, it is crucial to acknowledge the significant roles of cultural values because they dictate societal expectations regarding gender roles and acceptable behavior. These expectations profoundly influence how individuals prioritize their life goals and navigate the balance

between work and family responsibilities. The misalignment between personal aspirations and societal expectations can result in stress, reduced well-being, and a sense of failure in fulfilling both work and family roles (Hagqvist et al., 2017; Kaufman & Taniguchi, 2019). The profound effect of these expectations lies in their ability to shape not only individual behaviors but also societal structures, creating barriers to pursuing life goals that conflict with traditional roles. Furthermore, as societal norms evolve, they can either mitigate or exacerbate the effect of work-family interference on well-being, illustrating the dynamic interplay among cultural values, societal expectations, and individual well-being. Conducting studies across diverse cultural contexts is essential for understanding this complexity and revealing how these forces impact the endorsement of life goals and well-being in different societies. In this regard, this thesis particularly focuses on the impact of pursuing life goals that represent non-traditional gender roles on experienced work-family interference and its effect on well-being in Germany and Türkiye. Based on Hofstede's (2001) cultural dimension of individualism and collectivism, it may be assumed that in Germany, where individualistic values dominate, pursuing life goals aligned with independence and success may result in lower levels of work-family interference and higher well-being, as societal norms are more supportive of individual choices. In contrast, in Türkiye, where collectivistic values prevail, pursuing life goals that emphasize interdependence and caring may lead to less work-family interference and enhanced well-being, as these goals align more closely with societal expectations. Examining these issues in countries with differing cultural characteristics will reveal the influence of cultural context on the relationship among life goals, work-family interference, and well-being.

Besides cultural differences, personal differences, such as individuals' self-control skills, play a crucial role in how effectively people pursue their life goals, as research indicates that individuals with higher self-control are better equipped to manage competing demands, resulting in more successful goal achievement (Tangney et al., 2004; Hofmann et al., 2012). In

this thesis, the focus is on self-control as a mechanism to overcome obstacles that may arise while pursuing life goals (de Ridder et al., 2012). The strength model of self-control (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000) suggests that self-control can be exercised and strengthened over time, much like muscle. Targeted self-control training not only improves regulation across various domains of life but also contributes to overall well-being (Beames et al., 2017; Friese et al., 2017). These interventions offer individuals the tools to pursue their life goals more effectively while maintaining a healthy balance between different life domains without the need to retreat from external pressures. For example, studies evaluating systematic self-monitoring and reflection strategies have shown improvements in employee well-being and reductions in sick leave (Krampen, 2010). The literature highlights the need for interventions that help employees manage conflicting demands more efficiently (Richardson, 2017). However, research on the moderating effect of self-control and targeted interventions designed to improve self-control for better goal pursuit and management of the dynamics between different life domains remains limited. Therefore, this thesis seeks to test the effectiveness of a self-regulation intervention aimed at promoting self-control and reducing work-family interference.

Based on these explanations, this doctoral thesis tests specific hypotheses concerning the relationship among life goals, work-family interference, and employee well-being. It examines how work-family interference affects employee well-being and how life goals contribute to managing work and family demands. Additionally, the moderating effects of cultural and personal differences are analyzed to determine how these factors enable employees to address work-family challenges. By testing these hypotheses, this thesis provides evidence-based insights into how employees achieve a balance between their professional and personal responsibilities. To achieve these goals, the current chapter, Chapter 1, outlines key theoretical frameworks and reviews the literature on the relationship among life goals, work-family interference, and well-being, considering the role of intercultural and personal differences. It

concludes by outlining the research aims and objectives. Chapter 2 presents a longitudinal study comparing work-family interference and well-being among employees with different life goals, investigating how life goals may moderate work-family interference experiences. Chapter 3 explores cross-sectional data from white-collar employees in Germany and Türkiye, focusing on how life goals drive work-family interference and influence well-being. Chapter 4 assesses a self-control intervention aimed at helping employees improve their ability to manage competing demands. Finally, Chapter 5 summarizes the key findings, outlines limitations, and discusses the theoretical and practical contributions, providing recommendations for future research and applications.

1.2. Theoretical Framework

Before moving forward, this section will present a broad theoretical framework that explains the key conceptual relationships discussed in the following chapters and clarifies the rationale behind the choice of these concepts. Several resource-based theoretical models are used as foundational frameworks to help clarify the relationships between key concepts.

The Work-Home Resources model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012) is a model that examines the interplay between work and home domains, focusing on the allocation and utilization of resources across these domains to understand their impact on individual well-being (see Figure 1.1). The model defines work-family interference as a process whereby demands in either the work or home domain can drain personal resources, reducing effectiveness in the other area (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). It is grounded in the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which posits that individuals strive to obtain, preserve, and enhance their resources, such as time and energy, which are critical for effectively managing both work and home responsibilities. Hobfoll (2011) categorized the resources into two types: contextual resources, external to the self and located within one's social environment, and personal resources, which are personal characteristics and energies

(Hobfoll, 2011). The Work-Home Resources model introduces two additional subtypes of resources: key resources and macro resources. Key resources are placed at a higher level within personal resources, as they encompass stable personality traits like the intensity of goal pursuit. Likewise, macro resources are positioned at a higher level within contextual resources, representing more enduring and uncontrollable factors such as the cultural system (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012).

Figure 1. 1

Work-Home Resources Model
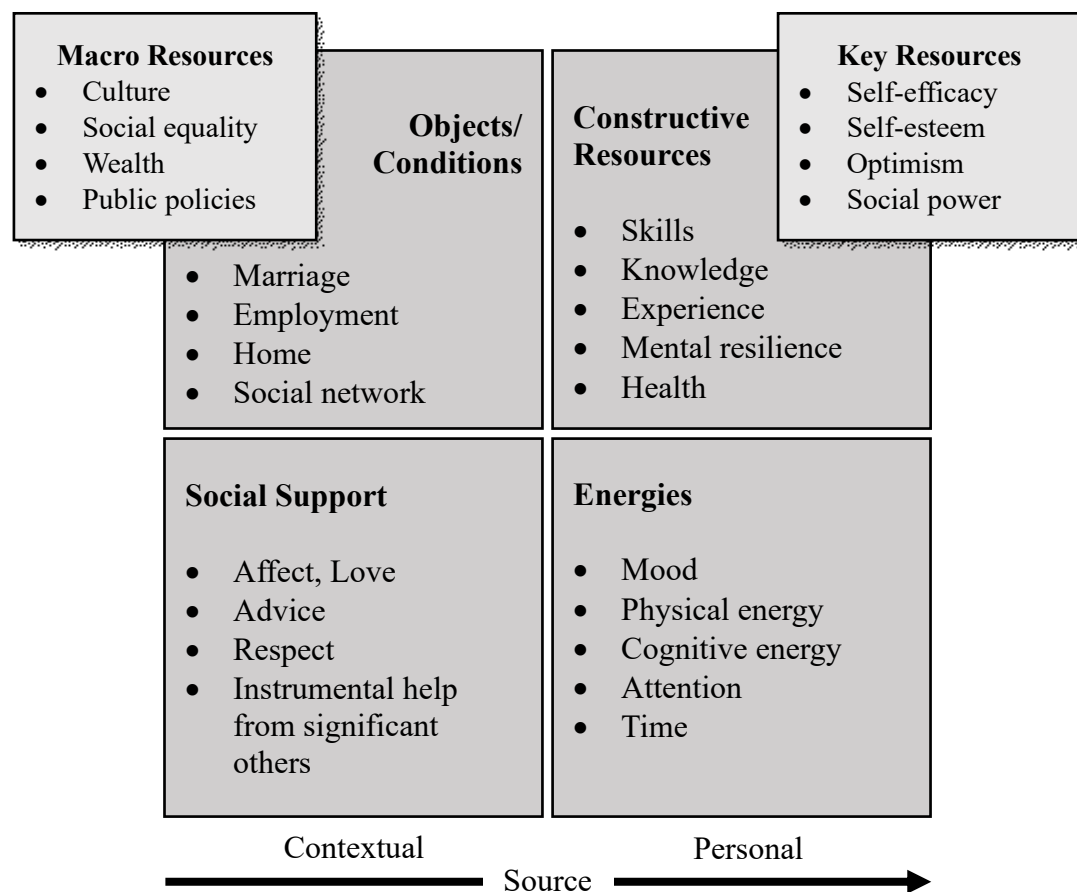
Note: Taken from ten Brummelhuis and Bakker (2012).

Self-regulation can be considered one of the personal resources in the Conservation of Resources theory and key resources in the Work-Home Resources model. It is defined as the

ability to control emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in pursuit of life goals (Zimmerman, 2000). It has four components: Individuals establish specific standards and desired behaviors, such as life goals. They maintain motivation to achieve their life goals or meet these standards. They regularly assess and track their actions and thoughts to monitor progress. Finally, they exercise willpower to resist temptations or impulses (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). Self-regulation encompasses more than just suppressing automatic responses (referred to as self-control); it also involves directing behavior toward desired outcomes (referred to as goal striving; Berkman, 2016). According to the limited-resource model of self-regulation, the self consists of energy and is governed by depletable, limited self-regulatory resources (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). This depletion is referred to as ego depletion and is explained through muscle metaphor. Just as muscles tire when heavily used and require rest to be effectively reused, the resources necessary for self-regulation can also diminish over time (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Limited self-regulation resources lead individuals to be motivated to conserve them rather than expend them until depleted (Muraven et al., 2006).

The Personal Resource Allocation framework (Grawitch et al., 2010), which is similar to and based on the models mentioned above, also focuses on the concept of resources and places significant emphasis on resource investment. According to the Personal Resource Allocation framework, effective resource allocation across all life domains is the key to maintaining balance between those domains. Individuals have limited resources, and as they face repeated demands on these resources, they must choose how to allocate them effectively (Grawitch et al., 2010). Self-regulation as a key personal resource enables resource management by facilitating the selection and application of resources across domains (Hagger, 2015). Nevertheless, the act of choices depletes essential resources required for self-regulation, suggesting that it potentially leads to resource depletion (Vohs et al., 2008). Therefore, whether individuals choose to invest their resources or are compelled to do so, this investment

ultimately drains their personal resources (Grawitch et al., 2010). There is a paradox here: self-regulation requires resources to function effectively, yet the very act of self-regulation also consumes these limited resources (Baumeister et al., 1998).

It is important to emphasize that each choice of where, when, and how resources will be invested involves some trade-offs. Tradeoffs are central to self-regulation, and paradoxically, the self depletes its resources when deciding how to allocate them (Baumeister & Alquist, 2009). Decision-making and self-regulation are integral components of the self's executive function; thus, effective self-regulation often necessitates sacrificing one desire in order to achieve another that is more important (Vohs et al., 2008). The pursuit of a significant, long-term goal can provide a clear sense of direction and purpose, which helps individuals prioritize their efforts and make necessary sacrifices more easily (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). Self-regulation decisions involve value-based judgments, where choices are assessed according to their subjective worth (Berkman et al., 2017). This idea is consistent with the Conservation of Resources theory, which posits that individuals typically allocate resources to preferred activities while minimizing expenditure on those considered necessary but less favored (Hobfoll, 2011). In the realm of achieving a balance between life domains, when individuals allocate their personal resources broadly to meet all desires rather than prioritizing essential ones, they may experience dissatisfaction and psychological distress due to resource insufficiency and unmet expectations (Grawitch et al., 2010).

All the outlined approaches have also addressed the origins of stress, as well as individuals' reactions to it. These models do not treat demands and stressors as the same concepts. On the contrary, while demands are factors or responsibilities that compete for personal resources, stress represents the mismatch between these demands and the available resources (Grawitch et al., 2010). Stress occurs when there is a perceived mismatch between demands and available resources, a threat of resource loss, an actual loss of resources, or a

failure to gain resources following their investment (Hobfoll, 1989). Resource availability emerges as a crucial factor in dealing with stress; thus, the more individuals have self-regulation skills, the better they can cope with stress (Hagger, 2015). Cyclically, coping with stress requires self-regulation, and subsequent attempts at self-regulation are more likely to fail after such exertions (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Hobfoll defined this process as the loss spiral. The loss spiral describes a process in which an initial loss in personal resources leads to further losses because there are fewer personal resources available to cope with ongoing demands effectively (Hobfoll, 2011). Theoretical frameworks that apply the loss spiral process from the Conservation of Resources theory to specific domains like work-family interference explain how demands in one area deplete personal resources. This depletion leaves insufficient resources for other areas, thereby elucidating the stressors that arise. These stressors manifest in outcomes related to work, home, and overall well-being (Grawitch et al., 2010; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Thus, the negative consequences in the work, family, and health-related areas result from ineffective management of life given a finite number of personal resources (time, energy, and money) (Grawitch et al., 2010).

In conclusion, the theoretical frameworks discussed in this chapter provide a comprehensive foundation for understanding the interplay among life goals, work-family interference, and individual well-being. By examining resource-based models, valuable insights are offered into how individuals allocate and manage their limited resources across life domains. This selective resource investment opens the door for trade-offs, where certain life goals and domains are prioritized at the expense of others. The concepts of self-regulation, resource depletion, and the loss spiral are crucial for explaining how resource imbalances can lead to stress and dissatisfaction in both work and personal life. These theories serve as a guide in shedding light on the mechanisms that influence individual well-being in the context of life goals and work-family interference.

In the subsequent sections of this chapter, each key concept of the thesis is explored in depth, offering a thorough review of the current knowledge in the field.

1.3. Work-Family Interference[1]

In organizational and social psychology contexts, a role is conceptualized as a set of activities (Kahn et al., 1964). Within role theory, the scarcity hypothesis is another model grounded in resource allocation that suggests that the concurrent management of multiple roles typically leads to strain, given that individuals have a limited number of resources to allocate across their various roles (Goode, 1960). Another perspective, known as the expansion approach, proposes that human energy and time are not fixed but rather flexible and capable of growth. This perspective posits that being involved in multiple roles can be perceived as enriching and fulfilling, offering significant benefits to individuals (Marks, 1977). Given that negative experiences tend to have a more profound impact on human lives than positive ones (Baumeister et al., 2001), this doctoral thesis will mainly focus on the negative interactions between roles.

Kahn et al. (1964) defined the notion of negative spillover between roles as "role conflict," which occurs when two or more demands from different roles arise simultaneously, making it difficult to meet one without compromising the others. They identified several forms

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[1] In the academic discourse, there's an awareness that the term "family" might not fully capture the experiences of individuals outside traditional family units, prompting suggestions for broader terms like "non-work," "home," and "private life" to describe personal life domains more inclusively. Despite the importance of these broader concepts, this doctoral thesis employs the term "work-family interference." This choice is grounded in its prevalent use among scholars in the field. Nevertheless, it still encompasses not only traditional family units but also other forms of life arrangements.

of role conflict, including inter-role conflict, which specifically refers to clashes between demands stemming from different group memberships (Kahn et al., 1964). Building on these definitions by Kahn et al. (1964), Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) defined work-family interference as a specific type of inter-role conflict where the demands from work and family spheres are mutually incompatible to some extent. This means that participation in either domain (work or family) is made more challenging by obligations in the other. They identify three types of interference: time-based, where time commitments to one role impair fulfillment in another; strain-based, where stress from one role impedes performance in another; and behavior-based, where the behaviors requisite in one role hinder fulfillment in another role (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Furthermore, work-family interference is a bi-directional phenomenon, comprising work-to-family interference (WtFI), where professional obligations encroach on personal life, and family-to-work interference (FtWI), where personal life duties impede professional responsibilities (Frone et al., 1992). Research has also unveiled a reciprocal relationship between these two types of interference (Frone et al., 1992; Gutek, 1991), suggesting that experiencing one form of interference is likely to predispose an individual to encounter the other. A meta-analysis has confirmed the presence of both overlapping (reciprocal) elements and distinct aspects between these interferences, underscoring the importance of treating them as separate constructs in research designs (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). When the classifications regarding the form and direction of interference are combined, six dimensions emerge, including time-based, strain-based, and behavior-based work-to-family interference and family-to-work interference (Carlson et al., 2000). However, empirical evidence for behavior-based forms of interference is limited (Geurts & Demerouti, 2003), with research predominantly focusing on conflicts rooted in time and strain. The current doctoral thesis follows that tradition, acknowledging the challenges of distinguishing the direction of

behavior-based conflicts due to the intertwined nature of work and family behaviors, and therefore focuses specifically on time- and strain-based interferences, which are widely recognized as the primary sources of conflict that individuals find most difficult to manage (Wei et al., 2022).

The antecedents contributing to work-family interference have been divided into three categories: domain-specific factors associated with work and family domains, as well as individual differences (Byron, 2005; Eby et al., 2005). The domain specificity hypothesis (Frone et al., 1992; 1997) suggests that work-specific characteristics are more strongly linked to WtFI, while family-specific characteristics are more strongly associated with FtWI. This hypothesis finds empirical support through meta-analytic investigations, consistently indicating that work-related factors (such as working hours, work involvement, and work support) have stronger correlations with WtFI than with FtWI and that family-related factors (such as the number of children, family commitment, and spousal support) exhibit stronger correlations with FtWI than with WtFI (Byron, 2005; Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005; Michel et al., 2011). Thus, it is important to note that these effects are not exclusively one-way; both work and family characteristics can influence both WtFI and FtWI, though the strength of these associations differs. When examining studies that focus on individual characteristics, it is observed that common factors such as internal locus of control, positive/negative affect, and self-efficacy are associated with both types of interference (Allen et al., 2012; Michel et al., 2011). In addition to these findings, as emphasized by Byron (2005) and Allen et al. (2012), the majority of existing literature has primarily concentrated on antecedents based on situational factors, creating a significant gap in comprehending the influence of individual-related or dispositional factors, such as motivational ones.

The resource-based theoretical frameworks, as discussed in the previous section, all emphasize that negative outcomes in different life domains occur when there is a misalignment

between resource allocation and the demands placed on individuals (Grawitch et al., 2010; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Work-family interference is a form of resource depletion, which in turn creates stress and negatively impacts individuals' well-being. Previous studies have found that when resources are allocated to one domain at the expense of neglecting the demands of the other domain, interference between work and family can lead to various negative outcomes, such as decreased organizational commitment, reduced family performance, and increased burnout. The consequences of interference between the work and family domains can be categorized into two main types: work and family-related (domain-specific) and health-related (domain-unspecific) outcomes (Allen et al., 2020; Amstad et al., 2011).

The work-family interference literature explores how the interplay between work and family is associated with outcomes across different domains, with a particular emphasis on two key theories: the cross-domain principle and the matching hypothesis. The former, which is the more widely recognized of the two (Frone et al., 1992; 1997), suggests that WtFI is associated with family outcomes (receiving domain) more significantly than work outcomes (originating domain), whereas FtWI is associated with work outcomes (receiving domain) more strongly than family outcomes (originating domain). This is because when individuals face overwhelming demands in one domain, their ability to fulfill responsibilities diminishes, resulting in decreased performance and quality of life in the receiving domain. Meta-analytic results conducted by Ford and colleagues (2007) support this hypothesis, showing that variables in the work domain explain a substantial amount of variance in family satisfaction, while variables in the family domain explain a significant portion of the variance in job satisfaction.

On the other hand, according to the matching hypothesis (Amstad et al., 2011), WtFI is more strongly associated with work-related outcomes (originating domain) compared to

family-related outcomes (receiving domain). Conversely, FtWI is more strongly associated with family-related outcomes (originating domain) than work-related outcomes (receiving domain). This pattern is due to cognitive evaluations, where blame is attributed to the domain where the interference originates, which consequently leads to more negative associations with outcomes in that domain compared to the receiving domain. Previous findings provide further support for the matching hypothesis and suggest that WtFI has stronger associations with work-related outcomes, such as job satisfaction, than with family-related outcomes, while FtWI is more closely associated with family-related outcomes, such as family satisfaction, than with work-related outcomes (Amstad et al., 2011; Shockley & Singla, 2011). Additionally, a meta-analysis by Nohe et al. (2015) found that the association between WtFI and job strain is stronger than that between FtWI and job strain. Even though this suggests that interference originating in one domain tends to be more strongly associated with outcomes within that same domain, it has been found that both forms of interference are most strongly associated with outcomes that are not specific to any domain but are domain-unspecific, such as overall well-being (Amstad et al., 2011).

Delving into the domain-unspecific outcomes of work-family interference reveals significant associations with key aspects of life. Meta-analyses have consistently shown that both WtFI and FtWI are negatively associated with life satisfaction, underscoring the detrimental associations of such interference with overall well-being (Allen et al., 2000; Amstad et al., 2011; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). Furthermore, research by Amstad and colleagues (2011) highlights that both WtFI and FtWI correlate positively with stress, psychological distress, depression, and anxiety. The study by Yavas et al. (2008) also illuminates the positive correlation between both directions of interference and emotional exhaustion, further emphasizing the significant psychological toll. Additionally, evidence suggests that work-

family interference can have not only cross-sectional but also both immediate and long-term adverse effects on individuals' well-being (Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001).

In summary, this section explored the core concepts of role theory, focusing on the dynamics between work and family domains and how conflicting demands lead to strain and negative outcomes. The section also covered the nature of work-family interference, emphasizing time-based and strain-based interference and their reciprocal relationship. Additionally, the antecedents that contribute to this interference were discussed. The work-family interference literature illustrates its impact on domain-specific outcomes, such as work and family performance, as well as domain-unspecific outcomes, including general well-being. Moving forward, the next section will delve deeper into these domain-unspecific outcomes, particularly the concept of subjective well-being. It will explore how work-family interference influences life satisfaction and stress, offering insights into the motivational perspective of subjective well-being.

1.4. Subjective Well-Being

Subjective well-being is an umbrella concept that reflects individuals' evaluations and feelings regarding their lives (Diener & Ryan, 2009). It is deeply rooted in both emotional and cognitive dimensions and involves individuals' emotional reactions—ranging from positive to negative affect—as well as their cognitive judgments of life satisfaction and fulfillment (Diener, 1984).

According to Diener and Ryan (2009), subjective well-being encompasses emotional reactions to life events, including feelings of joy and sadness, contributing to an individual's overall sense of well-being. Besides, life satisfaction —a cognitive dimension— emphasizes individuals' subjective evaluations of the pleasant and unpleasant aspects of their lives and their satisfaction across various life domains such as work, family, and personal life (Diener & Ryan, 2009). These judgments typically rest on comparisons with personal standards and

expectations, underlining the subjective nature of well-being (Diener et al., 2018). Within subjective well-being literature, a notable distinction is made between the top-down and bottom-up models. The top-down perspective posits that overall life satisfaction influences satisfaction within specific life domains. Conversely, the bottom-up approach views life satisfaction as a cumulative assessment derived from individual satisfaction across various important life domains (Schimmack et al., 2002). This model suggests that changes within these domains, as well as diverse life events, may cause variations in the overarching sense of life satisfaction (Pavot & Diener, 2008). Supporting the top-down perspective, this thesis follows the idea that understanding overall life satisfaction can offer valuable insights into other areas of life.

There are two different perspectives on well-being and happiness, originating from ancient Greek philosophy: The hedonic view and the eudaimonic approach. Subjective well-being offers a comprehensive perspective on well-being that adheres to the hedonic view, positing well-being as deriving from experiencing life positively through both affective evaluations and cognitive judgments (Diener, 1984). The hedonic view centers on subjective feelings and thoughts, which equates subjective well-being with happiness through pleasure and pain avoidance, even though eliminating negative states would not necessarily foster positive states (Diener et al., 2002). In contrast, the eudemonic approach considers well-being in terms of realizing one's potential and cultivating desirable qualities beyond just subjective happiness (Das et al., 2020). Unlike purely hedonic happiness, which is primarily subjective and based on personal pleasure, eudaimonic happiness is also tied to objective standards of what is considered a "good life" (Sheldon, 2018). In the current thesis, emphasis is placed on the former viewpoint—the personal/subjective perception of individual well-being, with a particular focus on life satisfaction and immediate perceptions of well-being rather than the pursuit of meaning.

According to the catalog study of Das and colleagues (2020), the theories of subjective well-being offer a multifaceted understanding of how personal fulfillment, emotions, and evaluations intertwine to shape overall happiness—a fluid and continuous process where each aspect of subjective well-being informs and reshapes the others. Personal goals lead to various degrees of fulfillment, which, through personal orientation, can lead to further goals and activities, completing the cycle. Emotions and evaluations are both outcomes and informers of affective and cognitive experiences (Das et al., 2020).

Motivational theories of subjective well-being (Diener, 1984) delve into the role of individual goals, needs, and activities in fostering subjective well-being, suggesting that the pursuit and attainment of personal goals and the satisfaction of needs through various activities are central to one's sense of well-being (Steca et al., 2016). The personal goals that people set for themselves, which involve what they want to accomplish or avoid in different life domains, are one key to understanding human behavior and emotions (Diener, 1984). The attainment and accomplishment of important personal goals typically correlate with higher levels of subjective well-being (Diener & Ryan, 2009). This idea also aligns with the resource theory of subjective well-being (Diener & Fujita, 1995), which asserts that the level of satisfaction one experiences in life is directly related to the sufficiency of personal resources that enable people to fulfill their needs or make progress toward their personal life goals (Diener et al., 2018).

To sum up, this section has explored the concept of subjective well-being, emphasizing its emotional and cognitive dimensions and its role in shaping individuals' overall life satisfaction. Additionally, the section has addressed the hedonic and eudaimonic views of happiness, with the current thesis focusing on the subjective, hedonic perspective. Motivational theories of subjective well-being have underscored the importance of personal life goals and the fulfillment of needs in fostering well-being, emphasizing that the attainment of these goals significantly contributes to an individual's overall happiness. Building on these ideas, the next

section will delve into the role of life goals, examining how the pursuit and achievement of these goals intersect with work-family interference and subjective well-being. This will provide a deeper understanding of how individuals navigate conflicting demands across life domains while striving for personal fulfillment.

1.5. Life Goals

Goals are essential components that give meaning to people's lives and contribute to the process by which individuals construe their lives as meaningful or worthwhile (Baumeister, 1991; Emmons, 2003). They are the internal representations of desired states (Austin & Vancouver, 1996) that "people seek to obtain, maintain, or avoid" (Emmons, 1996, p. 314). Understanding an individual's goals allows for a deeper insight into their current and future actions (Emmons, 1996), as these objectives serve as a guide for behavior (Gollwitzer & Bargh, 1996). Goals provide structure and meaning to daily life and help people construe their existence as meaningful, serving as vital components in the pursuit of well-being and a positive life (Emmons, 2003).

Clarifying the terms related to motivation is essential, as they were often used interchangeably. Motive dispositions represent mainly unconscious desires and are revealed indirectly (McClelland, 1985). In contrast, goals are explicitly conscious and differ from motive dispositions (Schmuck & Sheldon, 2001). Values are cognitive representations of what is desirable and indicate what one should do, as opposed to goals that indicate what one wants to do (Emmons, 1989). Values are abstract concepts that represent desirable end-states (Schwartz, 2012) and are broader in scope than goals (Emmons, 1989). While motives and values form the basis of broad, indirect principles that guide behavior, goals are more connected to an individual's intentions than motive dispositions and values (Schmuck & Sheldon, 2001). They serve as the link between motives/values and actions (Locke & Kristof, 1996).

Goals are structured hierarchically, highlighting the importance of grasping an individual's unique goal hierarchy for a comprehensive understanding of them, as noted by Wadsworth and Ford (1983). Lower-order goals serve higher-order goals, and these lower-order goals are context-specific, short-term, and can be easily substituted. On the other hand, higher-order goals are fewer in number, more abstract, can remain salient for longer periods, and are more important to the individual (Duckworth & Gross, 2014). According to Austin and Vancouver (1996), high-level goals are representations of the ideal self and world views and can be found at the top of the hierarchy. Below the high-level goals, there are personal strivings (Emmons, 1986), and at the bottom of the hierarchy, there are current concerns (Klinger, 1975), personal projects (Little, 1983), and life tasks (Cantor, 1990). Finally, the term life goals, which is used in this doctoral thesis, can be seen as high-level goals that individuals set as a fundamental reference point for planning their lives (Pöhlmann, 2001).

Researchers have explored the content of goals to understand what individuals are pursuing and identified several distinctions, such as approach versus avoidance goals (Elliot, 1999), self-determined versus externally controlled goals (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and intrinsic versus extrinsic goals (Kasser & Ryan, 2001). Bakan (1966) also made a distinction between two themes of motivation, naming them agency and communion. In Bakan's (1966) terms, agency refers to an organism's identity as an individual, while communion describes an individual's involvement in larger groups to which they belong. The distinction between agency and communion is based on where the focus is directed - either toward oneself or toward others (Helgeson, 1994). In other words, agentic goals are related to the self and focus on achieving personal success, autonomy, and demonstrating competence. Communal goals, on the other hand, are concerned with relationships and involve seeking affiliation, fostering cooperation, and supporting the community (Pöhlmann, 2001).

The literature has established various distinctions based on the concepts of agency[2] and communion, each encompassing a range of terminologies to describe related pursuits (see Figure 1.2). Agentic pursuits have been characterized by labels like "getting ahead" (Hogan, 1982), "individual strivings" (Wicker et al., 1984), "self-enhancement goals" (Schmuck & Sheldon, 2001), "self-achievement, power, variation" (Pöhlmann, 2001), "zero-sum goals" (Headey, 2008), "recognition and mastery" (Diekman et al., 2010), as well as "assertiveness and competence" (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014). Conversely, communal pursuits have been characterized by labels like "getting along" (Hogan, 1982), "harmony seeking" (Wicker et al., 1984), "group-enhancement goals" (Schmuck & Sheldon, 2001), "intimacy, affiliation, altruism" (Pöhlmann, 2001), "non-zero-sum goals" (Headey, 2008), "helping others and connecting with others" (Diekman et al., 2010), as well as "warmth and morality" (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014).

Figure 1. 2

Life Goals

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[2] *Agency* refers both to an individual's focus on achieving personal success and autonomy (e.g., life goals like self-achievement and power) and to the active initiation of actions, decision-making, and exertion of control. This thesis approaches the concept of agency in the former sense, as a focus on the self.
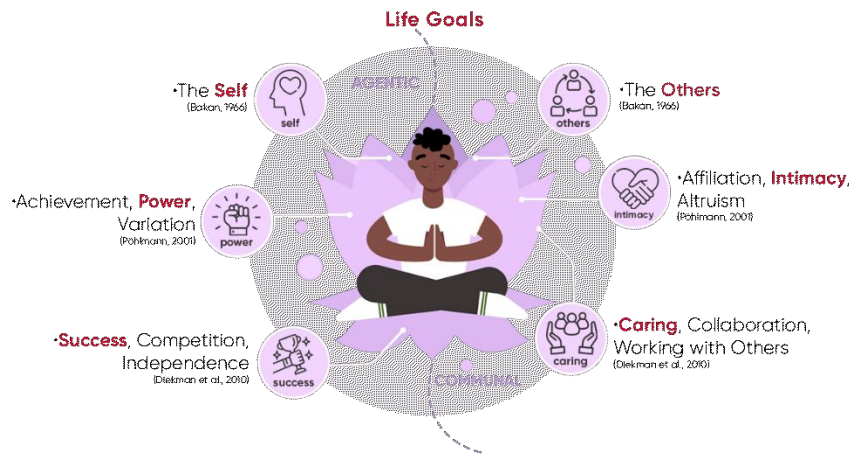
Originally, the concepts of agency and communion were theorized to operate within orthogonal (separate) dimensions of social cognition, representing distinct yet essential aspects of human functioning (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014). Although these two types of goals may seem to be on opposite ends of the spectrum, they are not mutually exclusive (Trapnell & Paulhus, 2011). As Wiggins (1991) explained, all possible combinations of agency and communion are feasible. This flexibility suggests that development in one domain does not inhibit growth in the other, indicating no essential conflict between them. Namely, while agency and communion are fundamentally orthogonal in content, their relationship is dynamic rather than static. They can be positively correlated due to shared positive aspects. Also, their relationship can manifest negatively due to differing perspectives of actors and observers (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014). This dynamic interplay, characterized by both theoretical and empirical inconsistencies, may suggest a curvilinear relationship between agency and communion (Imhoff & Koch, 2017). Thus, agentic and communal goals can be complementary and interrelated in many aspects of human motivation and behavior. The integration or balance of these goals can be key to personal well-being.

The link between life goals and well-being is complex and multifaceted. Striving for personal, enjoyable, and achievable goals fosters psychological well-being (Brunstein, 1993; Pöhlmann, 2001). Pursuing a goal—identifying what goal is being pursued (content),

understanding why it is being pursued (importance), and determining how well the actions taken to achieve it (achievability)—results in various impacts on well-being (Schmuck & Sheldon, 2001). Research indicates that the content of the goal has different effects on well-being. For instance, intrinsic goals usually enhance psychological well-being more than extrinsic ones (Kasser & Ryan, 1993). Studies have also highlighted how pursuing communal and agentic goals affects well-being differently. For optimal well-being, both agentic and communal goal pursuits are required. Helgeson (1994) introduced the unmitigated agency, an excessive focus on self, and the unmitigated communion, an excessive focus on others, to explain imbalances in focus. When one dominates without the other, it can lead to negative health outcomes such as poor social support, unhealthy behaviors, increased psychological distress, and lower well-being (Helgeson & Fritz, 1999). A higher proportion of intimacy-related goals, compared to other goals, is associated with increased well-being (Colby et al., 1994). In contrast, a higher focus on achievement and power goals has been linked to reduced well-being (Emmons, 1991). However, agency-motivated goals have also been associated with positive mental health, as individuals who pursue these goals tend to be more effective than people who pursue other goals in managing both internal and external demands in their lives (Pöhlmann, 2001). Inconsistently, other findings suggest that both intimacy/altruism and achievement/power goals can be positively correlated with positive affect and life satisfaction (Saragovi et al., 2002; Sheldon & Cooper, 2008; Tucak Junaković, 2015). Goals aligned with core values significantly boost well-being by way of greater goal-attainment (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon et al., 2004). The essence of well-being lies not only in the pursuit of specific goals but also in fulfilling one's life plan (Sheldon & Kasser, 1995).

Moreover, the more personal resources people have, the more positive well-being outcomes will occur while pursuing life goals (Diener & Fujita, 1995). People often have multiple goals that intersect in many ways, and pursuing one goal can have negative

consequences for the pursuit of others (Cantor & Blanton, 1996; Emmons & King, 1988). This is because pursuing multiple life goals requires long-term commitment and can create multiple demands (Cantor & Blanton, 1996). It aligns with role accumulation theories that suggest having multiple roles leads to role strain (Goode, 1960) and with stress models that emphasize the importance of resource depletion (Hobfoll, 1989). This means that when faced with multiple goal pursuits that hinge on limited resources, priority management becomes essential. Goal prioritization is crucial in such contexts, and it is a function of the goal's importance. In multiple goal contexts, valences and expectancies play significant roles in affecting goal prioritization and resource allocation (Sun & Frese, 2013). Unsworth et al. (2014) noted that goals linked to positive emotional values are more likely to receive prioritization. Furthermore, Fishbach et al. (2009) highlighted that individuals dedicate more resources to goals they regard as more important, whereas less salient goals are allotted fewer resources. While pursuing multiple life goals can lead to role strain and resource depletion, prioritizing goals based on their importance and emotional value is essential to manage resources effectively and achieve positive well-being outcomes.

Nevertheless, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) argued that the more prioritized motivation may increase time commitment and produce a strain that may interfere with another domain. Building on this idea, considering that individuals generally adopt roles in alignment with their goals (Diekman et al., 2017; 2020), it can be posited that pursuits represented by agentic life goals, such as power, achievement, and mastery, are predominantly related to the professional domain. Consequently, individuals who prioritize these goals are likely to allocate their resources toward career development. Similarly, pursuits associated with communal life goals, such as affiliation, intimacy, and altruism, are inherently linked to the family domain. Consequently, those who prioritize communal goals are likely to allocate their resources within

the home domain[3]. These relationships have been similarly established in prior research (e.g., Cinamon & Rich, 2002; Cohen, 2009). Regarding subjective well-being, it can be pointed out that subjective well-being is predicted to be influenced by the interaction between life events and life goals, with these events evaluated based on their significance to an individual's life goals (Emmons, 1996). Events are considered important when they impact what individuals are striving for. Research has shown that daily moods fluctuate based on positive and negative occurrences in domains that are significant to one's life goals. For example, people who value relationships feel more impact from social events, while those focused-on achievements react more to school or work events (Emmons, 1991). Similarly, it has been found that negative events that impact personal goals can deeply influence self-perception, often leading to increased self-focus and rumination (Lavallee & Campbell, 1995).

In summary, this section has highlighted the pivotal role of life goals in giving meaning to individuals' lives and shaping their well-being, focusing on the distinction between agentic life goals (personal success, autonomy, competence) and communal life goals (relationships, affiliation, community support). These distinctions provide a framework to examine how individuals allocate resources between professional and personal domains, particularly in the context of work-family interference. This thesis will explore how a focus on agentic goals may shift resources toward work life, potentially increasing family strain, while a focus on

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[3] Obviously, an individual might pursue agentic goals, like career advancement, with communal outcomes in mind, such as supporting their family. Conversely, they might seek communal goals, such as volunteering, with agentic outcomes in mind, like skill development. In this thesis, my focus is primarily on the goals individuals pursue, rather than their reasons, and the additional benefits to the unprioritized domain are beyond the main focus of my doctoral thesis.

communal goals may shift resources toward family life, impacting professional pursuits. The existing literature on life goals and well-being is inconsistent, especially regarding their role in work-family dynamics, which still remains underexplored. This thesis aims to investigate not only the complex relationship among life goals, well-being, and work-family interference but also the role of intercultural differences. The following section will provide a detailed explanation of these cultural differences and their potential impact on these relationships.

1.6. Inter-Cultural Differences: Societal Expectations and Non-Traditional Goal Pursuit

1.6.1. Individualistic Cultures vs. Collectivistic Cultures

This thesis explores how individuals' pursuit of non-traditional goals can be evaluated within the contexts of relative individualism and collectivism and how societal expectations from different gender roles affect individuals' well-being. Given the traditional gender roles that categorize men as providers and women as caregivers (Eagly & Wood, 2012), it is suggested that women engaging in communal goals, whereas men pursuing agentic goals meet the societal expectations for their gender role (Diekman & Eagly, 2008). In recent times, new goals and expectations have emerged for both men and women that go beyond their traditional roles (Boehnke, 2011). As people increasingly balance both their career and family responsibilities, the traditional division of labor is beginning to lose its significance, and traditional gender role expectations are questioned (Frear et al., 2019). This shift leads individuals to experience interference between work and family in many ways.

The concept of culture has been previously addressed through the individualistic and collectivistic classification (e.g., Hofstede, 2011; Triandis, 2001). According to this, individualistic cultures view people as independent units focusing on personal interests and emphasizing individuals' internal feelings and thoughts. In comparison, collectivistic cultures value extended families and prioritize in-group relationships (Hofstede, 2001). Individualism represents a cultural value system that prioritizes individual rights, freedom, and personal

goals. In contrast, collectivism represents a cultural value system where personal goals are subordinated to group expectations (Suh & Oishi, 2002).

Markus and Kitayama (1991) highlighted how individualistic cultures view the self as independent, emphasizing personal traits and accomplishments, whereas collectivistic cultures view the self as interdependent, prioritizing relationships and the well-being of the group. Both independent -closely associated with the agency- and interdependent -closely associated with the communion- self-construal exist within everyone, but cultural contexts shape their expression (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Wojciszke, 1997). Individuals from individualistic cultures derive their sense of self-worth from their capacity to express themselves and affirm their inner qualities. Conversely, individuals from collectivistic cultures find their self-worth in their ability to adapt and sustain harmony within their social environments (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Challenging this binary, Kagitcibasi (1996; 2005) critiques the Western psychological framework that contrasts autonomy (i.e., agency) and relatedness (i.e., communion) as opposing traits. She introduces a model comprising three self-structures: the first type leads to a heteronomous-related self, the second to an autonomous-separate self, and the third indicates an autonomous-related self, prevalent in collectivist societies where industrialization and urbanization have reduced material dependencies, but emotional interdependence remains valued (Kagitcibasi, 2005).

Triandis (1995) differentiated individualist cultures from collectivist cultures by the goals people pursue, suggesting that individuals in individualistic cultures aim for personal goals reflecting their desires and needs. In contrast, those in collectivistic cultures pursue communal goals reflecting the desires and needs of in-group members. In individualistic cultures, personal goals are not typically associated with communal goals, but in collectivistic cultures, they tend to be (Triandis, 1995). Consequently, in individualistic cultures, pursuing agentic goals is valued, whereas in collectivistic cultures, engaging in communal goals is valued (Gebauer et

al., 2013; Sedikides et al., 2003), thereby influencing the well-being through the expectations associated with the goals pursued.

Building on this, subjective well-being is found to differ across nations, influenced in part by cultural values and norms (Diener et al., 2018). Even though research shows that there is a worldwide trend toward individualism and away from collectivism (Santos et al., 2017), and people in individualistic cultures generally report higher levels of happiness compared to those in collectivistic cultures (Diener & Diener, 1995; Suh & Oishi, 2002), acting in harmony with the values of one's culture still enhances an individual's well-being (Myers & Diener, 1995). Oishi and Diener (2001) discovered that in more collectivistic cultures, individuals' subjective well-being was boosted by pursuing relationship-oriented goals, while in more individualistic cultures, personal interest-driven goals were more intricately linked to enhanced subjective well-being. This means that individuals who adopt goals that diverge from traditional expectations may confront challenges related to acceptance and social harmony, potentially affecting their well-being. Research suggests that conformity to societal expectations tends to elicit positive emotional responses, whereas deviation often leads to negative emotional outcomes, such as "trouble" in life (Haines & Stroessner, 2019; Rudman et al., 2012; Sczesny et al., 2018).

From the perspective of work-family interference, which may be another "trouble" in life, as previously mentioned, the Work-Home Resources model discusses the concept of macro-resources, which are characteristics of the cultural system embedding an individual; these are stable and beyond individual control but determine the extent to which other resources can be effectively utilized (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). The interplay between work-family interference and cultural values, particularly individualism and collectivism, plays a crucial role in shaping the outcomes of this interference on well-being. The review by Shockley et al. (2017) highlights studies that examine cultural values as moderators in the outcomes of

work-family interference. For instance, Aycan (2008) highlighted that WtFI is more negatively correlated with well-being in collectivistic cultures, where family is essential, and WtFI may threaten family identity. She further explains that in collectivistic cultures, family is deeply intertwined with personal identity, and WtFI is seen as a threat to this identity, amplifying its negative impact on well-being (e.g., Aycan & Eskin, 2005). Additionally, maintaining harmony and avoiding conflict in workplace relationships is considered a significant cultural demand, further contributing to strain-based WtFI. Conversely, in individualistic cultures where work is prioritized, FtWI emerges as more detrimental to well-being. Aycan (2008) explains that in these societies, work often defines personal identity, and when family interferes with work, it is perceived as an intrusion on one's sense of self. As a result, FtWI tends to have a more detrimental effect on well-being in individualistic contexts, where the importance of work outweighs other life domains. Similarly, it is hypothesized that in collectivistic cultures, WtFI negatively affects life satisfaction due to the threat it poses to family life, while in individualistic cultures, FtWI has a stronger impact on life satisfaction because of its influence on work identity (Poelmans et al., 2003). However, Allen et al. (2020) only partially support this perspective, as their findings suggest that the negative effects of both WtFI and FtWI on job, life, and family satisfaction are actually less pronounced in collectivistic societies. Similarly, in collectivistic cultures, work is often seen as a contribution to the family's welfare, which fosters a greater tolerance for spillover and a consequently weaker association between both WtFI and FtWI and stress-related outcomes (Spector et al., 2007; Yang, 2005). The collectivistic viewpoint that integrates work and family roles reduces the perceived interference between these domains (Allen et al., 2020). It has also been found that individualists tend to focus more on their own needs than collectivists, and thus, WtFI is viewed as a threat to their well-being (Aycan & Korabik, 2017). In individualistic societies, where a clear distinction between work and family exists, the balance between work and family is crucial and directly

influences positive outcomes. Conversely, in collectivistic cultures, where such boundaries are more fluid, the emphasis on balance between work and family is less pronounced, reflecting a cultural adaptation that views work and family as integrated parts of life (Haar et al., 2014). Thus, just as the specific life goals one pursues are important, so is the harmony between these life goals and cultural expectations.

Finally, the concept of work-family guilt is identified as an emotional response triggered by the need to balance work and family commitments (Aycan, 2008; Korabik, 2017). This guilt primarily arises from failing to meet traditional gender expectations, where deviations from roles—men as providers and women as caregivers—challenge established norms (Livingston & Judge, 2008). Such deviations include men focusing on communal strivings and women on agentic strivings, leading to varied impacts on work-family interaction and overall well-being across different cultural contexts. Research by Aycan and Eskin (2005) in Türkiye revealed that women experience more employment-related guilt than men, with that guilt being more strongly associated with women's WtFI than FtWI. Furthermore, Korabik (2017) discovered that guilt from WtFI was more significant than guilt from FtWI across ten countries studied. In more individualistic and egalitarian societies, the higher levels of guilt associated with work interfering with family were directly correlated with adverse well-being outcomes. Conversely, those in more collectivistic countries reported lower levels of guilt associated with family interference with work, which was also linked to better well-being outcomes (Korabik, 2017).

These findings illustrate the complexity of how cultural values, gender roles, and work-family interference interact to influence well-being. Specifically, the differences between how individualistic cultures emphasize personal achievement and agency while collectivistic cultures prioritize harmony and communion reveal the varying pressures individuals face in balancing work and family responsibilities. The apparent contradictions between these cultural expectations underscore the need to examine how the pursuit of non-traditional goals—such as

women focusing on agentic life goals or men engaging in communal ones—can lead to different well-being outcomes. In this thesis, these cultural, gender, and work-family dynamics will be explored in the specific contexts of Germany and Türkiye, representing individualistic and collectivistic cultures, respectively. By focusing on these two countries, this thesis aims to investigate how societal expectations and cultural values shape individuals' experiences of work-family interference and the pursuit of non-traditional goals, contributing to a deeper understanding of the well-being outcomes associated with these cultural frameworks.

1.6.2. The Special Cases: Germany and Türkiye

It is essential to underscore that the comparisons drawn within this thesis, focusing on Germany and Türkiye, are relative and not meant to be exclusive or definitive. Each country inherently embodies a spectrum of values, notably individualism, and collectivism, which coexist within their societal frameworks. One of the main aims of this thesis is to examine how the cultural norms of two different countries shape expectations around gender roles and the impact of these expectations. It also seeks to provide a better understanding of the cultural dynamics involved.

According to Hofstede's (2001) comparison of cultural dimensions, Germany values individualism, small family units, and self-actualization, prioritizing personal loyalty and direct communication. German culture emphasizes work, performance, decisiveness, and the demonstration of status through material possessions. It shows that people rather "live in order to work." In contrast, Türkiye leans towards collectivism, highlighting the importance of group harmony, indirect communication, and loyalty within extended families and groups. Turkish culture values consensus avoids conflicts, and places importance on leisure time and relationships, with the status being more influenced by power distance (Hofstede, 2001).

Both Germany and Türkiye are members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Based on the OECD Better Life Index 2020, which evaluates 41

countries, Türkiye is among the lowest four in terms of life quality, while Germany ranks in the top 13. When it comes to overall life satisfaction, Turkish people average a score of 4.9 out of 10, which is below the OECD's average of 6.7, positioning Türkiye at the bottom, in 41st place. In contrast, German people score an average of 7.3, which ranks Germany 8th among the 41 countries. The analysis reveals that Türkiye has the most significant gender gap in life satisfaction, with a great advantage for women and marking it as the country with the highest gender inequality in this regard. Germany, however, stands out for gender equality in life satisfaction, with a slight advantage for women, making it 10th in gender equality among the reviewed nations. Furthermore, 25% of Turkish employees work exceptionally long hours, one of the OECD's highest rates, placing Türkiye at 40th out of 41 countries. Meanwhile, in Germany, only about 4% of employees face such long hours, well below the OECD norm, placing it in the 16th spot. Similarly, Türkiye's employment rate is 47.52%, ranking it 40th, with a significant gender inequality leaning towards men, putting it at the very bottom in this aspect. Germany, on the other hand, boasts an employment rate of 76.69%, making it the 6th best among the nations studied, with its gender equality in employment placing it as the 18th best, reflecting a moderate advantage for men (OECD, 2020).

In the 2023 Global Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum (WEF), Türkiye ranks 129th out of 146 countries, showing the least progress in Economic Participation and Opportunity—being the only country with less than 60% of this gap closed. The country ranked 130th in terms of women's labor force participation rate, 91st in pay equality for the same job, 128th in estimated income, and 119th in access to executive positions. In contrast, Germany, ranking 6th, has closed over 80% of its gender gap, including a notable rise in women's representation in parliament and ministerial roles. The country ranked 49th in terms of women's labor force participation rate, 89th in pay equality for the same job, 102nd in estimated income, and 95th in access to executive positions (WEF, 2023).

These factors—characteristics, employment trends, well-being, and gender equality statistics within Turkish and German settings—significantly influence personal strivings, as well as work-family dynamics. Türkiye's strategic position as a bridge between the East and West not only enhances its cultural diversity but also shapes its work-family practices. Turkish society integrates traditional values of family orientation and collectivism with modern, egalitarian, and individualistic values (Erarslan-Başkurt & Aycan, 2017). This synthesis of autonomy and relatedness, as conceptualized by Kagitcibasi (1996; 2005), may be a unique feature of Turkish culture. Similarly, Uskul and colleagues (2023) demonstrated that participants from the Mediterranean region (including Türkiye) tended to be relatively more independent in terms of social orientation and self-construal compared to those from Anglo-Western societies. However, they also exhibited stronger interdependence in measures emphasizing the connection between individuals and their groups (e.g., ingroup closeness, connection to others, commitment to others). Additionally, all these numbers can be seen as a reflection of how society prioritizes and values various life goals within itself. Therefore, the pursuit of non-traditional goals, leading to potential guilt and a 'double trouble' effect from work-family interference and not meeting cultural expectations, is worth examining for its negative impacts on well-being.

Given the distinctions outlined, it is crucial to recognize that both agentic and communal values are not mutually exclusive and coexist across various cultures. Individuals and societies have the ability to balance these values depending on the specific social circumstances. It is acknowledged that even in individualistic cultures like Germany, social responsibilities are still upheld, while in collectivistic cultures like Türkiye, the pursuit of personal achievement and self-development is not neglected. In both cultures, individuals strive for a blend of agentic and communal life goals, but the priority and significance of these goals shift based on cultural context. In Germany, people often prioritize agentic goals, shaping their worldview around

personal success and autonomy. Meanwhile, in Türkiye, people often prioritize communal goals, tending to act in accordance with societal norms and expectations.

1.7. Personal Differences: Self-Control

This thesis, to account for individual differences, explores the capacity for self-control as a moderating factor, specifically moderating the relationships between personal goals and work-family interference, as well as well-being, while the other moderators influence other specific relationships. Drawing from the Work-Home Resources model, which posits that certain personal characteristics serve as key resources enabling individuals to manage stressful situations better (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), and management resources enable the selection, alteration, and application of other resources (Thoits, 1994), self-control capacity has been proposed as a pivotal 'key resource' within both the Conservation of Resources theory and the Work-Home Resources model. This capacity likely enhances functioning and behavioral regulation abilities, particularly when resource levels are high (Hagger, 2015).

Self-control is defined as the ability to monitor, modify, and regulate one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors (de Ridder et al., 2012). This involves controlling impulses and habits in practice. Behaviors governed by self-control aim to secure the individual's long-term goals. People with high self-control exhibit superior performance, fewer problems with impulse control, and better psychological adjustment, including lower levels of depression and anxiety, higher self-acceptance or self-esteem, and enhanced interpersonal relationships, as evidenced by stronger family cohesion and reduced family conflict. Individuals with high self-control can exert it when needed and suspend it when not; namely, it is positively correlated with conscientiousness but less linked to perfectionism (Tangney et al., 2004). A meta-analysis shows that higher self-control correlates with improved behavior management, aligning with personal goals and societal norms, enhancing psychological well-being and life satisfaction. The study found a medium to strong effect of self-control on achievement and task performance

and a medium effect on interpersonal functioning, suggesting that individuals with greater self-control are more successful in both work and social relationships (de Ridder et al., 2012). It has also been shown that self-control is necessary when shifting from one task to another, whether it be in a work or non-work setting (Baumeister et al., 2007).

Muraven and Baumeister (2000) conceptualized self-control as a crucial component of executive functioning with limited resources. It is like a muscle with limited capacity, which means that every act that requires self-control uses up this shared reserve of strength. Therefore, the effectiveness of self-control efforts depends on the individual's available self-control strength. Those who have greater reserves are more capable of achieving self-control objectives than those with lesser strength (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). This fundamental understanding of self-control as a depletable resource sets the stage for examining how challenges, such as work-family interference, arise as individuals allocate this precious capacity towards achieving specific life goals.

A research study by Hofmann et al. (2014) underscores the importance of self-control in promoting affective well-being and life satisfaction through the effective management of multiple life goals. Individuals with higher self-control are better at managing resources between goals, leading to increased happiness and satisfaction. The concept of key resources explains how people utilize their resources. Individuals with more key resources may plan activities more efficiently, thus conserving time and energy for other pursuits. Notably, work-home interference is less probable among those with key resources, as these resources reduce the pressure of demands on personal resources like time and energy (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Similar to my perspective, Hirschi et al. (2019) discussed self-control within the framework of an action regulation model for balancing work and family, which views balance as successfully pursuing both work and family goals. It highlights self-control's significance in resource management, indicating that individuals with higher self-control are

better at using and optimizing these resources effectively. The article emphasizes the need for adaptability and flexibility, which are intricately linked to self-control. Maintaining work-family balance involves regular progress monitoring, strategy adjustments, and decision-making to properly align and prioritize goals (Hirschi et al., 2019).

According to the strength model of self-control (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), it might be possible to increase people's ability to exercise self-control over time. If self-control works like a muscle, then exercising it could make it stronger. Although initially, exerting self-control may deplete and weaken one's capacity, in the long term, it might have the opposite effect. Regular exercise of self-control followed by periods of rest and replenishment could gradually enhance an individual's overall capacity for self-control (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Meta-analysis studies have found that self-control can be enhanced through practice, exhibiting small to medium effects on various outcomes. It has been suggested that training in self-control can foster self-control across multiple domains, as well as general well-being, highlighting the significant potential of such interventions (Beames et al., 2017; Friese et al., 2017).

Berkman (2016) explained the fundamental theoretical frameworks detailing the improvement of self-control through training. He highlighted three primary models: the strength model, the motivational model, and the cognitive model. The strength model suggests that self-control across different domains relies on a finite, shared resource. Training is believed to strengthen this resource, leading to domain-general improvement. Research using the strength model has shown that any activity utilizing this shared self-control resource could serve as effective training (Berkman, 2016). Empirical studies often involve participants engaging in everyday tasks that require self-control, such as practicing speech regulation by avoiding slang (Gailliot et al., 2007), resisting sweets, or maintaining a handgrip (Muraven, 2010). These activities are followed by assessing their performance in a different, untrained self-control task (Berkman, 2016).

Motivational models concentrate on the willingness to self-control, proposing that aligning personal goals with one's self-concept, such as enhancing intrinsic motivation, can boost self-control (Berkman, 2016). Empirical evidence for these models demonstrates that interventions designed to increase autonomy in achieving goals (Williams et al., 2006), positively affirm their core values and self-identity (Schmeichel & Vohs, 2009), or contingent rewards (Prendergast et al., 2006), and monetary incentives (Volpp et al., 2008) can enhance goal-directed motivation and improve self-control. The key difference between the strength and motivational models is their focus: the strength model targets an individual's overall capacity for self-control, aiming to impact a wide range of targets, while motivational models focus on specific goals, targeting enhancements related to those goals (Berkman, 2016).

Cognitive models underscore the importance of cognitive processes, such as attention, beliefs, and habit learning, in self-control. Training interventions often involve cognitive strategies aimed at reinforcing goal-consistent behaviors (Berkman, 2016). For example, from a social-cognitive perspective, action planning and self-monitoring are identified as vital self-control skills (Schwarzer et al., 2011). Following the same logic, if-then statements can increase individuals' self-control abilities by creating plans to deal with potential obstacles on the way to the goal (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006). Similarly, in the literature on work-family interference, some cognitive models aim to mitigate cross-domain interactions by enhancing self-control. For instance, individuals who engage in more planning behaviors are likely to be more proficient in exercising control to prevent work and family domains from conflicting (Lapierre & Allen, 2012). Furthermore, research has delved into how mindfulness can shape self-control processes, including decision-making regarding resource allocation and its connection to work-family interference (Kiburz et al., 2017). Developing mindfulness can serve as an effective self-regulatory practice, promoting better focus and attentional control, which, in turn, can positively alter perceptions of work-family balance (Allen & Paddock,

2015). Although not exclusively centered on self-control, the Selection, Optimization, and Compensation (Baltes & Heydens-Gahir 2003) framework is also fundamentally rooted in cognitive models, as these interventions are based on how individuals will select, optimize, and compensate their resources while pursuing their life goals (Müller et al., 2016).

Last but not least, self-control, while beneficial for achieving long-term goals, comes with significant costs. The exertion of self-control depletes mental and physical resources, temporarily weakening one's ability to make decisions and respond to challenges. Physiological effects include reduced glucose levels and compromised brain function, which can impair decision-making and social interactions (Baumeister & Alquist, 2009; Hofmann et al., 2014). Additionally, people with high self-control often face greater expectations from others, leading to heavier workloads and feelings of burden in both personal and professional relationships (Koval et al., 2015). People may also overestimate their capacity for self-control, particularly when planning for future tasks, which can result in unrealistic performance expectations and an increased likelihood of overwork (de Ridder et al., 2012; Del Líbano et al., 2012). In some cases, a combination of high self-control and low self-regulation fuels work cravings, contributing to psychological distress (Wojdylo et al., 2017). Beyond these social and cognitive demands, self-control may also come at an emotional cost. High levels of trait self-control can limit one's emotional experience, leading to a life that is less rich in feelings and satisfaction (Layton & Muraven, 2014). Moreover, excessive self-control may lead to long-term regret, as individuals who consistently choose responsibility over pleasure might later feel they missed out on important experiences. For example, someone who works during a vacation may regret not fully enjoying the holiday years later (Kivetz & Keinan, 2006). Finally, self-control's benefits vary across individuals. Individuals who prioritize rationality tend to feel true to themselves when they exercise self-control. In contrast, those who rely more on emotions often feel more satisfied and authentic when they give in to their desires (Kokkoris et al., 2019).

1.8. Aim of the Dissertation

1.8.1. Research Objectives

Building on the theoretical framework and literature presented in the previous section, this thesis seeks to understand the relationship among life goals, work-family interference, and well-being. An extended discussion has been provided on how individuals' life goals can influence the way they balance work and family responsibilities and how this balancing act affects their well-being.

Bolger and Zuckerman (1995) explored how individual-related factors can shape well-being, focusing on two key concepts: stressor exposure and stressor reactivity. Stressor exposure refers to how likely individuals are to perceive a situation as stressful, while stressor reactivity refers to their likelihood of reacting emotionally or physically to stress. They emphasized the importance of examining both how individuals encounter stress and how they respond to it in order to understand the role of dispositional factors in stress reactions. Viewing work-family interference as a source of stress underscores the extent to which individuals experience conflict between their work and family roles, contributing to their overall stress levels. The way individuals respond emotionally or physically to this stress, in turn, plays a critical role in determining their psychological well-being (Bolger & Zuckerman, 1995).

While prior research has shed light on work-family interference, there remains a notable gap in understanding the role of dispositional/motivational factors, particularly life goals, in shaping these dynamics. Despite calls from scholars (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Hauser et al., 2018; Senecal et al., 2001) to explore the association between life goals and work-family interference, much of the literature continues to focus on external, situational factors (Allen et al., 2020, 2023). Although some studies have examined the link between life goals and well-being and consider content, significance, and achievement of life goals (Macleod, 2012; Saragovi et al., 2002), they often overlook the ways in which these life goals impact multiple

domains of life. Inconsistencies in the relationship between work-family interference and well-being necessitate a deeper examination of how personal strivings, as well as inter-cultural and personal differences, can modify this connection. This implies that, depending on inter-cultural and personal differences, work-family interference may be experienced more or less frequently and have varying degrees of negative impact on an individual's well-being (Kinnunen et al., 2013). This thesis addresses this gap by investigating the relationship among life goals, work-family interference, and well-being, offering new insights into the complex interplay between life goals and the balance between work and family roles.

This thesis has four objectives, which are offering a new perspective on the role of dispositional/motivational factors in shaping work-family interference, evaluating the influence of culture, not only in terms of gender role expectations but also in the pursuit of non-traditional life goals, investigating the role of personal differences in managing work-family interference while pursuing life goals, and testing how self-regulation interventions manage work-family interference. To research these research objectives, the following research questions will be answered through a hypothesis-driven approach:

I. How does work-family interference mediate the relationship between life goals and well-being, and in what ways do life goals influence work-family interference and their subsequent impact on well-being?

II. How do different gender roles in different cultural contexts (i.e., Turkish and German cultures) modify the relationship between the pursuit of different life goals, work-family interference, and overall well-being?

III. How do varying levels of self-control modify the relationship between the pursuit of different life goals, work-family interference, and overall well-being?

IV. What role do self-regulation interventions play in managing work-family interference?

1.8.2. Hypotheses and Methodological Approaches

In order to answer the research questions mentioned above, this thesis comprises three empirical studies. The hypotheses presented here are grounded in the theoretical frameworks previously discussed, and the full derivation and justification for each hypothesis will be elaborated upon in later chapters.

Chapter 2, "Study 1: Work-Family Interference and Life Satisfaction: The Role of Life Goals," explores how life goals and gender roles influence the relationship between WtFI and FtWI on life satisfaction. It addresses the first research question using quantitative data from Waves 8 and 10 of the German Family Panel Survey (pairfam). This study examines why individuals experience the effects of WtFI and FtWI differently, with some showing resilience while others succumb to negative impacts. Drawing on the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which argues that resource loss directly diminishes well-being, and the Work-Home Resources model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), which posits that resource depletion from one life domain (work or family) impacts the other, it is expected that both WtFI and FtWI will reduce life satisfaction. These theories suggest that individuals allocate resources selectively, with those pursuing agentic goals investing more in the work domain and those with communal goals prioritizing the family domain. In line with these models, individuals who invest more heavily in either work or family roles may become more susceptible to interference originating from the domain in which they are most invested, leading to the hypothesis that individuals with agentic goals will experience a greater negative impact on life satisfaction from WtFI, while those with communal goals will be more affected by FtWI. Furthermore, based on gender role theories (Bakan, 1966; Eagly, 2020), deviations from traditional gender expectations—such as women pursuing agentic goals or men pursuing communal goals—are expected to create additional stress and conflict. As a result, individuals who deviate from these societal expectations are likely to experience heightened negative

effects from work-family interference due to the "double trouble" of conflicting social norms and work-family interference. This study positions life goals as moderators that can alter the intensity or direction of the effect of work-family interference on well-being, reflected through life satisfaction.

Chapter 3, "Study 2: You are Free to Choose Your Struggle: Exploring the Mediating Role of Work-Family Interference in the Dynamics of Life Goals and Well-Being," explores the question of how agentic and communal life goals affect well-being through the lens of work-family interference, within the diverse cultural settings of Germany and Turkey. This study also investigates how culture and individual trait self-control moderate these effects, responding to the first three research questions with primary self-report quantitative data from white-collar employees in both countries. Following the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) and the Work-Home Resources model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), pursuing life goals requires the investment of personal resources, which increases the likelihood of resource depletion and interference between work and family roles. Therefore, it is assumed that pursuing life goals, whether agentic or communal, requires significant personal resource investment. This resource investment can lead to depletion, which increases the likelihood of work-family interference. While life goals provide individuals with a sense of purpose and fulfillment, they may also indirectly harm well-being by amplifying work-family interference due to the strain on resources across work and family domains. In line with research on cultural contexts (Oishi & Diener, 2001), the assumption is that individualistic cultures emphasize agentic goals, while collectivistic cultures emphasize communal goals, suggesting that cultural context significantly shapes the relationship among life goals, work-family interference, and well-being. These relationships are particularly pronounced when gender roles conflict with societal expectations (Eagly, 2020) due to the "double trouble" of conflicting social norms and work-family interference. Third, building research on self-

regulation, it is assumed that self-control acts as a buffer in managing work-family interference. Individuals with higher self-control are better equipped to manage conflicting demands from work and family, allocating their resources more effectively (de Ridder et al., 2012; Tangney et al., 2004). As a result, they are expected to experience less interference and maintain higher levels of well-being compared to individuals with lower self-control, who may struggle more with balancing these competing demands. This study adds to the previous one and extends the scope by positioning life goals as a predictor and introducing cultural context and individual self-control as additional moderating factors.

Chapter 4, "Study 3: Examining the Impact of a Self-Regulation Intervention on Work-to-Family Interference", aims to improve self-control skills through an intervention intending to mitigate work-family interference and boost well-being, answering the fourth research question, using the longitudinal self-report survey data collected from the same group of German white-collar employees from the second study. A randomized controlled trial with a two-group pre-post design is being implemented. Drawing on the strength model of self-control (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), which posits that self-control can be developed and strengthened through practice, this study assumes that a self-regulation intervention incorporating action planning and action control strategies will reduce WtFI. By enhancing self-control, employees are expected to improve their ability to manage work demands and set clear boundaries between work and family life, thereby decreasing time-based and strain-based WtFI. It is further assumed that individuals who improve their self-control through the intervention will experience a more significant reduction in WtFI compared to those whose self-control remains stable or declines. This study adds a practical application to the theoretical frameworks developed in previous studies by testing the effectiveness of the self-regulation intervention in real-world settings.

Chapter 2: Work-Family Interference and Life Satisfaction: The Role of Life Goals

Abstract

The interface between work and family domains has received considerable scholarly attention in recent decades due to its substantial impact on outcomes related to work, family, health, and well-being. However, individuals experience this impact differently, with some demonstrating resilience while others are more vulnerable to negative effects. In this study, we investigate the role of individuals' life goals and gender in the work-family interface, using the framework of the work-home resources model and the self-regulation theory. Specifically, we examine how life goals and gender moderate the impact of work-to-family interference (WtFI) and family-to-work interference (FtWI) on life satisfaction. We analyze these associations for men and women using Structural Equation Modeling and data from Wave 8 and Wave 10 of the German Family Panel Survey (*pairfam*). Our findings show that life goals indeed significantly moderate these relationships. Individuals prioritizing agentic goals feel the detrimental impact of WtFI on life satisfaction more intensely than those who prioritize communal goals and those whose goals are balanced. Similarly, individuals with high communal goals are more affected by the adverse effects of FtWI on their life satisfaction than those who prioritize agentic goals and those whose goals are balanced. We observed no significant gender difference in the impact of WtFI on life satisfaction for women and men who primarily pursue agentic life goals, nor in the effect of FtWI on life satisfaction between those who primarily pursue communal goals. We also discuss potential theoretical and practical implications in light of our findings.

Keywords

Life goals; agency; communion; work–family interference; life satisfaction

2.1. Introduction

Recent decades have witnessed significant social and demographic changes, particularly in the work environment and family dynamics. These changes, characterized by increased work demands and evolving family structures, have made balancing work and family life a significant challenge. The growing difficulty in navigating these dual responsibilities has sparked interest in the work-family interface. This field delves into the interplay between work and family roles and their impact on life satisfaction. Within this framework, life goals serve as a lens through which individuals perceive and navigate the challenges posed by the work-family interface. Building upon the proposition put forth by Carlson and Kacmar (2000), variations in work-family interference can be attributed to individuals' distinct set of life goals. However, a notable gap persists in the existing literature concerning the specific ways life goals modulate the effects of work-family interference on life satisfaction.

The interaction between work and family domains can be comprehensively examined using the Work-Home Resources model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), which acknowledges both positive (enhancement) and negative (conflict) aspects. Although engaging in multiple roles can yield benefits and resource gains (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Marks, 1977), it also presents challenges when resources allocated to one domain diminish the availability for another (Goode, 1960; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Our research primarily focuses on the conflict perspective, guided by the understanding that negative experiences in this interplay often impact life satisfaction substantially more than positive ones (Baumeister et al., 2001; Drobnič et al., 2010). Numerous studies have demonstrated that work-family interference, characterized by resource loss, induces stress and adversely affects life satisfaction (Hobfoll et al., 2018). This notion is supported by a recent meta-analysis, which found that work-family interference has a negative impact on overall well-being (Biswas et al., 2022).

While an extensive body of research (see Amstad et al., 2011, and Mullen et al., 2008 for an overview) provides insights into the effects of work-family interference on life satisfaction, it indicates that individuals experience these impacts to varying degrees. This has led researchers to examine various factors, including work-related resources like job control (Mauno et al., 2006), family-related resources such as spousal support (Aycan & Eskin, 2005), and individual characteristics such as personality (Kinnunen et al., 2003). The role of dispositional characteristics, particularly life goals, in influencing the experience and impact of work-family interference on life satisfaction is an area of growing interest (Hirschi et al., 2019). Life goals, whether focused on independence (agentic) or interdependence (communal) (Bakan, 1966), can shape how individuals allocate their resources and perceive stressors from different domains (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). We argue that goal strivings in different life domains may threaten self-regulatory personal resources. Therefore, in this study, we aim to explore the moderating role of life goals in the relationship between work-family interference and life satisfaction.

Set within the context of the gendered nature of life experiences, we examine the intricate relationship between life goals and gender, focusing on their combined impact on work-family interference and life satisfaction. We explore how societal expectations for gender roles—typically communal characteristics for women and agentic characteristics for men (Eagly et al., 2020)—interact with personal life goals. This interplay within the broader societal context is crucial as it can amplify or mitigate the strain caused by work-family interference stressors. Individuals with life goals that align or conflict with societal gender expectations might experience work-family interference differently, influencing their life satisfaction.

In this study, grounded in the Work-Home Resources model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), which can be integrated with the self-regulation theory (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007), we focus on managing resources between work and family life and their impact on life

satisfaction. We emphasize the importance of understanding the longitudinal effects of work-family interference on life satisfaction over two years. By concentrating on individual characteristics, particularly life goals, and gender, our study brings a new perspective. It aims to clarify which individuals find these interferences more unsettling and why.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

2.2.1. Work-Family Interference and Life Satisfaction

Work-family interference is characterized by conflicting pressures between work and family roles, resulting in incompatibilities related to time, strain, and behavior (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). This interference can flow from work to family (WtFI) or from family to work (FtWI)[4], forming a cyclical process (Frone et al., 1992) where work demands impact family obligations and family needs affect work responsibilities (Netemeyer et al., 1996). The cyclical nature of this process has been substantiated by empirical evidence (Beham & Drobnič, 2011).

The interference between work and family domains often leads to various adverse outcomes across work, family (i.e., domain-specific), and health (i.e., domain-unspecific), as indicated by multiple meta-analyses (Allen et al., 2020; Amstad et al., 2011). The relationship between work-family interference and its domain-specific effects remains a considerable scholarly debate. The traditional cross-domain perspective (Frone et al., 1992; 1997) suggests that conflict from one domain predominantly causes issues in the opposite domain (e.g., WtFI influencing family-related outcomes). However, the more recent matching hypothesis (Amstad et al., 2011; Shockley & Singla, 2011) argues that conflict from one domain primarily affects the domain where it originates (e.g., WtFI influencing work-related outcomes). Nonetheless, a

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[4] In this paper, the term "work-family interference" is utilized to encompass the two-way interrelationships between work and family domains, while "work-to-family interference" (WtFI) and "family-to-work interference" (FtWI) refer to one-way processes.

meta-analysis shows the most significant relationship between work-family interference and domain-unspecific outcomes, such as life satisfaction (Amstad et al., 2011).

Life satisfaction is the cognitive aspect of the composite well-being measure (Riva et al., 2019), encompassing a person's evaluation of their life against personal standards (Diener et al., 1985). It is considered the sum of domain-specific (e.g., job, marital) satisfactions (Stubbe et al., 2005). Changes in these domains and various life events may cause a change in overall levels of life satisfaction (Pavot & Diener, 2008). Focusing on life satisfaction instead of narrower, domain-specific well-being indicators helps capture the long-term effects of work-family interference across various life domains.

The relationship between work-family interference and life satisfaction has mainly been studied within the framework of the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which forms the foundational theory of the Work-Home Resources model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). According to the Conservation of Resources theory, individuals strive to attain, protect, and accumulate personal resources such as time and energy. If they fail in their conservation efforts, their resources begin to deplete. Using the loss spiral concept, Hobfoll (1989; 2011) argues that initiating a cycle of resource depletion induces stress, and ongoing stress reduces well-being. The conflict between work and family domains manifests as a situation where requirements in one domain deplete personal resources, leaving insufficient resources to fulfill the needs of the other domain (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). The persistent demands in one domain require ongoing personal resource investment, leading to negative long-term outcomes (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Accordingly, in a longitudinal study, Knecht and colleagues (2011) found that people who experienced more work-family interference had lower health satisfaction. Yucel and Fan (2019) have also shown that work-family interference is a longitudinal predictor of life satisfaction and mental health.

Starting from these premises, in this study, we propose that work-to-family interference (WtFI) and family-to-work interference (FtWI) experienced at Time 1 (T1) will significantly predict life satisfaction two years later at Time 2 (T2), even when life satisfaction at T1 is controlled.

Hypothesis 1: WtFI and FtWI at T1 predict life satisfaction at T2.

2.2.2. The Role of Life Goals

According to the Work-Home Resources model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), demands from different domains draw on individuals' resources, and a reduction in these resources can lead to interference between domains. However, individual differences can either help a person cope with this resource loss or make them more vulnerable to its effects. In this study, we examine how individual differences in goal endorsement affect the impact of between-domain interference on life satisfaction. While work-family interference represents the current state, life goals represent the desirable state. Therefore, to evaluate the alignment between the current/mandatory situational characteristic and the individual's preferences, life goals are considered as a moderator in the relationship between work-family interference and life satisfaction.

Humans are inherently goal-oriented, driven by the pursuit of desired states they seek to obtain, maintain, or avoid (Emmons, 1996). Bakan (1966) conceptualizes human duality in terms of (i) the agency construct and (ii) the communion construct, representing self-relevant goals. Agency focuses on self and independence, while communion emphasizes others and interdependency (Helgeson, 1994). Agentic goals include achievement, power, variation, assertiveness, and competence, while communal goals comprise intimacy, affiliation, altruism, warmth, and morality (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014; Pöhlmann, 2001).

In the context of the Work-Home Resources model, *resources* play a central role in goal attainment (Hirschi et al., 2019). Resources are broadly categorized into two types: contextual resources, external to the self and located within one's social environment, and personal resources, which are personal characteristics and energies (Hobfoll, 2011). Key resources, such as optimism and goal-pursuit intensity, are stable personal characteristics crucial for resource management (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Self-regulation, considered a key resource, is depicted as the ability to control emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in pursuit of life goals (Zimmerman, 2000). The self-regulation theory posits that self-regulatory resources are as limited as other personal resources, such as time and energy (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). Thus, individuals must allocate these resources wisely, especially when facing conflicting demands from work and family domains.

Self-regulation models often highlight the importance of focusing on selected goals to conserve limited resources (Fishbach et al., 2009). Individuals allocate (or invest) resources based on the nature of their goals (Grawitch et al., 2010). This aligns with Hirschi et al.'s (2019) action regulation model, which posits that balancing domains requires effective resource allocation across life domains and making compromises when necessary. Achieving a balance across different life areas fosters a sense of fulfillment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2017). However, when individuals heavily invest in domains that align with their life goals and still encounter ongoing imbalances, they face challenges. People expect positive outcomes when they allocate more resources to a specific domain. However, if that domain remains a source of conflict and occupies a blamed position, it can be particularly distressing for individuals who attribute particular importance to it. This may lead to a more pronounced decline in their life satisfaction.

In our theoretical framework, self-regulation is proposed as an underlying mechanism that explains how life goals moderate the relationship between work-family interference and life satisfaction. Individuals with specific life goals utilize their self-regulation capabilities to

allocate resources toward achieving these goals. We adopt the perspective that agentic goals, more related to the work domain, may lead to a focus on work-related activities. In contrast, communal goals, which are more related to the family domain, might result in greater allocation towards family endeavors. These individuals use their self-regulatory resources to make effective decisions in allocating resources between work and family domains while pursuing their agentic or communal life goals. Rothbard and Edwards (2003) support the idea that the importance attributed to work and family domains is positively associated with the time and energy allocated to those domains.

Furthermore, we argue that investing resources in agentic or communal life goals can render individuals more susceptible to stress in their prioritized domain. For those who place high importance on a specific life goal, whether agentic or communal, role pressures become particularly significant because success and rewards in that domain are crucial to them (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). As a result, they strive to manage these pressures by intensifying their efforts and investments in work or family. Li et al. (2020) emphasize that such investment is not without risks; greater investment can result in more substantial losses in the face of stress, particularly when it arises from a highly invested domain. This situation contributes to a decreased sense of control over that area, compounding the impact on well-being. Consequently, individuals in this scenario often grapple with the frustration of not receiving a proportional return on their investment, further intensifying the sense of dissatisfaction. We propose that when work interferes with family, individuals pursuing agentic life goals (investing more in the work domain) experience a sense of loss of control. Conversely, when family interferes with work, individuals pursuing communal life goals (investing more in the family domain) also experience a sense of loss of control, which aligns with self-regulation theory (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996).

We, therefore, suggest life goals may moderate the relationship between WtFI/FtWI and life satisfaction in a direction different from the sensitization perspective (i.e., endorsement of agentic life goals should exacerbate the negative effects of FtWI on life satisfaction, and vice versa for endorsement of communal life goals; Carr et al., 2008). We follow the Work-Home Resources model by focusing on the amount of resources people invest in the work and family domains. Specifically, WtFI negatively impacts the life satisfaction of those with agentic life goals more than those with communal or balanced life goals. This is because they are more dissatisfied when their significant investment in work leaves them with insufficient resources for their family, leading to a sense of losing control over their work priorities. Similarly, FtWI negatively impacts the life satisfaction of those with communal life goals more than those with agentic or balanced life goals. They are more dissatisfied when their significant investment in the family leaves them with insufficient resources for work, leading to a sense of losing control over their family priorities.

Hypothesis 2a: Individuals who primarily pursue agentic life goals are likely to experience more substantial negative effects of WtFI on life satisfaction than those who primarily pursue communal or balanced life goals.

Hypothesis 2b: Individuals who primarily pursue communal life goals are likely to experience more substantial negative effects of FtWI on life satisfaction than those who primarily pursue agentic or balanced life goals.

2.2.3. The Role of Gender

Researchers have noted that agency and communion exist in both men and women. However, women are expected to be more communal (reflecting a desire to be with others), and men are expected to be more agentic (reflecting a desire to master) (Bakan, 1966; Eagly, 2020). Stereotypical societal expectations influence people's actions, leading them to regulate

their behavior in alignment with their gender identity (Sczesny et al., 2018). When individuals cannot regulate their actions in a way that aligns with societal expectations, negative affect is commonly experienced (Haines & Stroessner, 2019; Rudman et al., 2012).

The Work-Home Resources model provides insights into how cultural norms on gender roles may impact men and women differently (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). This model facilitates the exploration of gender differences in accessing contextual and personal resources, emphasizing the importance of macro resources, such as societal and cultural systems. These macro resources are positioned at a higher level because they are more stable and beyond individual control (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). We consider societal expectations as one of the macro resources and argue that the negative effect of work-family interference on life satisfaction will differ between men and women who align or deviate from societal expectations. Individuals with gender-atypical goals might already experience strain because their goals deviate from societal expectations. When faced with another source of strain, like work-family interference, they encounter double pressures.

Regarding interference between different domains, previous studies have yielded inconsistent findings on how men and women are affected by work-family interference. Wang and colleagues (2012) found that major depressive disorders were associated with FtWI for men but with WtFI for women. However, Frone and colleagues (1996) found that depression levels in men are more negatively affected by WtFI than in women. Yucel and Fan (2019) found no gender difference in the relationship between work-family interference (both WtFI and FtWI) and well-being. We argue that these inconsistencies stem from studies focusing solely on gender, overlooking the crucial impact of life goals on individuals' experiences with work-family interference.

This research proposes that women with agentic goals and men with communal goals deviating from societal norms may face more significant challenges in work-family interference. Based on our initial assumptions, we contend that the life satisfaction of individuals with agentic goals will be more affected by WtFI, while FtWI will have a greater impact on those with communal goals due to their sensitivity to conflict in domains where they have invested personal resources. However, we also argue that women primarily pursuing agentic goals not endorsed by societal norms will experience lower life satisfaction levels than men with similar life goals when experiencing WtFI. Similarly, men primarily pursuing communal goals, contrary to societal expectations, will have lower life satisfaction levels than women with communal goals while experiencing FtWI. We interpret this as individuals showing increased sensitivity to the life domain where they invest their resources (as guided by their life goals), heightened when social expectations contradict their personal goals, leading to additional stress or burden. Given the above, we propose that life goals and gender interact with each other and *together* moderate the relationship between work-family interference (both WtFI and FtWI) and life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3a: Women who primarily pursue agentic life goals are likely to experience more substantial negative effects of WtFI on life satisfaction than men who primarily pursue agentic life goals.

Hypothesis 3b: Men who primarily pursue communal life goals are likely to experience more substantial negative effects of FtWI on life satisfaction than women who primarily pursue communal life goals.

The theoretical model in Figure 2. suggests that life goals and gender can moderate the relationship between work-family interference (both WtFI and FtWI) and life satisfaction.

Figure 2.

Research Model
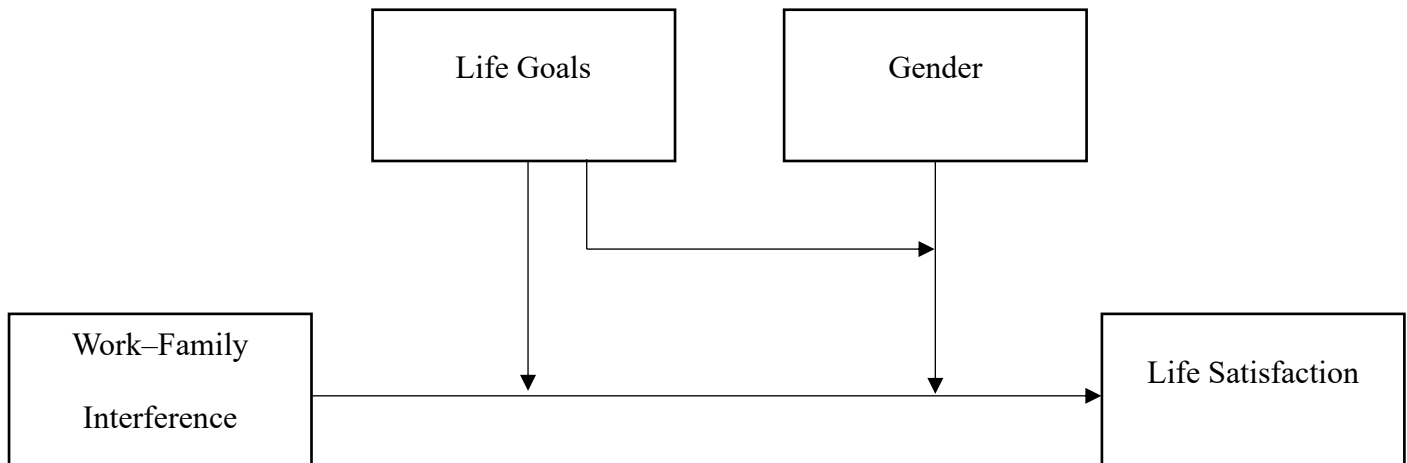
2.3. Method

2.3.1. Data and Sample

The data for this study came from the German Family Panel (*pairfam*: "Panel Analysis of Intimate Relationships and Family Dynamics") (Brüderl et al., 2021). The survey began in 2008 with a nationwide random probability sample of 12,402 respondents selected from the population registers for three birth cohorts (1971–1973, 1981–1983, and 1991–1993). This was supplemented with a refreshment sample and a new birth cohort (2001–2003) in 2018. The primary mode of data collection was a computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI). Besides the annual core questionnaire, other questions were asked bi-annually or less frequently. We used only *pairfam's* Wave 8 (2015/2016) and Wave 10 (2017/2018) because participants answered questions about work-family interference, life satisfaction, and essential goals and domains in life in the same survey year. Wave 8 included 5,461 respondents; Wave 10 included 4,750 respondents. Consistent with our research focus, we excluded non-employed individuals but included self-employed individuals or those with full-time or part-time work. We also excluded individuals whose marital status changed between Wave 8 and Wave 10 (*n* = 176).

This was done because we could not rule out the possibility that their level of life satisfaction was strongly affected by variables not included in Figure 2. or even assessed in Wave 8 and Wave 10. Participants with missing data for any of the variables in Figure 2. were also excluded from the analysis, as were respondents who did not participate in both data-gathering waves. This resulted in a final sample size of 2,656 participants.

According to descriptive statistics in Wave 8, 1361 (51.2%) of the 2656 participants in the analytical sample were men, and 1295 (48.8%) were women. The age range was 21–45 years (Mean (M) = 36.33; Standard Deviation (SD) = 7.40). There were 1052 (39.6%) respondents with a university degree or higher. A total of 1389 (49%) respondents were married or lived in a so-called civil union (a legal arrangement available to same-sex couples during Wave 8 and Wave 10). A total of 1,097 (38.7%) respondents were single, 161 (5.7%) were divorced (or in dissolved civil union), and 9 (0.3%) were widowed (or the surviving partner from a civil union). A total of 1,763 (66.4%) respondents were employed full-time, 642 (24.2%) were employed part-time, and 251 (9.5%) were self-employed. The average weekly working time was 38.6 hours (SD = 11.02). Only 49 (1.8%) respondents stated that they always worked from home. Most study participants had at least one child (1,592, 59.9%). A total of 1,279 (48.2%) participants stated that they had children younger than 14 living at home.

2.3.2. Measures

Dependent variable. In this study, general satisfaction with life is the measure of well-being. Life satisfaction is a one-item variable based on the question, "How satisfied are you with your life at the moment?" Participants responded on an 11-point Likert-type scale (0 = very dissatisfied to 10 = very satisfied). This measurement was used for both time points (Wave 8 and Wave 10). Specifically, the dependent variable was life satisfaction in Wave 10 (Time 2).

Independent variables. The interference between work and family domains was measured with items that allowed us to assess the bidirectional inter-role conflicts of concern: work-to-family interference and family-to-work interference concerning time and strain (Carlson & Grzywacz, 2008). Our instrument contained eight items, four measuring WtFI and four measuring FtWI. Respondents were asked how their family life and work life influence one another and the extent to which the statements in the questionnaire describe their situation. Response options were presented as a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = not at all to 5 = absolutely). An example item for WtFI was, "My work prevents me from doing things with my friends, partner, and family more than I would like." An example item for FtWI was, "Because I am often stressed in my private life, I have problems concentrating on my work." Cronbach's alpha was .765 for WtFI and .720 for FtWI. WtFI and FtWI were taken from Wave 8 (Time 1) and calculated by adding up the scores of the four domain-specific items. Due to a potential conceptual overlap between both variables, we conducted confirmatory factor analyses prior to hypothesis testing (results available on request). These confirmed that WtFI and FtWI are two different constructs.

Moderator variables. We used life goals and gender as moderator variables and took data from Wave 8 (Time 1). Huinink and Schröder (2003) developed the items for assessing life goals in their project 'Das Timing der Familiengründung' [The timing of family formation]. Respondents were asked to consider five life goals: (1) pursuing education or career interests, (2) pursuing hobbies and interests, (3) keeping in touch with friends, (4) living in a partnership, and (5) having a(nother) child. Respondents were asked to assess each goal's importance and indicate their relative importance by distributing 15 points to five goals. The more important a goal was, the more points they were asked to assign. Goals 1 and 2 were considered to be representative of agentic goals, while Goals 3, 4, and 5 were considered to be representative of communal goals. We calculated the sum of points a respondent gave to agentic and communal

goals. We then determined the sample's median values for agentic and communal goals. Respondents were considered to have high agentic goals if their sum of points for agentic goals was at or above the sample median ($Mdn_{AG} = 7.00$). Respondents were considered to have low agentic goals if their sum of points for agentic goals was below the sample median. The procedure was repeated for communal goals ($Mdn_{CG} = 8.00$). Finally, we created three grouping variables, distinguishing between respondents with (1) low agentic–high communal goals, (2) high agentic–low communal goals, and (3) high agentic–high communal goals. Respondents could not have scores below the median for both types of goals.

Gender was assessed in the classic binary form (0 = man, 1 = woman). As mentioned, we expected that the effect of WtFI and FtWI on life satisfaction would vary between men and women. Based on individuals' life goals, we created six interaction variables by multiplying life goals with gender. We could then distinguish between (1) men with low agentic–high communal goals, (2) women with low agentic–high communal goals, (3) men with high agentic–low communal goals, (4) women with high agentic–low communal goals, (5) men with high agentic–high communal goals, and (6) women with high agentic–high communal goals.

Control variables. To control the baseline life satisfaction level, we included a respondent's life satisfaction level at Time 1 (Wave 8). We also used employment status (1 = regular full-time employment, 0 = other), marital status (1 = married or in a civil union, 0 = other), and having children (1 = yes, 0 = no children) as control variables. The data for all control variables were taken from Wave 8 (Time 1). We included employment status, marital status, and children because these factors can confound the relationship between work-family interference and life satisfaction. Some research has shown that married people are more satisfied with their lives than those who are divorced or have never married (Haring-Hidore et al., 1985; Helliwell, 2003). In addition, long working hours and having a child at home increase

work and family demands. This can lead to higher levels of work-family interference and negatively affect well-being (Byron, 2005; Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998).

2.3.3. Analytic Strategy

After documenting our descriptive findings, we conducted a Pearson correlation analysis to examine the relationships between the key variables (WtFI, FtWI, life goals, gender, and life satisfaction) in the study. Next, we used structural equation modeling to test and assess the effects of work-family interference (both WtFI and FtWI) on life satisfaction. Finally, we performed a multiple-group comparison analysis to examine whether the effect on life satisfaction differed for the six life goals by gender groups. We included all control variables in these analyses using SPSS and AMOS 28.

2.4. Results

Descriptive results for the overall sample and the various life-goal groups for men and women are presented in Table A2.1 in the Appendix. In both time points, women showed slightly higher life satisfaction ($M = 7.66$, 7.68) than men ($M = 7.64$, 7.61). Among the life-goal groups, the highest life satisfaction was observed in those with low agentic–high communal goals ($M = 7.74$, 7.74). WtFI was much more prevalent ($M = 9.53$) than FtWI ($M = 6.51$), with men reporting more interference in both directions ($M = 9.82$, 6.57) than women ($M = 9.22$, 6.46). We also analyzed correlations between WtFI, FtWI, life satisfaction (T2), and our proposed moderator variables (Table A2.2 in the Appendix). The correlation matrix revealed a negative relationship of life satisfaction (T2) with WtFI and FtWI ($r = -.19$, $p \leq .001$; $r = -.16$, $p \leq .001$), yet no significant correlation was found between different life goal combinations and interference types. Gender correlated with WtFI, indicating more interference experienced by men ($r = -.08$, $p \leq .001$), but not with FtWI. The relationships between key variables like WtFI, FtWI, life goals, gender, and life satisfaction, in general, exhibit small to medium effect sizes (as per Cohen 1988).

In the next step, we examined the direct effects of WtFI and FtWI on life satisfaction by incorporating all control variables into the model (Table 2.1). The results confirmed that the negative effects of WtFI and FtWI on life satisfaction (T2) were statistically significant (ß = – 0.06, $p \leq 0.001$; ß = –0.04, $p \leq 0.05$, respectively). The overall model explained 23% of the variance (R^2) in life satisfaction. These findings suggest that interference between work and family domains is associated with decreased life satisfaction, even when controlling for baseline life satisfaction levels. Thus, these results support Hypothesis 1.

Table 2. 1

Path Analysis of Primary Relationships

Path	ß	p
WtFI → Life Satisfaction (T2)	–.064	.001
FtWI → Life Satisfaction (T2)	–.040	.029
Life Satisfaction (T1) → Life Satisfaction (T2)	.446	.001
Having a Child → Life Satisfaction (T2)	–.040	.062
Working Full-Time → Life Satisfaction (T2)	–.009	.602
Being Married → Life Satisfaction (T2)	.044	.036
R^2	.233	

Note. WtFI: Work-to-family interference, FtWI: Family-to-work interference.

In the subsequent analysis, we explored whether prioritizing specific life goals moderates the relationship between WtFI as well as FtWI and life satisfaction while controlling for life satisfaction in T1, employment type, marital status, and children. Multi-group comparisons were conducted to assess the significance of group differences (Table 2.2). The slope was constrained equally among the groups compared to the unconstrained model. Specifically, we

compared two models: one in which the slopes of the relationships between WtFI as well as FtWI and life satisfaction were constrained to be equal across life goals groups (constrained model), and another in which these slopes were allowed to vary freely (unconstrained model). The statistical differences between the models were determined using the chi-square difference test. Results for WtFI revealed significant differences in the effects of WtFI on life satisfaction among the three life goals groups ($\chi^2 = 13.863$; df $= 2$; $p \leq 0.001$) between individuals with low agentic–high communal life goals and those with high agentic–low communal life goals ($\chi^2 = 11.107$; df $= 1$; $p \leq 0.001$), as well as between individuals with high agentic–low communal life goals and those with high agentic–high communal life goals ($\chi^2 = 10.810$; df $= 1$; $p \leq 0.001$). Differences between individuals with low agentic–high communal life goals and those with high agentic–high communal life goals ($\chi^2 = .220$; df $= 1$; $p = 0.64$) were not significant. Results for FtWI indicated that only individuals with low agentic–high communal life goals and those with high agentic–low communal life goals marginally differed ($\chi^2 = 2.887$; df $= 1$; p $= 0.09$) in terms of the relationship between FtWI and life satisfaction.

Table 2. 2

Nested Model Comparisons in The Relationship Between Work-Family Interference and Life Satisfaction among Individuals with Different Life Goals

WtFI → Life Satisfaction (T2) Life Goals			χ^2	DF	*p*
LA_HC	HA_LC	HA_HC	13.863	2	.001
	LA_HC	HA_LC	11.107	1	.001
	LA_HC	HA_HC	.220	1	.639
	HA_LC	HA_HC	10.810	1	.001
FtWI → Life Satisfaction (T2) Life Goals			χ^2	DF	*p*
LA_HC	HA_LC	HA_HC	3.003	2	.223
	LA_HC	HA_LC	2.887	1	.089
	LA_HC	HA_HC	.725	1	.395
	HA_LC	HA_HC	.561	1	.454

Note. LA_HC: Low agentic–high communal goal endorsement, HA_LC: High agentic–low communal goal endorsement, HA_HC: High agentic–high communal goal endorsement. When assuming the unconstrained model to be correct, the results from a multiple-group comparison analysis indicate whether the relationship between work-family interference and life satisfaction differs significantly among individuals with different life goals. The rows represent pairwise comparisons in the relationship between work-family interference and life satisfaction among different life goal groups.

The impact of work-family interference on life satisfaction for different life-goals groups is presented in Table 2.3. The results for WtFI indicated a negative, highly significant impact

of WtFI on life satisfaction for individuals with high agentic–low communal life goals (β = –0.18, $p \leq 0.001$). In contrast, the effect of WtFI on life satisfaction was insignificant for those with low agentic–high communal life goals (β = –0.03, p = 0.22) and for those with high agentic–high communal life goals (β = –0.01, p = 0.78). This pattern provides support for Hypothesis 2a.

Table 2. 3

Path Analysis of The Moderating Role of Life Goals

Path	LA_HC		HA_LC		HA_HC	
	β	p	β	p	β	p
WtFI → Life Satisfaction (T2)	–.032	.222	–.179	.001	–.011	.775
FtWI → Life Satisfaction (T2)	–.065	.012	.014	.698	–.026	.498
R^2	.208		.280		.245	

Note. LA_HC: Low agentic–high communal goal endorsement, HA_LC: High agentic–low communal goal endorsement, HA_HC: High agentic–high communal goal endorsement.

The effect of FtWI on life satisfaction was significant only for individuals with low agentic–high communal life goals (β = –0.07, $p \leq 0.05$), while it was not significant for the other two groups (β = 0.01, p = 0.70 and β = –0.03, p = 0.50, respectively) (Table 2.3). This partially supports Hypothesis 2b. These findings suggest that concerning life satisfaction, individuals who mainly prioritize agentic life goals are most adversely affected when work interferes with family. In contrast, when family interferes with work, those who prioritize communal goals experience the most significant impact. The changes in scores for WtFI, FtWI,

and life satisfaction at two different time points by groups can be found in Appendix Figures A1-A3.

Next, we explored whether the interaction between life goals and gender moderated the relationship between WtFI and life satisfaction when all control variables were included in the model. Utilizing multi-group comparisons, we aimed to assess the significance of group differences in these relationships. The slope was constrained equally among the groups compared to the unconstrained model. Specifically, we compared two models: one in which the slopes of the relationships between WtFI, as well as FtWI, and life satisfaction, were constrained to be equal across the groups of interaction between life goals and gender (constrained model), and another in which these slopes were allowed to vary freely (unconstrained model). The statistical differences between the models were determined using the chi-square difference test. Results displayed in Table 2.4 showed that when work interfered with family (WtFI), significant differences in the effects of WtFI on life satisfaction levels were observed among six groups with different interactions between life goals and gender (χ^2= 18.867; df = 5; $p \leq 0.01$).

The negative effect of WtFI on life satisfaction was significant for both men and women with high agentic–low communal life goals, but the impact was slightly more pronounced among women ($\beta = -.215, p = .001$) than men ($\beta = -.159, p = .001$). Women primarily pursuing agentic life goals did not significantly differ from men with similar life goals (χ^2= 0.439; df = 1; $p = 0.51$), failing to support Hypothesis 3a (Table 2.4). However, women primarily pursuing agentic life goals significantly differed from women prioritizing communal life goals (χ^2= 4.270; df = 1; $p \leq 0.05$) and those with balanced life goals (χ^2= 9.534; df = 1; $p \leq 0.01$). Additionally, it was observed that men primarily pursuing agentic life goals and those prioritizing communal life goals significantly differed in the relationship between WtFI and life satisfaction (χ^2= 8.157; df = 1; $p \leq 0.01$).

Table 2. 4

Nested Model Comparisons in The Relationship Between WtFI and Life Satisfaction among Men and Women with Different Life Goals

WtFI → Life Satisfaction (T2)						χ^2	DF	*p*
LA_HC_M	LA_HC_W	HA_LC_M	HA_LC_W	HA_HC_M	HA_HC_W	18.867	5	.002
				LA_HC_M	LA_HC_W	3.124	1	.077
				HA_LC_M	HA_LC_W	.439	1	.508
				HA_HC_M	HA_HC_W	1.093	1	.296
			LA_HC_M	HA_LC_M	HA_HC_M	8.188	2	.017
				LA_HC_M	HA_LC_M	8.157	1	.004
				LA_HC_M	HA_HC_M	1.252	1	.263
				HA_LC_M	HA_HC_M	2.260	1	.133
			LA_HC_W	HA_LC_W	HA_HC_W	9.639	2	.008
				LA_HC_W	HA_LC_W	4.270	1	.039
				LA_HC_W	HA_HC_W	2.313	1	.128
				HA_LC_W	HA_HC_W	9.534	1	.002

Note. LA_HC_M: men with low agentic–high communal goal endorsement, LA_HC_W: women with low agentic–high communal goal endorsement, HA_LC_M: men with high agentic–low communal goal endorsement, HA_LC_W: women with high agentic–low communal goal endorsement, HA_HC_M: men with high agentic–high communal goal endorsement, HA_HC_W: women with high agentic–high communal goal endorsement. When assuming the unconstrained model to be correct, the results from a multiple-group comparison analysis indicate whether the relationship between work-to-family interference and life satisfaction differs significantly among men and women with different life goals. The rows represent pairwise comparisons in the relationship between work-to-family interference and life satisfaction among men and women with different life goals.

Similarly, several analyses were conducted on how the interaction between life goals and gender moderated the relationship between FtWI and life satisfaction, with all control variables included in the model. The effect of FtWI on life satisfaction was significant among men with low agentic–high communal goals ($\beta = -.093$, $p = .008$), while it was not significant among women with the same goals ($\beta = -.033$, $p = .393$). Results presented in Table 2.5 showed that men who mainly pursued communal life goals did not significantly differ from women with similar life goals ($\chi^2 = 1.696$; df $= 1$; $p = 0.19$), failing to support Hypothesis 3b. Men primarily pursuing communal life goals significantly differed from men prioritizing agentic life goals ($\chi^2 = 4.389$; df $= 1$; $p \leq 0.05$) and those with balanced life goals ($\chi^2 = 5.360$; df $= 1$; $p \leq 0.05$).

After exploring whether gender and life goals groups differ in the impact of work-family interference on life satisfaction, we examined the size of the effects for these groups. The effect of WtFI on life satisfaction was significant for both men and women with high agentic and low communal life goals ($\beta = -0.16$, $p \leq 0.001$ and $\beta = -0.22$, $p \leq 0.001$, respectively; Table 2.6). For women with low agentic and high communal life goals, the effect of WtFI on life satisfaction was significant ($\beta = -0.09$, $p \leq 0.05$), while it was insignificant for those with balanced life goals ($\beta = 0.02$, $p = 0.71$). The effect was insignificant for men primarily pursuing communal life goals as well as those with balanced goals ($\beta = 0.01$, $p = 0.72$; $\beta = -0.06$, $p = 0.26$, respectively).

The impact of FtWI on life satisfaction was significant only for men with low agentic and high communal life goals ($\beta = -0.09$, $p \leq 0.01$) and was insignificant for all other gender and life goals groups (Table 2.6). These findings suggest that when family interferes with work, the life satisfaction level of men prioritizing communal life goals is the most affected.

Table 2. 5

Nested Model Comparisons in The Relationship Between FtWI and Life Satisfaction among Men and Women with Different Life Goals

FtWI → Life Satisfaction (T2)						χ^2	DF	*p*
LA_HC_M	LA_HC_W	HA_LC_M	HA_LC_W	HA_HC_M	HA_HC_W	8.676	5	.123
				LA_HC_M	LA_HC_W	1.696	1	.193
				HA_LC_M	HA_LC_W	.253	1	.615
				HA_HC_M	HA_HC_W	2.961	1	.085
			LA_HC_M	HA_LC_M	HA_HC_M	7.366	2	.025
				LA_HC_M	HA_LC_M	4.389	1	.036
				LA_HC_M	HA_HC_M	5.360	1	.021
				HA_LC_M	HA_HC_M	.001	1	.979
			LA_HC_W	HA_LC_W	HA_HC_W	1.276	2	.528
				LA_HC_W	HA_LC_W	.275	1	.600
				LA_HC_W	HA_HC_W	.638	1	.425
				HA_LC_W	HA_HC_W	1.253	1	.263

Note. LA_HC_M: men with low agentic–high communal goal endorsement, LA_HC_W: women with low agentic–high communal goal endorsement, HA_LC_M: men with high agentic–low communal goal endorsement, HA_LC_W: women with high agentic–low communal goal endorsement, HA_HC_M: men with high agentic–high communal goal endorsement, HA_HC_W: women with high agentic–high communal goal endorsement. When assuming the unconstrained model to be correct, the results from a multiple-group comparison analysis indicate whether the relationship between family-to-work interference and life satisfaction differs significantly among men and women with different life goals. The rows represent pairwise comparisons in the relationship between family-to-work interference and life satisfaction among men and women with different life goals.

Table 2. 6

Path Analysis of The Moderating Role of Life Goals and Gender

Path	LA_HC_M ß	p	LA_HC_W ß	p	HA_LC_M ß	p	HA_LC_W ß	p	HA_HC_M ß	p	HA_HC_W ß	p
WtFI → Life Satisfaction (T2)	.013	.723	−.085	.034	−.159	.001	−.215	.001	−.059	.262	.020	.708
FtWI → Life Satisfaction (T2)	−.093	.008	−.033	.393	.037	.447	.003	.951	.049	.365	−.081	.134
R^2	.269		.154		.276		.301		.305		.222	

Note. LA_HC_M: men with low agentic–high communal goal endorsement, LA_HC_W: women with low agentic–high communal goal endorsement, HA_LC_M: men with high agentic–low communal goal endorsement, HA_LC_W: women with high agentic–low communal goal endorsement, HA_HC_M: men with high agentic–high communal goal endorsement, HA_HC_W: women with high agentic–high communal goal endorsement.

2.5. Discussion

In this research, our objective was to examine whether life goals and gender moderate the long-term effects of work-family interference (both WtFI and FtWI) on life satisfaction. Our results indicate that life goals play an important moderating role in this relationship. Specifically, interference between life domains reduces satisfaction with life, especially when the domain containing primary life goals interferes with the other domain.

After controlling baseline life satisfaction levels at Time 1, our findings reveal that interference between work and family domains negatively predicts life satisfaction two years later (T2). These results align with previous studies (e.g., Grant-Vallone & Donaldson, 2001; Yucel & Fan, 2019). It should be noted that the effect sizes are relatively small, consistent with similar research results (Matthews et al., 2014; Yucel & Borgmann, 2022). This can be attributed to the multicausal nature of stressor-strain relationships, where various factors influence different aspects of life satisfaction, resulting in the relatively weak impact of a single stressor (Zapf et al., 1996). Beyond these primary impacts, we found that they can vary according to life goals.

Individuals who prioritize agentic life goals experience a significant decrease in life satisfaction when work interferes with family, in contrast to those with primarily communal life goals or a balanced set of goals. Similarly, when family interferes with work, individuals who prioritize communal goals over agentic goals experience a significant decrease in life satisfaction. This finding does not extend to individuals with primarily agentic life goals or a balanced set of goals where the effects were not significant. How can we understand the finding that the satisfaction levels of individuals are more affected by interference from their prioritized domain rather than personally less relevant domain? First, these findings resonate with Noor's (2004) study on role centrality, suggesting that prioritizing goals in a specific domain heightens sensitivity to stressors in that area, leading to increased negative impacts on life satisfaction

due to a perceived lack of control. Second, there appears to be a mutual relationship between the challenges of balancing different roles and a deficit in self-regulatory resources (Khatri & Shukla, 2022). This involves a mechanism not only of perceiving interference but also of being affected by it. While literature suggests that individuals are willing to tolerate higher levels of WtFI for domains they value more (Greenhaus et al., 2001; Matthews et al., 2012), if the interference persists, the lack of return on resource investment and a sense of losing control over the targeted domain result in a greater decline in satisfaction compared to those who have not invested resources in that domain. This dynamic resonates with Hobfoll's (1989) *loss spiral* concept. It illustrates a cyclical relationship where individuals feel vulnerable and lose control in their prioritized domain due to domain-specific stresses (instead of fulfillment) despite their investment efforts. This may lead to further investment in their life-goals-related domain to regain control. However, excessive investment can ultimately deplete their resources, leaving them more susceptible to interference from that domain.

The absence of a significant effect of WtFI on life satisfaction among individuals with primarily communal life goals, as well as the absence of the effect of FtWI on life satisfaction among individuals with primarily agentic life goals, may be surprising when considering previous research (e.g., Carr et al., 2008). In addition to the rationale that we presented above, figures A1-A3 in the Appendix may help to clarify these results. For individuals who prioritize communal life goals, there is a slight increase in WtFI between the two-time points, and similarly, there is an increase in life satisfaction between the two time points. Strong family bonds and social support systems can mitigate the negative effects of WtFI on these individuals' overall life satisfaction. Conversely, for those who prioritize agentic life goals, FtWI shows a decrease between the two-time points, and their life satisfaction also decreases over the same period. The career focus and access to professional support resources of individuals with agentic life goals can help alleviate the negative effects of FtWI, but not those of WtFI, on life

satisfaction. As their FtWI decreases, it might signal that they are dedicating more time and energy to work at the expense of family; they might not perceive FtWI as a primary factor affecting their life satisfaction because their main focus is on their career.

Another central objective of our study was to explore the interaction between life goals and gender. Contrary to expectations, neither the effect of WtFI nor FtWI on life satisfaction varies between women and men with the same life goals. Both agentic women and men experience similar levels of life satisfaction decline when work interferes with family life. The significant negative effect observed for all genders indicates that when individuals are highly focused on achieving agentic, career-oriented life goals, the demands of work that spill over into family life are equally disruptive, regardless of gender. In a comparatively gender-egalitarian society like Germany, the shared challenges of balancing demanding professional aspirations with family responsibilities might explain this similarity.

On the other hand, the effect of FtWI on life satisfaction presents a different pattern. We observed that FtWI significantly impacts life satisfaction for men who prioritize communal life goals, but this effect is not significant for women with similar goals. This finding suggests that men who focus on communal, family-oriented goals are particularly sensitive to disruptions caused by family demands interfering with their work lives. The lack of a significant effect for women may indicate that women, even those with communal goals, might have developed more effective coping strategies or possess higher resilience in managing FtWI, possibly due to traditional socialization and experience in handling family responsibilities (Elman & Gilbert, 1984; Matias & Fontaine, 2015). While the groups individually show different relationships, with one being significant and the other not, there is no statistically significant difference between the groups, which may be due to small effect sizes. The absence of significant differences between women and men with communal life goals in the impact of FtWI on life satisfaction further underscores the nuanced interplay between gender and life goals. This

suggests that communal goals inherently involve a high degree of family involvement and commitment, leading to similar challenges for both men and women when family demands encroach upon work.

These results align with social role theory, which posits that differences in binary gender roles should be particularly notable in less egalitarian countries (Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2023; Wood & Eagly, 2012) and less notable in more gender-egalitarian countries like Germany, so that gender-related stereotypical expectations should be less dominant. Importantly, our study measured life goals rather than assuming predefined life goals for men and women, revealing that gender does not affect the relationship between work-family interference and life satisfaction for individuals with the same life goals. The interaction effect of life goals and gender, particularly when individuals prioritize life goals that contradict stereotypically gendered societal expectations, was not found to be significant. Instead, our findings indicate that it is the centralization of specific life goals, regardless of gender, that strengthens the negative impact of interference from the prioritized domain on life satisfaction.

In conclusion, our results affirm that life goals can be viewed as a resource shaping the relationship between work-family interference and life satisfaction. Building on the Work-Home Resources model, prior research has recognized individual differences, including psychological capital (Choi et al., 2018), self-efficacy (Bakker et al., 2019), and motivation (ten Brummelhuis et al., 2011), as resources in this relationship. Our research is the first to demonstrate that life goals and the self-regulatory resources utilized in pursuing them also play a significant role as critical resources in the work-family interference and life satisfaction relationship.

We acknowledge certain limitations of the study and propose possible alternative strategies for future research. While our sample, representative of Germany, provides valuable

insights, our rigorous exclusion of incomplete data might have slightly compromised representativity to an extent we consider negligible. Additionally, our findings may not readily generalize to cultures that are more collectivistic or adhere to different gender-role norms. Another limitation lies in using a one-item life satisfaction instrument, potentially introducing reliability concerns. Also, some may argue against measuring life goals interdependently with the distribution of 15 importance points among the domains, suggesting that future research should consider independent measurement. Lastly, we assessed the moderating effects of life goals and gender on the relationship between work-family interference and life satisfaction. However, life goals and gender may also impact work-family interference itself and affect life satisfaction through work-family interference. Future research should explore these alternative relationships.

In summary, this study significantly contributes to the literature and has practical applications. We used longitudinal data spanning two years to examine the role of life goals on the effect of both WtFI and FtWI on life satisfaction. Going beyond the Work-Home Resources model, our study extends it by recognizing self-regulatory resources as key contributors. The work-family interference literature has often overlooked moderators related to individual identities and characteristics. Our study sheds light on the complex dynamics by employing the concept of life goals as an individual-related mechanism. While investing resources in a domain related to life goals may bring short-term satisfaction, our results indicate that the long-term impact - as interference with other domains increases - can potentially lead to a more significant decline in life satisfaction.

Our findings underscore the importance of considering individual differences to mitigate the adverse impact of work-family interference on life satisfaction. This insight is valuable for practitioners, suggesting the need to educate human resources professionals about the detrimental impact of work-family interference on employees and, thereby, the organization.

Creating awareness and providing support training to stakeholders can empower individuals to take control of their life goals, potentially reducing the negative effects of work-family interference.

Chapter 3: Exploring the Mediating Role of Work-Family Interference in the Complex

Dynamics of Life Goals and Well-Being

Abstract

In an era where balancing work and family has become increasingly challenging, this study examines the impact of agentic and communal life goals on well-being, with work-family interference serving as a mediating factor. The research is conducted within the diverse cultural settings of Germany and Türkiye and further explores the moderating roles of culture and trait self-control in these relationships. The study sample consists of white-collar employees (662 residing in Germany and 590 in Türkiye), and data were collected using cross-sectional, self-report online surveys, including the Work-Family Conflict Scale (Carlson et al., 2000) and the GOALS Questionnaire (Pöhlmann & Brunstein, 1997). Structural equation modeling results reveal that prioritizing agentic goals intensifies work-to-family interference, thereby negatively affecting well-being. In contrast, prioritizing communal goals heightens family-to-work interference, indirectly reducing overall well-being. A notable finding is the adverse effect on women's well-being due to the misalignment between their agentic goals and societal gender role expectations. Interestingly, individuals with high self-control, while generally more satisfied with their lives, tend to underestimate the demands associated with communal goals, leading to increased family-to-work interference. The study concludes by discussing the implications of these findings, highlighting the complex interplay between life goals, work-family interference, and overall well-being.

Keywords

3.1. Introduction

In the contemporary landscape of work and family dynamics, achieving a healthy balance between professional duties and personal life is a significant challenge, particularly for white-collar workers whose work-life boundaries can blur easily (Peng et al., 2011). Advancements in technology have made it easier to bring work home, contributing to well-being issues among white-collar employees, as it has been discovered that 80% of white-collar employees experience at least one mental health issue (Deloitte, 2022). This underscores the critical importance of understanding the consequences of eliminating these boundaries—a relevance that persists in today's context.

Extensive research has delved into the adverse spillover effects between work and family on overall well-being (Amstad et al., 2011; Mullen et al., 2008), including psychological distress (Kinnunen et al., 2006) and overall life satisfaction (de Simone et al., 2014). However, there is a notable gap regarding individual characteristics that impact work-family interference. Interactions between work and family may be driven by personal aspirations, namely life goals. This study addresses this gap by considering life goals as a crucial individual factor. Additionally, while some studies have explored the relationship between life goals and well-being (Macleod, 2012; Saragovi et al., 2002; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999), the results are not consistent and comprehensive. Moreover, little is known about how these goals affect different domains. This research aims to elucidate why goal endorsement can negatively affect well-being through the mechanism of work-family interference.

According to the Work-Home Resources model, which is a model that establishes connection mechanisms between contextual demands and resources and work or home outcomes, persistent demands in one domain lead to negative outcomes in the long term, as personal resources are invested to meet these demands (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). The pursuit of life goals, which can be categorized according to Bakan's (1966) agentic-

communal conceptualization, also requires personal resources, and self-regulation plays a vital role in conserving and managing these resources (Zimmerman, 2000). However, ongoing resource depletion while pursuing life goals can result in stress, ultimately impacting well-being (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007; Hobfoll, 2011).

In addition to the mediating role of work-family interference on the relationship between life goals and well-being, this study explores moderating relationships, focusing on macro resources (cultural environments) and key resources (individual traits; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), examining how societal expectations around gender roles and individual traits like self-control interact and impact well-being. Cultural values, such as individualism in societies like Germany versus collectivism in societies like Türkiye, shape gender role expectations, influencing whether societies support agentic or communal goals (Ng et al., 2003; Sedikides et al., 2003). Deviation from these societal norms, such as women pursuing agentic goals or men pursuing communal goals, can adversely affect well-being (Haines & Stroessner, 2019; Sczesny et al., 2018) due to the additional strain beyond work-family interference and a lack of macro resources. Furthermore, self-control, essential for achieving life goals and managing stressors, is recognized as a protective factor against the detrimental impacts of stress (de Ridder et al., 2012; Clinton et al., 2020). High self-control is associated with better flexibility in goal setting and strategies under stress, thereby enhancing the balance between work and family and maintaining well-being (Johnson et al., 2018; Lanaj et al., 2014; Wrosch et al., 2003). Therefore, this research aims to examine the moderating effects of these cultural/gender-related factors and self-control traits on the relationship between life goals, work-family interference, and well-being.

Altogether, drawing on the theoretical frameworks of self-regulation and the Work-Home Resources model, this study aims to explore how white-collar employees strategically allocate their cognitive and emotional resources to manage the demands of work and family while

pursuing life goals across various domains and to understand how the interference between these domains impacts their overall well-being. By integrating insights from cultural and gender-specific influences, as well as the role of self-control, this research contributes to understanding the well-being of white-collar employees navigating the complex intersection of work and family life. Before discussing theoretical insights, the conceptual model in Figure 3.1 of the relationships that will be examined can provide a comprehensive perspective.

Figure 3. 1

Research Model
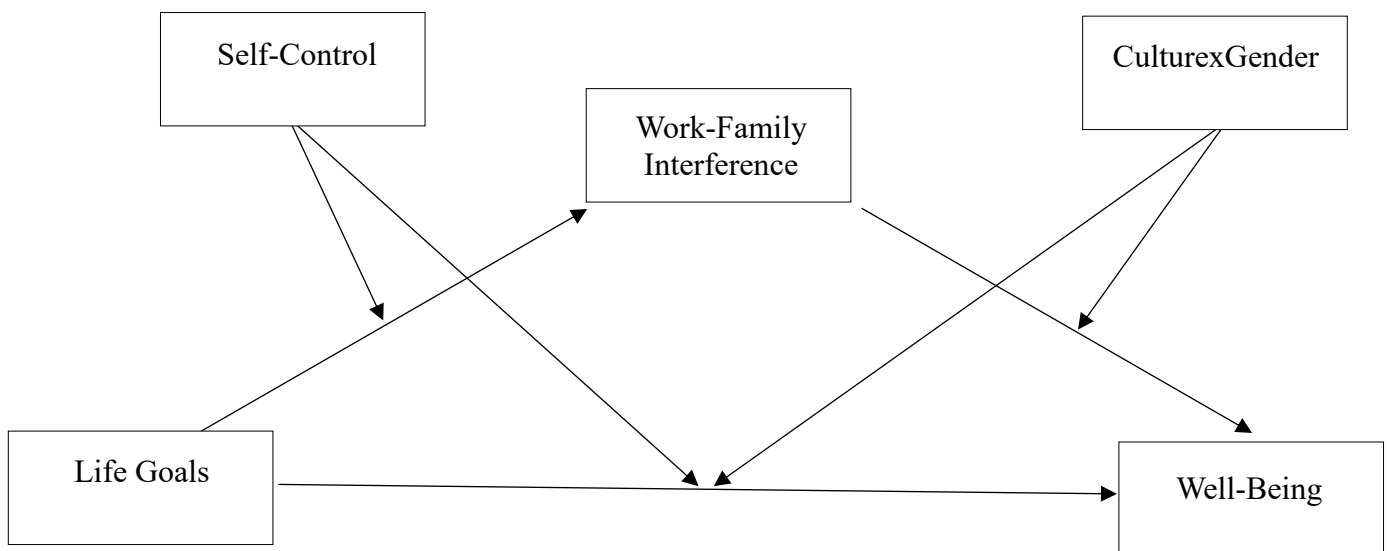
3.2. Theoretical Framework

3.2.1. The Relationship Between Well-Being and Goal Endorsement

Subjective well-being refers to how individuals evaluate their own lives, including cognitive judgments of satisfaction, influenced by various life domains like job, family, or personal life (Diener et al., 2002). In the literature, there are two predominant perspectives on well-being: overall life satisfaction affecting well-being in life domains and satisfaction in life domains influencing overall life satisfaction (Heller et al., 2004). Stress also is a significant outcome of the interaction between an individual and their environment (Lazarus, 1999; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Hobfoll (2011) states that stress occurs as a response to personal

resource loss since individuals strive to obtain, retain, and enhance their resources. Persistent or chronic stress can exert a detrimental effect on overall life satisfaction. This interplay between satisfaction, stress, and overall well-being, as well as resource management, underscores the intricate relationship between one's life evaluations and mental and emotional states (Kahneman et al., 1999; Lazarus, 1999).

Given the pivotal role well-being plays in the essential spaces of individuals' lives, researchers have delved into what factors or influences can potentially undermine it. Well-being is shaped by personal experiences, each experience being significantly influenced and guided by overarching life goals. Life goals are concepts that give meaning to people's lives (Baumeister, 1991), and they can enhance the chance for long-term well-being (Brunstein, 1993; Emmons, 1996). They are described as internal representations of desired states (Austin & Vancouver, 1996) and are considered to be the directory of actions (Gollwitzer & Bargh, 1996). Thus, they can provide an understanding of people's behavior patterns (Emmons, 1996).

Researchers have employed various dichotomies to delineate goals, such as mastery versus performance goals (Poortvliet & Darnon, 2010), approach versus avoidance goals (Elliot, 1999), intrinsic versus extrinsic goals (Kasser & Ryan, 2001), and individual striving versus harmony seeking (Wicker et al., 1984). Among these, a prominent classification distinguishes between agency and communion (Bakan, 1966). Research has consistently identified two essential dimensions —often referred to as the "Big Two"—that pervade multiple areas of social cognition: agency and communion (Abele et al., 2016). These two dimensions are considered overarching categories that encompass all other dichotomies and are believed to correspond to two core components of self-concept (Wojciszke & Abele, 2008). The agency is employed to define an organism's existence as an individual, while communion determines an individual's engagement within a larger organism of which they are a part. The distinction between agency and communion lies in the former's focus on the self and the latter's

focus on others (Helgeson, 1994). In the literature, agentic strivings are depicted as self-achievement, power, variation (Pöhlmann, 2001), influence, control, and mastery (Horowitz et al., 2006), as well as assertiveness and competence (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014). On the other hand, communal strivings are depicted as intimacy, affiliation, altruism (Pöhlmann, 2001), connection, participation (Horowitz et al., 2006), as well as warmth, and morality (Abele & Wojciszke, 2014). In summary, theoretically, three categories of life goals (achievement, power, and variation) form a broader group known as the field of agentic life goals. The other three life goals (intimacy, affiliation, and altruism) constitute the field of communal life goals (Pöhlmann & Brunstein, 1997).

The pursuit of a goal—identifying which goal is being pursued (content), understanding why it is being pursued (importance), determining the actions taken to achieve it (achievability), specifying how it is being pursued (orientation), and assessing how it concludes (success)—results in various impacts on well-being. (Emmons, 1991; Pöhlmann & Brunstein, 1997; Sheldon et al., 2010). Previous studies have demonstrated that the pursuit of agentic and communal goals can impact well-being in several ways (Helgeson & Fritz, 1999; Hennecke & Brandstätter, 2017). For instance, it has been found that the proportion of the intimacy goal among the other goals has the most important positive effect on well-being (Colby, 1996). Conversely, it also has been found that agency-motivated goals were associated with more positive mental health. That is, agentic-motivated people were better at dealing with internal and external demands (Pöhlmann, 2001). In a recent study, it was found that both intimacy and altruism goals, as well as achievement and power goals, have a positive relationship with life satisfaction (Tucak Junaković, 2015; Sheldon & Cooper, 2008). From another perspective, setting various life goals may inherently signify a disparity between current circumstances and desired outcomes. This means that the behaviors guided by the life goals can even negatively affect well-being (MacLeod, 2012). In another study, the proportion of achievement and power

goals have the most significant negative impact on well-being (Emmons, 1991). In essence, the intricate interplay of specific life goals—ranging from intimacy and altruism to achievement and power—profoundly influences well-being, offering a nuanced perspective on the intricate connections between goal pursuit, life satisfaction, and stress. The contradictory findings in the literature underscore the importance of understanding these nuances.

Self-regulation theory is frequently used to explain the link between life goals and well-being. This theory emphasizes the idea of guiding thoughts, feelings, and actions toward achieving goals (Zimmerman, 2000). Life goals guide individuals' actions, and individuals experience satisfaction with their lives when their life's trajectory aligns with the goals they have set for themselves (Oishi, 2000) and when they regulate their actions accordingly (Hofmann et al., 2014). Research has shown that individuals who actively pursue their goals tend to have higher well-being levels than those without concrete goals (e.g., Freund & Baltes, 2002). Goal striving has been found to promote improved psychological well-being, as demonstrated in a meta-analysis (Klug & Maier, 2015). People generally feel happy when they believe they are making reasonable progress toward their goals (Lazarus, 1991, p. 267). Here, coming from the idea that goal pursuing may lead to gains in the sense of fulfillment, and one can delve into the bright side of the narrative: Individuals with diverse goals may witness an uplifting improvement in their well-being, an elevation in life satisfaction, and a reduction in stress. Thus, based on self-regulation theory, we hypothesize the positive effects of pursuing life goals on well-being. This aligns with the idea that well-regulated goals often lead to positive outcomes in well-being. Both agentic and communal life goals provide individuals with a sense of meaning and purpose in their lives rather than acting as stressors, thus playing a significant role in reducing stress and increasing life satisfaction. Consequently, as indicators of a sense of fulfillment derived from investing in resource enrichment, this study focuses on

stress and life satisfaction as primary indicators of well-being. Specifically, we hypothesize the following (see Table 3.1):

Table 3. 1

Hypothesis 1: The Relationship Between Well-Being and Goal Endorsement

Hypothesis	Goal Type	Relationship Type	Dependent Variable	Relationship Direction
H1a	Agentic	Direct	Life Satisfaction	Positive
H1b	Agentic	Direct	Stress	Negative
H1c	Communal	Direct	Life Satisfaction	Positive
H1d	Communal	Direct	Stress	Negative

The prominence of agency and communion aspects in an individual's self-concept reflects their tendency to engage in strategies to achieve these different life goals (Uchronski, 2008). Individuals with specific life goals use their self-regulation abilities to allocate resources toward achieving these goals. For those who place high importance on a particular life goal (whether agentic or communal), role pressures become particularly significant because success and rewards in that domain are crucial to them (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). As a result, they strive to manage these pressures by intensifying their efforts and investments in the work or family domain. Rothbard and Edwards (2003) support the idea that the importance attributed to work and family domains is positively associated with the time and energy allocated to those domains. Therefore, in this study, we adopt the perspective that agentic goals are more related to the work domain, while communal goals are more related to the family domain.

Pursuing the desired states mentioned above also requires an investment of resources, and investment in life goals may deplete the limited resources (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000). Namely, successful development in one goal might be associated with negative outcomes in another (Marsiske et al., 1995). Similarly, the allocation of resources to pursue specific goals

in one life domain, whether it be in the realm of work or family, may unintentionally result in resource deficiencies in another. It means the goals pursued in one domain may drain an individual's resources, leaving less to fulfill the requirements in other domains. This scenario can give rise to conflicts between different life domains. Hence, the mechanism elucidating the relationship between life goals and well-being may involve the experience of conflict, and this experience can cast a shadow over positive relationships.

3.2.2. The Mediating Role of Work-Family Interference

Work-family interference refers to the conflicts or tensions that arise when the demands and responsibilities of work and family roles are in opposition or interfere with each other (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). There are two directions of interference: work-to-family and family-to-work (Frone et al., 1992). Work-to-family interference (WtFI) occurs when the demands and responsibilities of work interfere with family life. On the other hand, family-to-work interference (FtWI) unfolds when family obligations hinder an individual's capacity to fulfill his/her occupational duties. Juggling responsibilities in multiple roles - such as work and family - is categorized into time-based (conflicts due to time constraints) and strain-based (stress spillover, making obligations challenging; Elloy & Smith, 2004).

The Work-Home Resources model defines work-family interference as a process whereby demands in either the work or home domain can drain personal resources, leading to reduced effectiveness in the other area (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). This model is grounded in the Conservation of Resources (Hobfoll, 1989) theory, which posits that individuals strive to obtain, preserve, and enhance their resources, such as time and energy, which are critical for managing both work and home responsibilities effectively. However, any failure in these conservation efforts eventually leads to resource depletion (Hobfoll, 2011). Negative outcomes in the work, family, and health-related areas result from ineffective management of life given a finite number of personal resources (time, energy, and money)

(Grawitch et al., 2010). Such a shortage causes distress due to an enhancement of loss over gain perception (Hobfoll, 2011). Thus, work-family interference arises when one domain is overinvested, depleting resources for the other (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999), leading to long-term well-being reduction (Hobfoll, 2011).

The consequences of work-family interference can be grouped into work, non-work, and stress-related outcomes (Allen et al., 2000). Meta-analyses that support the matching hypothesis reveal that stronger interference relationships within the same domain, namely WtFI was more strongly associated with work-related than family-related outcomes, and FtWI was more strongly associated with family-related than work-related outcomes (Amstad et al., 2011; Nohe et al., 2014; Shockley & Singla, 2011). However, both types of interference have been found to be most associated with domain-unspecific outcomes, namely general life satisfaction and stress (Amstad et al., 2011).

When delving into the precursors of interference, the prevalent viewpoint in literature leans towards domain specificity (Frone et al., 1992; 1997). This implies that stressors and engagement in either work or family roles can lead to interference from the corresponding domain into the other rather than vice versa (Nohe et al., 2014). This situation is explained in the Work-Home Resources model with contextual demands and personal resources - the contextual demands from one domain lead to losing personal resources and resulting in diminished outcomes of another (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). This perspective has also been corroborated in meta-analyses examining the antecedents of work-family interference, which typically encompass a wide array of factors falling under broad categories, including work and family-related sources (Byron, 2005). Work-related antecedents, including work-related demands like extended work hours and unsupportive supervisors or coworkers, relate to WtFI more than FtWI. Meanwhile, family-related antecedents, including family-related

demands such as the number of children and unsupportive or demanding spouses, relate to FtWI more than WtFI (see Byron, 2005; Ford et al., 2007; Michel et al., 2011 for an overview).

Despite the numerous endeavors in extensive literature to unravel the antecedents of work-family interference, a significant gap remains in acknowledging individual differences. While some studies have explored dispositional variables like personality and gender (Miller et al., 2022; Shockley et al., 2017), as highlighted by Byron (2005) and Allen et al. (2012), the existing literature has predominantly focused on situation-based antecedents. This leaves a notable void in understanding the impact of individual-related or dispositional factors. Recognizing the critical importance of these factors is essential for a more comprehensive understanding of work-family interference (Hargis et al., 2011). Among these, personal life goals emerge as a significant and often overlooked contributor to work-family interference.

Work and family are two key life domains where people pursue their life goals, often leading to trade-offs between them due to conflicting demands (Hirschi et al., 2019; Mickel & Dallimore, 2009). People want to achieve their long-term goals and are willing to make sacrifices for them (Baumeister & Vohs, 2007). This means that they prioritize and actively engage in behaviors to achieve their personally valued life goals (Unsworth et al., 2014). As a result, individuals divide their time and energy between work and family responsibilities, highlighting the motivation to allocate resources toward a domain related to their life goals (Grawitch et al., 2010). However, this resource allocation process may come together with the challenge of overspending available resources to pursue one goal at the cost of other life goals (Hirschi et al., 2019). It is also mentally exhausting and often leads to resource depletion and increased stress levels, ultimately impacting well-being (Hobfoll, 2011; Muraven & Baumeister, 2000).

Thus, individuals who pursue agentic goals related to their job, career, or education, as well as those who prioritize communal goals linked to personal relationships and caregiving, are likely to experience work-family interference in distinct ways. In the context of self-regulation and the Work-Home Resources model, we believe that pursuing agentic life goals focused on personal achievement, often linked to work, can result in a higher dedication of personal resources to work requirements, thereby increasing work demands. On the other hand, pursuing communal life goals centered around relationships, typically associated with family, might cause more personal resources to be allocated to family activities, leading to increased family demands. In support of the matching hypothesis, the unfavorable aspect of the story is that those pursuing agentic goals may face heightened WtFI due to the increased allocation of resources to work. Conversely, individuals pursuing communal goals may often grapple with FtWI as more resources are allocated to the family. The different dimensions of work-family interference will negatively influence the connection between different life goals and well-being (see Table 3.2).

Table 3. 2

Hypothesis 2: The Mediating Role of Work-Family Interference

Hypothesis	Goal Type	Indirect Relationship	Dependent Variable	Relationship Direction
H2a	Agentic	WtFI	Life Satisfaction	Negative
H2b	Agentic	WtFI	Stress	Positive
H2c	Communal	FtWI	Life Satisfaction	Negative
H2d	Communal	FtWI	Stress	Positive

The Work-Home Resources model defines the conditions in which work-family interference emerges and is experienced through key resources - the characteristics of individuals, and macro resources - the contexts in which individuals live (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Building on this, the study examines self-control traits as key resources and

societal expectations concerning gender roles as macro resources. It investigates how these conditional factors moderate the relationship between life goals, work-family interference, and dimensions of well-being.

3.2.3. The Moderating Role of Self-Control

Key resources, such as self-control, explain why some people are better than others at coping with stressful situations, such as self-control (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Self-control is the remarkable ability to regulate one's own emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in pursuit of long-term goals (Goschke & Job, 2023). Research has shed light on its protective role in the face of stressful situations (Clinton et al., 2020; Tangney et al., 2004). It has been shown in a meta-analysis that self-control can bring about desired outcomes by helping individuals regulate their behavior, thoughts, and emotions in a way that promotes improved psychological well-being and overall life satisfaction. It guides goal-directed behavior and serves a valued long-term goal, leading to a happier and more fulfilling life (de Ridder et al., 2012). Like every resource, the self-control strength model (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000) suggests that self-control functions like a muscle, with a limited, consumable strength similar to a muscle's capacity. This implies that individuals may experience ego depletion when facing multiple demands simultaneously, even if they would have otherwise been successful (Baumeister et al., 2018).

The Personal Resource Allocation framework argues that balancing the interaction between work and family is about how individuals allocate their personal resources when confronted with various demands (Grawitch et al., 2010). In other words, individuals may be motivated to invest their personal resources, such as time and energy, into specific domains to achieve their life goals. However, the depletion of these resources can make them more vulnerable and fragile in work and family interactions (Lanaj et al., 2014; Rothbard, 2001). Therefore, the level of dispositional self-control is crucial as a key resource in managing all

other personal resources. Hofmann et al. (2014) found that self-control influences well-being by balancing resources in main life domains, such as work and family.

Hence, it is hypothesized that individuals with high self-control abilities, while pursuing life goals, can allocate certain resources to domains beyond these goals, resulting in a lower experience of work-family interference compared to individuals with low self-control abilities. Similarly, individuals with high self-control abilities are expected to manage better external temptations in their journey towards achieving these goals, leading to a higher level of well-being compared to those with lower self-control abilities (see Table 3.3).

Table 3. 3

Hypothesis 3: The Moderating Role of Self-Control

Hypothesis	Goal Type	Relationship Type	Dependent Variable	Moderator	Effect Direction
H3a	Agentic	Direct Positive	Life Satisfaction	Self-Control	Stronger (High Self-Control)
H3b	Agentic	Direct Negative	Stress	Self-Control	Stronger (High Self-Control)
H3c	Agentic	Direct Negative	WtFI	Self-Control	Weaker (High Self-Control)
H3d	Communal	Direct Positive	Life Satisfaction	Self-Control	Stronger (High Self-Control)
H3e	Communal	Direct Negative	Stress	Self-Control	Stronger (High Self-Control)
H3f	Communal	Direct Negative	FtWI	Self-Control	Weaker (High Self-Control)

3.2.4. The Moderating Role of Societal Expectations Concerning Gender Roles

Macro resources, such as cultural values, refer to the macro-level factors surrounding the interface between different domains (Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Different cultural values shape the expectations associated with gender roles in different cultures and significantly impact how individuals manage work-family interactions, thereby influencing their overall well-being. Individualism-collectivism and egalitarianism-hierarchy can be considered cultural

values (Hofstede, 2001). Individualistic cultures prioritize personal independence, leading to higher reported happiness levels compared to collectivistic cultures, which prioritize group harmony (Diener & Diener, 1995). In societies with high power distance, hierarchy is prevalent, while those with low power distance emphasize equality (Hofstede, 2001). The link between the Big Two (agentic and communal; Abele & Wojciszke, 2014) and the standard dimensions of cross-cultural comparisons, individualism, and collectivism provides a framework for understanding how agency and communion are associated with these cultural dimensions (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Individualism aligns with agency, as individualists prioritize differentiation from others, while collectivism aligns with communion, as collectivists prioritize assimilation with others (Gebauer et al., 2013). In more individualistic and egalitarian societies, there is a greater emphasis on agentic traits. On the other hand, in societies that are more collectivistic and hierarchical, communal traits tend to be more supported (Ng et al., 2003; Sedikides et al., 2003; Wojciszke & Bialobrzeska, 2014). In more individualistic cultures, work is seen as a personal achievement, and individuals prioritizing work over family are more sensitive to family demands, experiencing the negative effects of FtWI on well-being (Spector et al., 2007). Conversely, in more collectivistic cultures, individuals may be more sensitive to work demands, and experiencing WtFI may threaten family identity and affect well-being (Aycan, 2008).

Gender differences arise from stereotypical expectations associated with societal roles, often categorized as agentic (power-oriented) and communal (connection-oriented), contributing to gender-related behavioral disparities (Bakan, 1966; Eagly & Wood, 2012). Therefore, men and women may be influenced differently by these cultural values on gender roles. Considering the stereotypical gender roles where men are viewed as breadwinners and women are viewed as caregivers (Eagly & Wood, 2012), it can be argued that as women pursue communal goals, they will be compatible with societal expectations for their gender role, while

as men pursue agentic goals, they will be compatible with societal expectations for their gender role (Diekman & Eagly, 2008; Wood et al., 1997). Studies indicate that aligning one's actions with these expectations leads to positive emotional experiences, while deviating from them results in negative emotions (Haines & Stroessner, 2019; Rudman et al., 2012; Sczesny et al., 2018). Therefore, it can be assumed that when life goals align with both cultural and gender expectations, it is more likely to experience positive or beneficial effects on well-being. However, failure to meet these expectations can result in a lack of access to macro resources, which can eventually have a negative impact on well-being. Those who do not behave in line with societal expectations, namely women who pursue agentic goals and men who pursue communal goals, face some penalties (Haines & Stroessner, 2019; Sczesny et al., 2018).

Germany is characterized by more individualistic, egalitarian, and agency-oriented practices. In contrast, Türkiye emphasizes collectivistic, hierarchical, and communion-oriented practices (Hofstede, 2001). Therefore, in Türkiye, women pursuing agency goals may face extra challenges due to the pressure to meet societal expectations of caring for the family, while in Germany, men pursuing communal goals may struggle more due to pressure to meet societal expectations of being breadwinners. It is hypothesized that as Turkish women give importance to agentic goals, they may face more significant challenges; also, if they experience WtFI, their well-being will be affected more negatively than German women. Similarly, as German men value communal goals, they may experience heightened challenges; also, if they experience FtWI, their well-being will be affected more negatively compared to Turkish men (see Table 3.4).

Table 3. 4

Hypothesis 4: The Moderating Role of Societal Expectations Concerning Gender Roles

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Relationship Type	Dependent Variable	Moderator	Effect Direction
H4a	Agentic	Direct Positive	Life Satisfaction	Culture x Gender Interaction	Weaker (Turkish Women)
H4b	Agentic	Direct Negative	Stress	Culture x Gender Interaction	Weaker (Turkish Women)
H4c	WtFI	Direct Negative	Life Satisfaction	Culture x Gender Interaction	Stronger (Turkish Women)
H4d	WtFI	Direct Positive	Stress	Culture x Gender Interaction	Stronger (Turkish Women)
H4e	Communal	Direct Positive	Life Satisfaction	Culture x Gender Interaction	Weaker (German Men)
H4f	Communal	Direct Negative	Stress	Culture x Gender Interaction	Weaker (German Men)
H4g	FtWI	Direct Negative	Life Satisfaction	Culture x Gender Interaction	Stronger (German Men)
H4h	FtWI	Direct Positive	Stress	Culture x Gender Interaction	Stronger (German Men)

3.3. Method

3.3.1. Procedure

An online questionnaire was prepared using the UNIPARK system. It is available in English, German, and Turkish. All measurements that had not been previously translated into the relevant language were translated by the researcher using the back-translation method (Brislin, 1970). Participants were given the option to choose their preferred language before starting the survey. The initial intention was to access white-collar employees through direct collaboration with their employers. However, faced with an inadequate number of participants in this category, a strategic shift occurred. Participants residing in Germany were reached through Norstat GmbH. The survey company shared the online questionnaire through relevant links, thereby employing a convenience sampling technique. A snowball sampling technique was used to recruit participants in Türkiye. Consequently, the researcher shared the online questionnaire with white-collar employees living in Türkiye within their own networks,

requesting them to share the questionnaire further within their networks. In both cases, ethical considerations emphasizing the rights and privacy of participants, including informed consent and confidentiality, were communicated to the participants at the beginning of the survey. After the distribution of the online surveys, data collection in both countries was completed within approximately two months, from June till the end of August 2023.

The data analysis process began with an examination of descriptive findings. Subsequently, confirmatory factor analysis was conducted for general data, as well as for each country, and the scales' reliability was checked. Upon identifying sub-dimensions, various interdependent t-tests were employed to explore mean-level differences. Following this, structural equation modeling was utilized for model testing and assessing the indirect effects of life goals on well-being (i.e., life satisfaction and stress) through work-family interference. Finally, multiple-group comparison analysis was performed to investigate whether the effect on well-being differed across cultural, gender, and self-control groups. All control variables were included in these analyses, which were conducted using SPSS and AMOS 29.

3.3.2. Participants

This study was conducted with white-collar workers living in Türkiye and Germany. A total of 1252 participants were reached, with 662 residing in Germany and 590 in Türkiye. The gender distribution includes 599 (47.8%) women, 650 (51.9%) men, and 3 (0.2%) individuals identifying as diverse. Gender distributions are equal in both countries. The birth year of the oldest person in the dataset is 1955, while the youngest is 2005. The number of individuals with at least a bachelor's degree in the German sample is 268 (40.5%), and in the Turkish sample is 497 (84.2%).

According to the country-specific household income deciles, it is observed that the median monthly household income for German participants corresponds to the 7th highest

income bracket with a range from €3,321 to €3,880. In contrast, the median monthly household income for Turkish participants aligns with the 8th highest income bracket and ranges from ₺39,000 (~ €1,300) to ₺45,999 (~ €1,533).

Half of the participants (n = 627) are married. Parental status is evenly distributed, with 605 individuals (48.3%) having at least one child. A large majority of the participants (n = 980, 78.3%) work full-time. While 122 participants (9.8%) work from home every day, 497 (39.8%) state that they never work from home. Most participants' spouses/partners (n = 647, 80%) are currently employed, with a large portion (n = 494, 76.5%) working full-time. The number of spouses/partners who consistently work from home is 73 (11.3%), while the number of those who never work from home is 286 (44.3%).

3.3.3. Measures

Life Goals: The importance assigned to goals was measured using the GOALS questionnaire developed by Pöhlmann and Brunstein (1997; for more details, see Pöhlmann et al., 2010). Participants rated the 24 goal items based on importance by responding to the question, "How important is it for you to reach this goal in your lifetime?": *power* (e.g., "I would like to be able to exert influence."), *achievement* (e.g., "I would like to continuously improve myself."), *variation* (e.g., "I would like to have adventures, live an adventurous life."), *intimacy* (e.g., "I would like to give affection and love."), *affiliation* (e.g., "I would like to be friends with many people."), and *altruism* (e.g., "I would like to help other people who are in need.") with four items each. All items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). Confirmatory factor analyses confirmed the six-factor structure both in the total sample and across different cultural groups (results available on request). As previously mentioned in the literature (Pöhlmann, 2001), the first three subdimensions represent agentic goals, while the last three represent communal goals according to Bakan's taxonomy (Bakan, 1966). Based on this, in the current study, the first

three dimensions were loaded onto the agentic goals second-order factor, and the last three dimensions were loaded onto the communal goals second-order factor. The results indicated no significant statistical difference between using a first-order or second-order factorial model, demonstrating robustness in the factorial structure. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.91 for agentic goals and 0.88 for communal goals.

Work-Family Interference: The interference between work and family/private life domains was assessed using a scale that measured bidirectional inter-role conflicts: work-to-family interference (WtFI) and family-to-work interference (FtWI) concerning time and strain, developed by Carlson et al. (2000). The German translation of the survey was conducted by Wolff and Höge (2011), and the Turkish translation by Erdoğan (2009). The scale consisted of twelve items, with six measuring WtFI and six measuring FtWI. Responses were collected on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (absolutely). An example item for WtFI was "My work keeps me from my family/private activities more than I would like," while for FtWI, it was "The time I spend on family/private responsibilities often interferes with my work responsibilities." Confirmatory factor analyses were conducted before hypothesis testing for the entire sample and different cultural groups, confirming that WtFI and FtWI are distinct constructs (results available on request). The scores for WtFI and FtWI were calculated by summing up the scores of the six domain-specific items and dividing them by six. The Cronbach's alpha was 0.91 for WtFI and 0.89 for FtWI.

Well-Being: Well-being was measured using a single item for each life satisfaction and stress. The question of life satisfaction was phrased as " All in all, how satisfied are you with your life at the moment?" Participants responded on an 11-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (very dissatisfied) to 11 (very satisfied). Stress, on the other hand, was assessed using a one-item developed by Elo et al. (2003), with the question, "Stress means a situation in which people feel tense, restless, nervous or anxious or are unable to sleep at night because their mind

is troubled all the time. Do you feel this kind of stress these days?" Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).

Self-Control: Self-control was measured based on three single-item questions used by Wolff et al. (2022). Participants were asked three single-item questions related to self-control ("How much self-control do you have?"), self-discipline ("How much self-discipline do you have?) and willpower ("How much willpower do you have?"). They responded on an 11-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 11 (very much). Confirmatory factor analyses demonstrated that these three items converged into a single factor (results available on request). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated as 0.81. A self-control score was obtained by averaging the scores of the three items. Subsequently, the median score for the entire sample was determined. Accordingly, participants scoring below the median were coded as the low self-control group, while those scoring above the median were coded as the high self-control group.

Culture and Gender: Culture was assessed by asking participants, "Of which country or countries are you a citizen?" The response options included Türkiye, Germany, or another country. Gender, on the other hand, was measured by asking participants, "Which of the following describes your gender identity?" Participants responded as female, male, or diverse. Given that the focus of the current study is on how different cultures may shape well-being for various gender groups, we created four interaction variables by multiplying cultures with gender: German-female, German-male, Turkish-female, and Turkish-male.

Confounding variables: We used employment status (1 = full-time employment, 0 = all other), marital status (1 = married, 0 = all other), and having children (1 = yes, 0 = no children) as control variables. We included employment status, marital status, and children because these factors can confound the relationship between life goals, work-family interference, and well-

being. Existing research indicates that married people tend to report higher life satisfaction compared to those who are divorced or have never been married (Helliwell, 2003; Stahnke & Cooley, 2021). Moreover, extensive work hours and the responsibility of caring for a child at home can elevate both work and family demands, potentially leading to increased levels of stress and consequently exerting a negative impact on overall well-being (Byron, 2005; Michel et al., 2011).

3.4. Results

3.4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics and the differences in mean scores, both as directly observed variables and as latent factors, are significant and can be examined from Tables A3.1 and A3.2, shared in the appendices. The correlations between the main variables—agentic life goals, communal life goals, WtFI, FtWI, life satisfaction, and stress—are presented in Table A3.3 in the appendix.

3.4.2. Mediation Testing

We conducted mediation analyses to test our hypotheses. In these analyses, we included control variables in addition to agentic goals, which represent power, achievement, variation, and WtFI, as well as components of well-being like satisfaction and stress (Figure 3.2). The model fit the data well, indicating a good match (χ^2/df= 3.347; RMSEA= .043; CFI = .967; GFI = .950). We conducted the bootstrap analysis with 10000 samples using a 95% Bias-Corrected (BC) confidence interval. The coefficients and confidence intervals for indirect, direct, and total effect paths are presented in Appendix Table A3.4. As a result, we found that agentic goals were positively linked to higher levels of life satisfaction and stress; H1a is supported, and H1b is not supported. Moreover, it was clear that the indirect relationships between agentic goals and satisfaction (ß = -.120; p < .001; 95% CI: -.155, -.089), as well as stress (ß = .163; p < .001;

95% CI: .123, .205), through WtFI, were significant. Therefore, both H2a and H2b are supported.

Figure 3. 2

The Relationship between Agentic Goals, WtFI, Life Satisfaction, and Stress
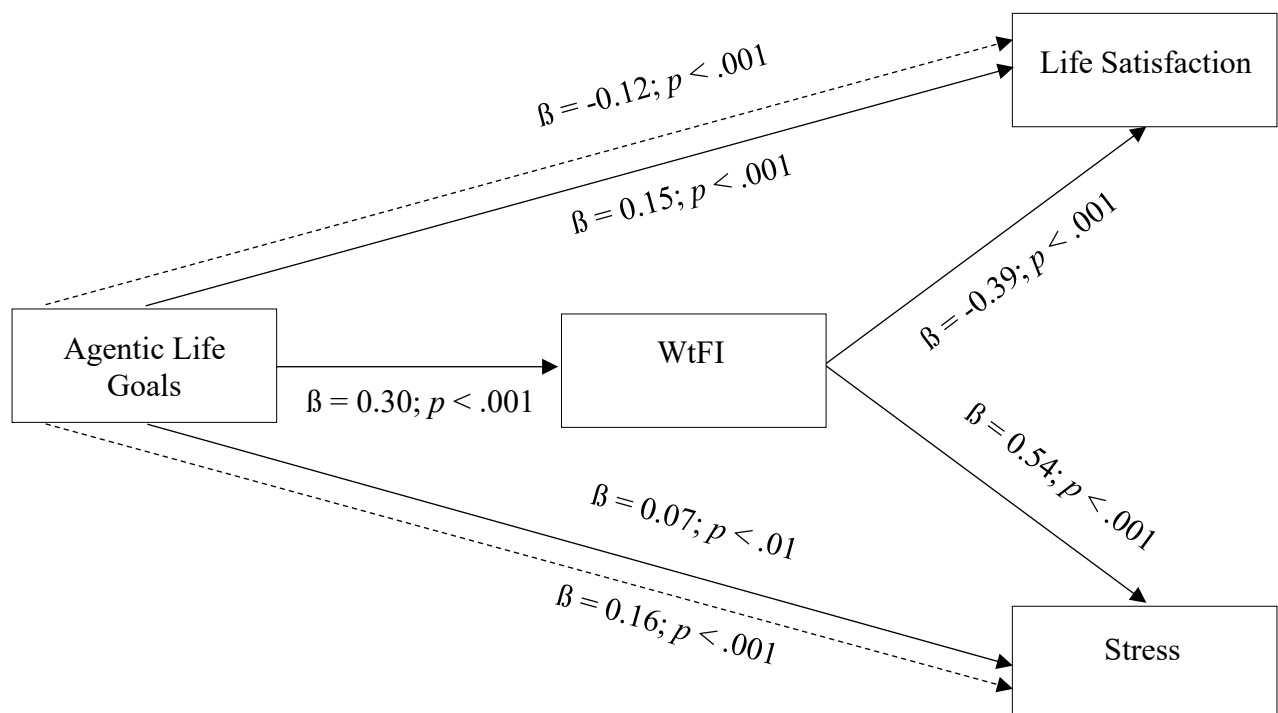
Note. Solid lines represent direct relationships, while dotted lines represent indirect relationships. Due to the study's cross-sectional design, no information could be derived about the causality of the hypothesized relationships, and the arrows in the figure should be analyzed with caution.

We followed a similar approach for the scenario where communal goals were considered as the independent variable (Figure 3.3). In this model, we included control variables alongside communal goals, which represent affiliation, intimacy, altruism, and FtWI, as well as components of well-being like life satisfaction and stress. The model fit the data reasonably well (χ^2/df= 4.961; RMSEA= .056; CFI = .933; GFI = .928). We conducted the bootstrap analysis with 10000 samples using a 95% Bias-Corrected (BC) confidence interval. The

coefficients and confidence intervals for indirect, direct, and total effect paths are presented in Appendix Table A3.5. In this context, we found that communal goals were positively associated with higher levels of life satisfaction and stress; H1c is supported, and H1d is not supported. Moreover, it was evident that the indirect relationships between communal goals and satisfaction (ß = -.053; $p < .001$; 95% CI: -.080, -.031), as well as stress (ß = .079; $p < .001$; 95% CI: .048, .113) through FtWI, were significant. Therefore, both H2c and H2d are supported.

Figure 3. 3

The Relationship between Communal Goals, FtWI, Life Satisfaction, and Stress
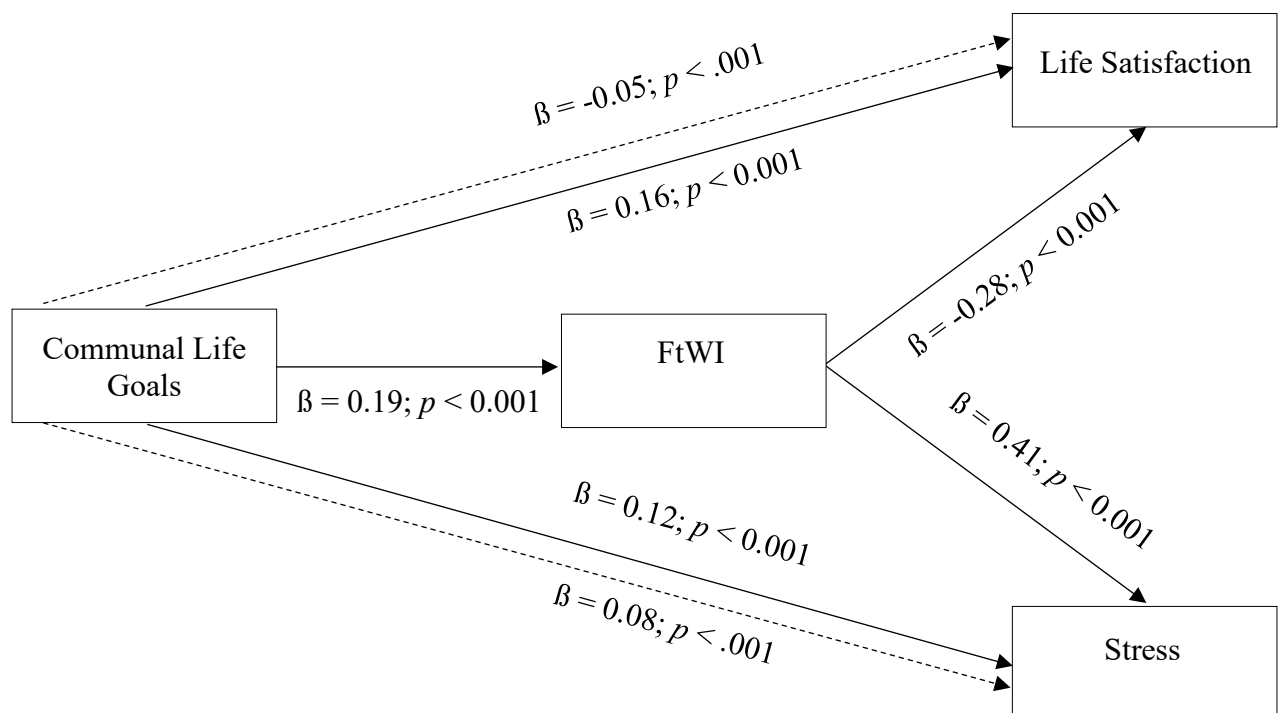
Note. Solid lines represent direct relationships, while dotted lines represent indirect relationships. Due to the study's cross-sectional design, no information could be derived about the causality of the hypothesized relationships, and the arrows in the figure should be analyzed with caution.

3.4.3. Group Comparisons for Self-Control Levels

We also examined how different levels of self-control interacted with the main variables to compare the groups. We looked at the low self-control group and the high self-control group separately, studying their differences in agentic goals, WtFI, life satisfaction, and stress. The model showed a good fit with the data, indicating a strong match (χ^2/df= 2.248; RMSEA= .032; CFI = .965; GFI = .936). The bootstrapping results supported the mediation relationship. For the low self-control group, the indirect relationships between agentic goals with life satisfaction (ß = -.119; p < .001; 95% CI: -.169, -.078) and stress (ß = .152; p < .001; 95% CI: .103, .208) through WtFI were significant (see Table A3.6 in the Appendix). Similarly, for the high self-control group, the indirect relationships between agentic goals with satisfaction (ß = -.126; p < .001; 95% CI: -.179, -.082) and stress (ß = .185; p < .001; 95% CI: .126, .247) through WtFI were also significant (see Table A3.7 in the Appendix).

For the low self-control group, the links between agentic goals and life satisfaction as well as stress became insignificant (ß = .06; p = .182; ß = .07; p = .138). For the high self-control group, connections between agentic goals and life satisfaction (ß = .16; p < .001) as well as stress (ß = .09; p < .05) remained significant. For both groups, the connections between agentic goals and WtFI (ß = .31; p < .001, ß = .32; p < .001), WtFI and satisfaction (ß = -.38; p < .001, ß = -.39; p < .001), and WtFI and stress (ß = .49; p < .001, ß = .57; p < .001) remained significant.

To examine the significance of group differences in these relationships, we conducted multi-group comparisons. We equalized the paths in the model for both groups and compared them to the unconstrained model. The results showed that there was no significant difference between the low self-control and high self-control groups when we controlled for being married, having children, and working full-time. Therefore, H3a, H3b, and H3c are not supported.

We also conducted the same test to determine the relationship between communal goals, FtWI, life satisfaction, and stress. The model fit the data well, indicating a strong match ($\chi^2/df=$ 2.995; RMSEA= .040; CFI = .931; GFI = .916). The bootstrapping results confirmed the mediation relationship. For the low self-control group, the indirect relationships between communal goals with satisfaction (ß = -.051; $p <$ .001; 95% CI: -.088, -.020) and stress (ß = .062; $p <$ .001; 95% CI: .025, .103) through FtWI were significant (see Table A3.8 in the Appendix). Similarly, for the high self-control group, the indirect relationships between communal goals with satisfaction (ß = -.065; $p <$ .001; 95% CI: -.116, -.031) and stress (ß = .124; $p <$ .001; 95% CI: .073, .190) through FtWI were also significant (see Table A3.9 in the Appendix).

For the low self-control group, the connection between communal goals and satisfaction (ß = .07; $p =$ .138) was no longer significant, while it was significant for the high self-control group (ß = .17; $p <$ .01). For the low self-control group, the link between communal goals and stress (ß = .14; $p <$ .01) was significant while it became marginally significant for the high self-control group (ß = .11; $p =$ .057). For both groups, the links between communal goals and FtWI (ß = .16; $p <$ .001, ß = .29; $p <$ .001), FtWI and satisfaction (ß = -.31; $p <$ .001, ß = -.23; $p <$ .001), and FtWI and stress (ß = .38; $p <$ .001, ß = .44; $p <$ .001) were significant.

Multi-group comparisons were performed to assess the significance of group differences in these relationships. The paths in the model were equalized for both groups and compared to the unconstrained model. The results revealed a marginal significance in the relationship between communal goals and satisfaction ($\chi^2(1)=$ 3.259; $p =$ .071); H3d is supported. However, there was no significant difference between low and high self-control groups regarding the relationship between communal goals and stress; H3e is not supported. Similarly, there was a significant distinction between the low self-control and high self-control groups in terms of the relationship between communal goals and FtWI ($\chi^2(1)=$ 5.743; $p <$ .05). However, contrary to

expectations, the relationship between communal goals and FtWI was stronger among people with high self-control than those with low self-control. Therefore, H3f is not supported. Additionally, there was a marginal significance in the relationship between FtWI and satisfaction (χ^2= 2.979; p = .084).

3.4.4. Group Comparisons for Culture and Gender Interactions

To compare the groups, we analyzed how nationality and gender interacted with the main variables. We looked at German and Turkish women separately, examining their differences in agentic goals, WtFI, and well-being (specifically, life satisfaction and stress). The model fit the data well, indicating a good match (χ^2/df= 1.764; RMSEA= .036; CFI = .948; GFI = .900). The bootstrapping results confirmed the mediation relationship. For German women, the indirect relationships between agentic goals with satisfaction (ß = -.156; p < .001; 95% CI: -.262, -.076) and stress (ß = .168; p < .001; 95% CI: .083, .270) through WtFI were significant (see Table A3.10 in the Appendix). Similarly, for Turkish women, the indirect relationships between agentic goals with satisfaction (ß = -.076; p < .05; 95% CI: -.147, -.019) and stress (ß = .095; p < .01; 95% CI: .022, .166) through WtFI were also significant (see Table A3.11 in the Appendix).

In both groups, except for the relationships between agentic goals, life satisfaction, and stress, all other connections in the main model remained significant. For German women, agentic goals were no longer linked to stress (ß = .04; p = .585), while for Turkish women, this link remained significant (ß = .14; p < .05). For Turkish women, agentic goals were no longer associated with life satisfaction (ß = .03; p = .658), while for German women, this relationship still held (ß = .34; p < .001). For German and Turkish women, the connections between agentic goals and WtFI (ß = .32; p < .001, ß = .20; p < .05), WtFI and life satisfaction (ß = -.48; p < .001, ß = -.38; p < .001), and WtFI and stress (ß = .52; p < .001, ß = .47; p < .001) remained significant.

To assess the significance of group differences in these relationships, we conducted multi-group comparisons. We equalized the paths in the model for both groups and compared them to the unconstrained model. The results showed that German and Turkish women differed significantly in terms of the relationships between agentic goals and life satisfaction ($\chi^2(1)=$ 4.216; $p = .040$), H4a, but not H4b, is supported. However, there was no significant difference in the relationship between WtFI and any of the well-being dimensions. Therefore, both H4c and H4d are not supported.

The same analyses were repeated for German and Turkish male groups, considering communal goals, FtWI, life satisfaction, and stress. The model fit the data well ($\chi^2/df=$ 2.022; RMSEA= .040; CFI = .934; GFI = .899). The bootstrap results indicated that the mediation relationship could no longer be discussed for both German and Turkish men. Specifically, for German men, the indirect relationships between communal goals and satisfaction (ß = -.017; p = .078; 95% CI: -.064, .002), as well as stress (ß = .052; p = .110; 95% CI: -.013, .134) through FtWI were not significant(see Table A3.12 in the Appendix). For Turkish men, the indirect relationships between communal goals and satisfaction (ß = -.016; p = .415; 95% CI: -.065, .026) as well as stress (ß = .022; p = .434; 95% CI: -.036, .087) through FtWI were not significant (see Table A3.13 in the Appendix).

For both German and Turkish men, the relationship between communal goals and stress was no longer significant (ß = .05; p = .493; ß = .09; p = .188, respectively). However, communal goals were associated with higher levels of satisfaction (ß = .31; $p < .001$, ß = .22; $p < .001$; respectively) for both groups. The relationship between communal goals and FtWI was no longer significant for German men (ß = .12; p = .122) and Turkish men (ß = .05; p = .442). It was observed that FtWI had a significant dampening effect on satisfaction (ß = -.14; p < .05; ß = -.29; $p < .001$), while it increased stress levels in the opposite direction (ß = .43; $p <$ .001; ß =.40; $p < .001$) for both German men and Turkish men.

Multi-group comparisons were performed to assess the significance of group differences in these relationships. The paths in the model were equalized for both groups, and these models were compared to the unconstrained model. There was no significant difference between German men and Turkish men regarding the relationship between communal goals and any of the well-being dimensions; neither H4e nor H4f were supported. However, the results showed that German and Turkish men differed significantly in terms of the relationships between FtWI and life satisfaction ($\chi^2(1)= 5.741$; $p < .05$). However, contrary to expectations, the negative impact of FtWI on life satisfaction was stronger among Turkish men than among German men. Therefore, both H4g and H4h are not supported.

3.5. Discussion

In this study, we examined the effects of life goals on life satisfaction and stress, assessing their implications for well-being. We evaluated the mediating role of work-family interference as a negative impact of goal endorsements. It was also assumed that this effect would be moderated by both culture-gender interaction and self-control. In the current study, it was hypothesized that there are two facets to the narrative. Initially, it was posited that the direct correlation between life goals and well-being would yield positive outcomes, manifesting in increased life satisfaction and decreased stress. Conversely, the indirect relationship, mediated by work-family interference, was expected to exhibit a negative impact on well-being.

The analysis of the direct effect revealed that as individuals place increasing importance on a specific goal, life satisfaction levels increase, regardless of whether they are agentic or communal life goals. However, contrary to expectations, an increase in the importance attached to these life goals has also brought about increased stress levels. Within broader literature, numerous studies have explored the direct impact of diverse life goals on well-being. Notably, the Big Two framework, encompassing both agentic and communal goals, has been linked to well-being (Saragovi et al., 2002; Sheldon & Cooper, 2008). Confirming self-regulation

theories, it seems that having goals brings about a sense of fulfillment and meaning in life, resulting in life satisfaction (Emmons, 2003). Although our results show that increasing the importance placed on agentic or communal goals leads to higher stress levels, these findings align with the literature. According to the cognitive activation theory of stress, life goals can serve as activators of stress. Short-term stress responses can help individuals cope with challenges and restore homeostasis (Ursin & Eriksen, 2010). On the other hand, there could be "too much of a good thing," meaning the demands associated with these goals, perhaps driven by a desire for attainment, also bring about stress (Toth et al., 2018). The more life goals indicating deficiencies in life receive importance, the more individuals may become stressed (Mayser et al., 2008). Therefore, life goals may be stressful, but they can simultaneously enhance life satisfaction, especially when they are perceived as achieved.

Existing literature lacks investigation into the relationship between goal endorsement and well-being across different domains, including the interference mechanism. Our study fills this gap by examining the direct effect of life goals on well-being through work-family interference, highlighting the unfavorable aspect of the story. In the current study, by identifying agentic goals with personal achievement and communal goals with relationships centered, we found results that support matching-domain effects in the literature (Amstad et al., 2011; Shockley & Singla, 2011). Increased importance on agentic goals leads to more WtFI, decreasing life satisfaction, and increasing stress. Similarly, emphasis on communal goals increases FtWI, further lowering life satisfaction and increasing stress indirectly. Negative experiences (WtFI or FtWI) tend to be based on areas with an excessive emphasis on a particular focus (agentic or communal life goals). This interaction with demands in that specific domain has repercussions in other aspects of life, leading to adverse outcomes such as reduced well-being, diminished life satisfaction, and increased stress. Our study demonstrated the existence of

matching-domain effects, and further research is needed to discuss the cross-domain effects of life goals on work-family interference and well-being.

It is found that as the importance of agentic goals increases, individuals invest more in the work domain, leaving them vulnerable to family demands, resulting in more WtFI, stress, and lower life satisfaction. Similarly, an emphasis on communal goals leads individuals to invest more in the family domain, causing FtWI, stress and decreased life satisfaction. These findings align with previous research indicating that higher income (the goal of making more money can be considered as an agentic goal) correlates with more WtFI (Rubenstein et al., 2022) and being ostracized by loved ones (individuals who do not want to feel excluded by their families are possibly who pursue communal goals) correlates with more FtWI (Babalola et al., 2020). These results also align with the boundary theory, which states that the more someone identifies with a role, the more they blend it with other roles (Ashforth et al., 2000). Similarly, Kossek et al. (2012) found that individuals with a greater work focus experience more WtFI, while those with a stronger family focus face more FtWI. Additionally, research indicates that individuals' perceptions of the usage of Information and Communication Technology are influenced by their motivations (Schöllbauer et al., 2021). People who continuously strive for career advancement tend to use Information and Communication Technology more during non-work hours, leading to increased WtFI (Schlachter et al., 2018). Conversely, we can extend these results by stating that those with communal goals may voluntarily use non-work-related technology during work hours, resulting in more FtWI. These situations also offer individuals a perspective that allows them to choose their struggles freely. Accordingly, giving more importance to goals in a specific domain opens the way for interaction with other domains of life, but this interaction makes individuals vulnerable by consuming their resources, negatively affecting their well-being. While goal endorsement ordinarily positively influences life satisfaction, an additional negative impact unfolds through

the mediation of work-family interference. Moreover, work-family interference plays a mediating role in amplifying the negative effect of goal endorsement on stress.

The current research also examined whether the indirect effect of life goals on well-being through work-family interference varies according to different self-control levels, which is called the key resources concept of the Work-Home Resources model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Accordingly, when comparing the low self-control group with the high self-control group, no significant difference was found in the model that examined the relationship between agentic goals, WtFI, and well-being (i.e., life satisfaction and stress). Individuals who value agentic goals may be perceived as having a heightened sense of self-control. In other words, agentic life goals may already manifest themselves through a greater level of self-focus (Garcia et al., 2015; Saragovi et al., 1997). This could explain the lack of significant differences between groups with low and high levels of self-control, as the degree of importance attributed to agentic goals may be the primary factor influencing the relationships with WtFI and well-being dimensions.

While examining the model on communal goals, FtWI, and well-being (life satisfaction and stress), we discovered unexpected differences. Surprisingly, the high self-control group, when emphasizing communal goals, experienced more FtWI compared to the low self-control group. Initially, we assumed that individuals with high self-control would face less FtWI when pursuing communal goals due to their efficient resource allocation. This expectation was consistent with the literature, as Kossek et al. (2012) noted that individuals with high control profiles, regardless of their degree of boundary-crossing behaviors and the array of identity centralities, were more likely to report positive work-family outcomes compared to those with low control profiles. However, it seems this relationship goes beyond resource management, involving factors like self-confidence or over-commitment. Those with high self-control skills tend to take on more responsibility in pursuing goals (Koval et al., 2015), potentially leading

to underestimating demands and overestimating capacities (Hetland et al., 2012). Paradoxically, an excessive dependence on one's own abilities may lead to elevated levels of FtWI. Consistent with existing literature, an emphasis on communal goals correlated with higher life satisfaction for the high self-control group compared to the low self-control group. Previous research indicates that individuals with high self-control skills are more successful in goal pursuit, leading to better health and well-being (de Ridder et al., 2012; Tangney et al., 2004). Additionally, self-control skills positively contribute to stress-coping abilities (Boals et al., 2011; Folkman, 1984). In line with this, our study found that FtWI has a less detrimental effect on life satisfaction for the high self-control group compared to the low self-control group. The results indicate that self-control does not suppress the level of cross-domain interference associated with life goals but rather mitigates the adverse outcomes of the experienced interference.

Finally, the present research explores how cultural and gender roles influence the relationship between life goals, work-family interference, and well-being in Germany and Türkiye, using the macro resources concept of the Work-Home Resources model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Therefore, it was investigated if these relationships are significantly different for men and women in Germany and Türkiye by considering cultural values as one of the macro resources. Firstly, the study examined whether the importance placed on agentic goals and their impact on well-being (specifically life satisfaction and stress) through WtFI exhibited disparities among women in Germany and Türkiye. The findings revealed that as German women were placing greater importance on agentic goals, they exhibited higher life satisfaction than their Turkish counterparts. This could be related to appreciating individualism, self-focus, mastery, and power in German society. Upon examining subgroups, it appears that the effect of agentic goal endorsement on stress disappears as German women align themselves with social expectations. In Turkish women, however,

agentic goal endorsement increases stress while its impact on life satisfaction diminishes. This suggests that not pursuing goals aligned with societal expectations suppresses positive effects. Consequently, consistent with previous literature (Myers & Diener, 1995; Sedikides et al., 2003), German women meet societal expectations by pursuing their agentic goals in a manner valued by their community, which significantly positively impacts their life satisfaction. Significant differences were not found in the impact of WtFI on various dimensions of well-being among women living in different cultures. This outcome suggests that, regardless of cultural context, work life interference with family life is uniformly detrimental to the well-being of individuals, as supported by the findings of a previous study (Kusnierz et al., 2022).

Secondly, similar analyses were conducted to determine whether the impact of the importance given to communal goals on FtWI and well-being (i.e., life satisfaction and stress) differed for men in Germany and Türkiye. Surprisingly, the findings were contrary to our expectations: Turkish men, as they faced higher levels of FtWI, their life satisfaction level was negatively affected more than their German counterparts. This phenomenon can be explained by insights from previous studies, indicating that close family ties can act more as a demand than a source, potentially exerting a detrimental impact on life satisfaction (Allen et al., 2015; Kalliath et al., 2017). In societies characterized by pronounced gender inequalities, male individuals who perceive their role in providing for the family may experience a more significant impact on life satisfaction in the event of interference between family and work compared to their counterparts in societies with greater gender equality (i.e., Allen et al., 2015). Significant differences were not found in the effect of pursuing communal goals on well-being among men living in different cultures. Men who pursue these communal life goals do not experience increased stress, and their life satisfaction is positively influenced. These results indicate that valuing communal goals, such as cooperation, caring, and fostering relationships,

is directly crucial for well-being regardless of cultural background, consistent with the results of a meta-analysis study (Le et al., 2018).

Accordingly, the negative impact that emerges during the goal endorsement, which we view as the unfavorable aspect of the study, appears to affect individuals with different characteristics consistently. Interestingly, in relationships where group differences are significant, it has been observed that the dependent variable is mostly life satisfaction, not stress. These results are consistent with the meta-analysis, which found that the association between goal pursuit and well-being is larger when well-being is measured with positive indicators, as opposed to ill-being (negative indicators; Klug & Maier, 2015).

3.5.1. Limitations

It is important to consider several limitations of the study. Firstly, using a cross-sectional study design limits the comprehensiveness of data collection, as it captures a static snapshot of data and does not account for changes over time, thus preventing the establishment of causal relationships and only allowing the reporting of associations between variables. It can also be argued that the data from German participants is more representative than the data from Turkish participants. This assertion is based on the observation that a majority of Turkish participants in the present research possess higher education degrees and higher incomes and reside in urban areas, in contrast to the broader demographic of Turkish citizens. Additionally, using a one-item scale for measurement may limit the depth and accuracy of data collection. Furthermore, the study only focused on domain-unspecific outcomes, which may restrict the overall understanding of its implications on domain-specific outcomes. It is also essential to recognize that further research is imperative to fully unravel the cross-domain effects of life goals on work-family interference and well-being. While this study provides a valuable starting point, its limitations highlight the need for continued exploration in future research.

3.5.2. Contributions

This study contributes significantly to the literature by integrating the Work-Home Resources model with self-regulation theory, thereby bridging gaps in understanding how various life goals impact well-being. It establishes a crucial framework for discerning the diverse effects of different life goals on well-being, highlighting both their positive contributions and potential negative consequences mediated by work-family interference. This dual perspective enhances comprehension of the complexity inherent in goal pursuit. The research particularly examines how mismatches between individuals' goals and societal gender role expectations can detrimentally affect well-being, compounded by the tendency of individuals with high self-control to underestimate demands. Practically, the study underscores the importance of awareness of potential stress and work-family interference of individuals pursuing their life goals. It advocates techniques from Hirschi et al.'s (2019) theoretical action regulation model, which can help them pursue their goals without interfering with work and family domains. Organizational implications include fostering supportive environments with flexible work arrangements and childcare resources, which are crucial to increasing both contextual and personal resources of employees. Policymakers are urged to promote social awareness and provide support for both individual and organizational well-being in the contemporary era, where all genders value both agentic and communal goals (Galinsky et al., 2013).

Chapter 4: Examining the Impact of a Self-Regulation Intervention on Work-to-Family

Interference

Abstract

In the quest to improve employee well-being, the ability of self-control to balance work and family dynamics has become crucial, especially in times of skill shortages and increased stress among employees. Drawing on self-control theory (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), we investigated the impact of an online intervention addressing self-regulation by means of action planning and action control. Self-control was hypothesized to lead to less work-to-family interference (WtFI) and enhanced well-being. The randomized controlled trial (RCT) included N = 662 white-collar employees with two measurement points over three months. Various analyses, including Multivariate Analysis of Variance and spline regression, were employed to evaluate the intervention's effectiveness. To test whether the intervention effects were consistent across all individuals, participants were categorized into Improvers (those whose self-control increased over time), Stables (those who maintained their existing self-control abilities), and Reducers (those whose self-control declined over time). However, the results indicated no significant differences in WtFI between the intervention and control groups, meaning there was no overall intervention effect. Further analysis revealed that the degree of self-control change played a crucial role. Specifically, participants in the intervention group who experienced moderate improvements in self-control initially reported an increase in WtFI. Conversely, those with higher increases in self-control showed a decrease in WtFI overtime, indicating long-term benefits. Reducers and Stables exhibited no significant changes in WtFI. These findings may highlight that while self-control improvements can be beneficial, they may initially increase WtFI before yielding positive outcomes. Such subgroups within the intervention group should be taken into account in the future to prevent such negative effects.

Keywords

Self-control, self-regulation, stress, well-being, work-to-family interference

4.1. Introduction

In the quest to improve employee well-being, the ability of self-control to balance work and family dynamics has emerged as a critical area of focus. In today's business landscape, technological advancements have significantly increased the integration of work into daily life, allowing for greater flexibility and efficiency. However, this increased accessibility also presents challenges to maintaining well-being, such as difficulty in setting boundaries between work and personal life. This study aims to test the hypothesis that a self-regulation intervention can help reduce work-to-family interference by means of action planning and action control.

Work-to-family interference (WtFI) occurs when work demands negatively impact family responsibilities, causing stress and reduced well-being (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). For example, an employee may struggle to attend their child's school event due to work deadlines, leading to feelings of guilt and frustration. Such interference, in turn, limits well-being and increases stress, which are major consequences of WtFI (Amstad et al., 2011; Kinnunen et al., 2006).

Self-control, the ability to regulate one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in the face of temptations and distractions (Baumeister et al., 1994), is increasingly recognized as a valuable asset in the workplace. High self-control enables employees to manage their resources and time better (Adams & Jex, 1999) and set effective boundaries between work and personal life (Rothbard & Ollier-Malaterre, 2016). This was shown to help to cope with stress (Tangney et al., 2004) and maintain beneficial routines (Muraven et al., 1999). The present study investigates the impact of a self-regulation intervention designed to enhance self-control and its subsequent positive effects on reducing WtFI.

Drawing on the *strength model of self-control* (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), which posits that self-control can be strengthened through practice, the current intervention incorporates action planning and action control strategies. Action planning involves specifying

when and where behaviors will be performed, which helps convert behavioral intentions into real activities. Implementation intentions (Gollwitzer et al., 2004), a subset of *action control*, involve planning responses to anticipated barriers, helping to overcome obstacles to action. Action control, particularly through self-monitoring, involves continuously observing and evaluating one's actions to ensure they align with action plans. These strategies are critical components of the Behavior Change Techniques (BCT) taxonomy (Michie et al., 2013), providing a structured framework for individuals to set goals, monitor progress, and establish consistent behaviors.

The relationship between WtFI, limited well-being, and stress underscores the necessity for an intervention that helps employees manage these conflicting demands more effectively (Richardson, 2017). This article focuses on time-based and strain-based interference, as its relationship with self-control is expected to be more pronounced. Research indicates that high self-control aids in time management and prioritization, helping to mitigate time-based interference (Gröpel & Kuhl, 2006; Mellner et al., 2014). It has also been shown that self-control alleviates strain-based interference by enhancing stress management (Cheung & Tang, 2011; Wei et al., 2022). Training programs focused on developing self-control can equip employees with the tools needed to regulate their responses to stressors and maintain a healthier work-life balance (Kiburz et al., 2017). Research evaluating a program using systematic self-monitoring and reflection strategies also found improved employee well-being and reduced sick leave (Krampen, 2010).

This study aims to test the nuanced effects of a self-regulation intervention specifically designed to promote self-control and reduce WtFI, incorporating elements of action control and planning. The ultimate goal is to optimize these programs to benefit employees. The impact of a self-regulation intervention was assessed by comparing it to a waitlist control group. To fully comprehend the intervention's effectiveness, we applied two complementary analytical

approaches to provide a deeper understanding of the outcomes. First, employees were categorized based on their self-control trajectories: Improvers, Stables, and Reducers. Improvers developed an increase in self-control, Stables maintained existing self-control abilities, and Reducers experienced a decline in self-control. This categorization allowed us to distinguish between changes attributable to the intervention itself and the inherent fluctuations in self-control levels that might occur naturally or due to external circumstances. By differentiating these groups, we were able to isolate the unique effects of the intervention on self-control, providing a clearer picture of its impact across diverse trajectories.

In the second analytical approach, we addressed the fact that the data did not follow a simple linear pattern. We anticipated that self-control would not influence WtFI uniformly across all levels but instead would exhibit varying effects depending on certain critical thresholds. To capture these nuances, we used spline regression, which allowed us to examine how the relationship between self-control changes and WtFI shifted at different points along the self-control spectrum. The categorical analysis offers a broad view of the overall trends, showing how distinct groups of employees responded to the intervention. However, the spline regression provided a more granular, detailed analysis, identifying specific threshold points where the effects of self-control changes became more pronounced or diminished. This dual approach allowed us to understand not only the general effectiveness of the intervention but also the specific conditions under which its impact was most significant.

We hypothesized that participants in the intervention group would develop more self-control than those in the WLCG (T1-T2 = intervention check) and that this increase would result in less WtFI. We also hypothesized that the effects would be more pronounced among individuals who improved their self-control compared to those whose self-control remained stable or declined. The differences between Improvers and Stables were expected to be smaller than those between Improvers and Reducers.

4.2. Method

4.2.1. Participants and Procedure

The participants in this study were white-collar employees residing in Germany. They were recruited through a German-based survey company (Norstat Deutschland GmbH), which distributed the online questionnaire via relevant links, utilizing a convenience sampling technique. The online questionnaire was prepared using the UNIPARK system. All measures that had not previously been translated into German were translated by the researcher using the back-translation method (Brislin, 1970).

Participants were informed via email about the details of the study and received the baseline questionnaires. They gave their informed consent at the start of the online questionnaire by explicitly agreeing by hitting a "continue" button. Without this consent, they were unable to complete the questionnaire and were classified as dropouts. Occasional email reminders were sent to encourage the completion of the questionnaires or the intervention.

Initially, $N = 662$ employees were contacted at the baseline stage (T1). These participants were then randomly divided into two separate groups by the survey company: an intervention group and a waitlist control group, each consisting of $N = 331$ individuals. Approximately one month after completing the baseline questionnaires (see Figure 4.1 for the study flow chart), the two-week training content consisting of 2 hours in total was sent to the intervention group. One month after completing the training, the first post-questionnaire was sent to both the intervention and control groups. At this stage (T2), $n = 183$ participants from the intervention group and $n = 258$ individuals from the control group, totaling $n = 441$ participants, completed the questionnaires. The study continued with the waitlist control group.

Figure 4. 1

Flow Chart and Study Design
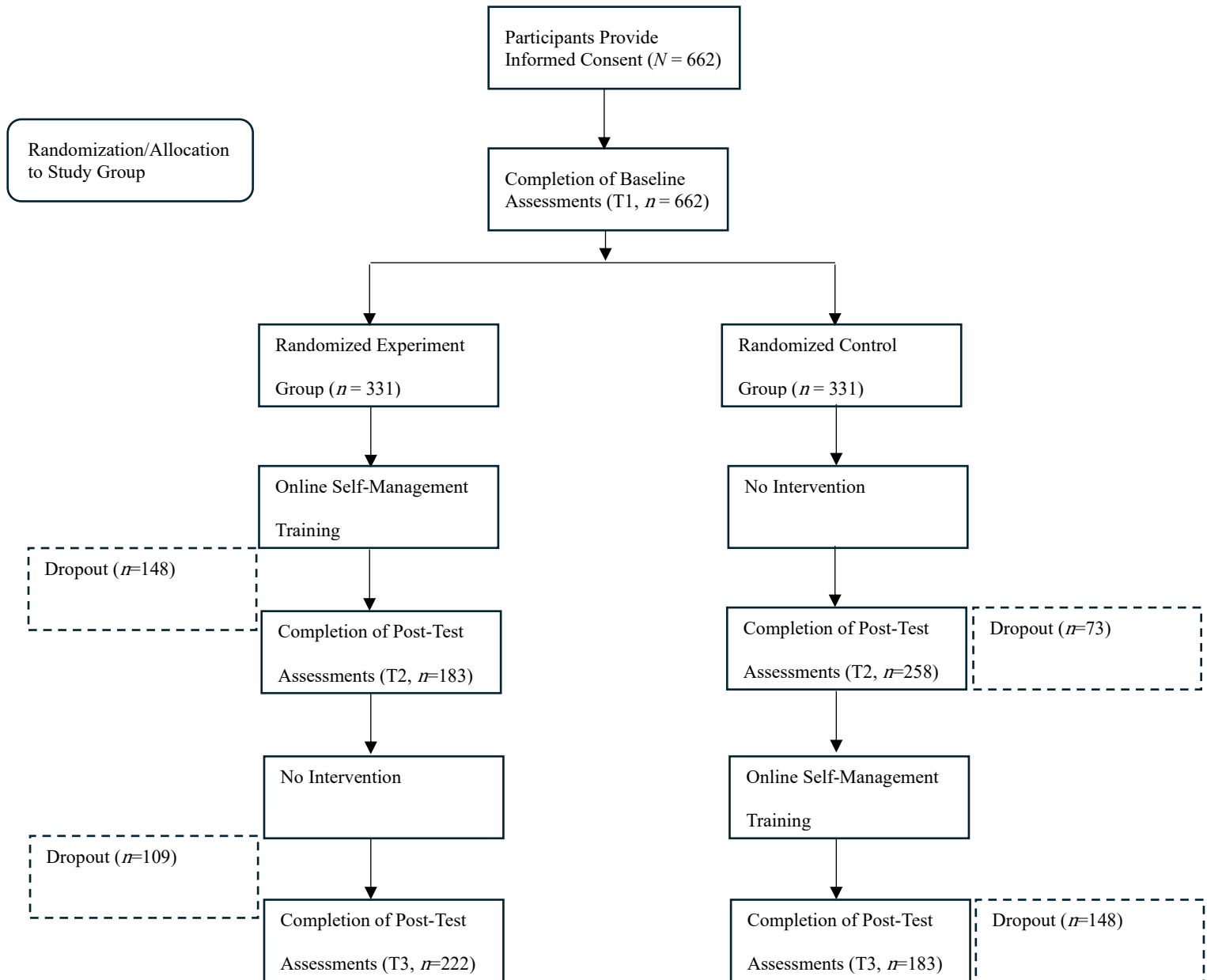
The demographic characteristics of the intervention group ($n = 331$) and the control group

($n = 331$) were analyzed (see Table 4.1 for the descriptives). The proportion of married or living

in partnership individuals is similar in both groups, with 64% ($n = 211$) in the intervention

group and 65% ($n = 215$) in the control group. Full-time employees constitute the majority in

both groups, with 77% ($n = 255$) in the intervention group and 83% ($n = 274$) in the control

group. In terms of gender distribution, women are more prevalent in the intervention group at

54% (n = 177), while men are more prevalent in the control group at 62% (n = 204). The grouping is done to ensure an equal number of individuals in each group has shown that the majority of participants are in their 40s, with those aged 40-48 comprising 54% (n=180) of the intervention group and 50% (n = 165) of the control group. Regarding educational status, individuals with a university degree are 38% (n = 125) in the intervention group and 40% (n = 133) in the control group.

Table 4. 1

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of The Participants: Number of Study Participants and Percentages Per Group

		Intervention		Control		Dropouts	
Marital Status	Married/Living in A Partnership	211	64%	215	65%	141	64%
	Other	120	36%	116	35%	80	36%
Employment Status	Full-Time	255	77%	274	83%	173	78%
	Part-Time	76	23%	57	17%	48	22%
Gender	Male	154	47%	204	62%	105	48%
	Female	177	54%	127	38%	116	53%
Age	Younger Than 31 Years Old	5	1.5%	11	3.3%	5	2.3%
	31-40 Years	83	25.1%	98	29.6%	63	28.5%
	41-50 Years	220	66.5%	209	63.1%	133	60.2%
	Older Than 51 Years Old	23	6.9%	13	3.9%	20	9%
Education	University Degree	125	38%	133	40%	76	34%
	Other	200	60%	192	58%	137	62%
	Not Reported	6	2%	6	2%	8	4%

Note. Significant differences were only found in gender distribution between intervention and control groups, $\chi^2(1) = 15.207$, $p<.001$. There were no group differences regarding other demographic factors $\chi^2(1-5) = .411-6.553$, $p = .07-.65$.

Participants who dropped out from the intervention group were largely similar to those who completed the intervention and provided T2 data regarding their socio-demographic

characteristics, $\chi^2(1–3) = 0.28$ to 6.95, $p = .073$ to $.596$, with one notable exception: a higher

proportion of women dropped out compared to men, $\chi^2(1)=5.791$, $p=.016$. Additionally,

baseline scale results showed that participants who dropped out had higher levels of stress

compared to those who completed the T2 questionnaires, $t(325.487)=-3.410$, $p < .001$. In the

control group, participants who dropped out did not differ significantly from those who

completed the T2 questionnaires in terms of socio-demographic data, $\chi^2(1–3) = 0.04$ to 5.38, p

$= .146$ to $.841$, and baseline scale results.

4.2.2. Self-Regulation Intervention

Participants underwent an intervention aimed at developing action planning and action

control behaviors. This process included exercises designed to help participants set clear goals,

monitor their progress, and establish consistent behaviors. By fostering these behaviors, the

intervention aimed to reduce work-to-family interference (WtFI) and improve overall well-

being.

The intervention consisted of a comprehensive booklet on self-control and an exercise

plan with action-control guidelines designed by the researcher and integrated into the

UNIPARK system. Relevant Behavior Change Techniques (BCTs) were selected in

accordance with the BCT taxonomy developed by Michie et al. (2013). Participants received a

document of about two pages that detailed the definition, importance, physiological

characteristics, development, and potential depletion of self-control (Shaping knowledge [BCT

4]). Following this, they were instructed to perform action control exercises over approximately

two weeks using a template provided by the researcher. In these exercises, participants planned

how to pursue their goals by specifying what they wanted to achieve, where and when they

would work on their goals, and creating if-then scenarios to anticipate potential obstacles

(Gollwitzer et al., 2004). They were also encouraged to reflect on how they could improve their

goal achievement strategies for the future (Goals and planning [BCT 1], Feedback and monitoring [BCT 2], Repetition and substitution [BCT 8]).

4.2.3. Measures

Self-control was evaluated using three single-item questions from Wolff et al. (2022). Participants answered three specific questions about self-control ("How much self-control do you have?"), self-discipline ("How much self-discipline do you have?"), and willpower ("How much willpower do you have?"). The score was calculated by averaging the three items. They responded on an 11-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 11 (very much). Cronbach's α was .80 at T1 and .79 at T2. Participants were categorized into three categories based on changes in their self-control levels from T1 to T2. Specifically, the change in self-control was calculated by subtracting the T1 self-control score from the T2 self-control score (T2 - T1). Participants with positive change scores were classified as "*Improvers*," indicating an increase in self-control. Those with a change score of between ±.50 were categorized as "*Stables*," indicating no change in self-control. Finally, participants with negative change scores were labeled as "*Reducers*," indicating a decrease in self-control. This classification allowed us to analyze the effects of the self-control training intervention across different trajectories of self-control change.

The *interference between work and family/private life* was measured using the time and strain subdimensions of the WtFI subscale developed by Carlson et al. (2000). The German version of the survey was translated by Wolff and Höge (2011). These subscales included three items for time-based and strain-based WtFI. Responses were given on a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (not at all) to 5 (absolutely). The score was calculated by averaging the six items. Cronbach's α was .91 at T1 and .91 at T2.

Stress was evaluated using a single-item measure created by Elo et al. (2003): "Stress means a situation in which people feel tense, restless, nervous, or anxious or are unable to sleep

at night because their mind is troubled all the time. Do you feel this kind of stress these days?" Participants answered using a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (not at all) to 5 (very much).

Socio-demographics were measured in terms of gender (1 = woman, 0 = man), marital status (1 = married/living in partnership, 0 = all other), employment status (1 = full-time employment, 0 = all other), and age (1 = younger than 31 years old, 2 = 31-40 years, 3 = 41-50 years, 4 = older than 51 years old).

4.2.4. Data Analysis

Due to the multiple repeated measurements in the study, some outcome variables had missing data. This occurred primarily because some participants discontinued their participation or chose not to answer some of the regular questions. To address this issue, both the Intention-to-Treat and Complete-Case (Per Protocol) approaches were used for analysis and comparison, yielding nearly identical results. Participants who dropped out were compared with those who provided T2 data using χ^2-tests for categorical socio-demographic data and independent *t*-tests for T1 scales, with analyses conducted in SPSS version 29.

For the complete case analyses, the training effects on these variables were examined using Chi-Square tests, Repeated Measures ANOVA, Spline Regression, and *t*-Tests, all conducted in SPSS version 29. For the 183 participants from the intervention group and the 258 participants from the control group who provided both baseline data (T1) and post-intervention data (T2), missing data was less than 5%; hence the list-wise deletion method was used for the missing data.

To validate the analyses using an Intention-to-Treat approach, the same models were applied to multiply imputed datasets, including the entire sample of 662 white-collar employees who provided baseline data (331 in the intervention group and 331 in the control group). The Fully Conditional Specification method was chosen for imputation, conducted in SPSS version 29. In the analysis, the group variable was excluded from the predictor and imputation

processes. The Predictive Mean Matching method was selected for imputation, and categorical variables were defined as factors and included in the predictor matrix. The number of imputed datasets was set to 10, following prominent guidelines (Rubin, 1987). Finally, the maximum number of iterations for each dataset was set to 10. Among the imputed datasets generated, the one most similar to the original dataset was selected for reporting the results. This approach was taken because SPSS does not provide pooled results for the relevant analyses.

4.3. Results

4.3.1. Per Protocol Analyses[5]

The mean scores of variables between the intervention and control group and intercorrelations of self-control, work-to-family dynamics, and well-being, as well as their change scores between T1 and T2, are reported in Table 4.2 and Table 4.3. Initial self-control was correlated with the initial work-to-family interference scores, $r = -.12$ ($p < .01$).

In general, there were differences between the control group and the intervention group, not only with the mean scores but also with the intercorrelations between variables. The baseline results indicated no significant differences between the groups regarding self-control at T1, t(439) = -0.106, p = .92, and WtFI at T1, t(439) = -1.428, p = .15. However, there was a significant difference in stress levels at T1, t(364.770) = -2.748, p < .01 with higher stress levels in the control group. The correlations were always larger for the IG than the CG, indicating more variability/variance and changes over time.

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[5] The results obtained using Intention-to-Treat analysis were similar to those obtained using per protocol analysis.

Table 4. 2

Correlation Matrix

	WtFI_T1	SCON_T1	Stress_T1	Change_WtFI	Change_SCON	Change_Stress
WtFI_T1	-	-.12**	.51**	-.40**	.02	-.08*
SCON_T1	-.05/-.22**	-	-.13**	.09	-.44**	.01
Stress_T1	.45**/.58**	-.08/-.19**	-	-.09	.05	-.46**
Change_WtFI	-.39**/-.42**	.16*/.00	-.06/-.13	-	.01	.20**
Change_SCON	.05/-.05	-.50**/-.37**	.13*/-.07	-.08/.12	-	.00
Change_Stress	.01/-.20**	.03/-.02	-.39**/-.53**	.14*/.27*	-.09/.13	-

Note. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$. WtFI: Work-to-family interference. SCON: Self-Control. Above the diagonal: Both groups are together; below, the first is the control group, and the second is the intervention group.

Table 4. 3

Means and Standard Deviations

	Control	Intervention	Total
WtFI_T1	2.50	2.37	2.45
SD	.97	.93	.95
SCON_T1	7.84	7.82	7.83
SD	1.56	1.66	1.60
Stress_T1	2.98	2.68	2.85
SD	1.07	1.19	1.13
WtFI_T2	2.52	2.41	2.48
SD	.98	.95	.97
SCON_T2	7.84	7.64	7.76
SD	1.40	1.69	1.53
Stress_T2	3.02	2.82	2.93
SD	1.16	1.12	1.14

4.3.2. Self-Control Changes

Over time and with all study participants taken together, 135 individuals (30.6%) exhibited improved self-control skills, referred to as *Improvers*. Conversely, 143 individuals (32.4%) showed a decrease in self-control skills, termed *Reducers*. Meanwhile, 159 individuals (36.1%) maintained the same level of self-control skills, identified as *Stables*. In the intervention group, 48 individuals (26.2%) were identified as Improvers, compared to 87 individuals (33.7%) in the control group. The intervention group had 64 Reducers (35%), whereas the control group had 79 (30.6%). Additionally, there were 68 Stables (37.2%) in the intervention group and 91 (35.3%) in the control group. These descriptive differences were not

statistically significant: $\chi^2(2) = 2.87$; $p = .24$ in baseline and post-intervention scores (see appendix). Additionally, there were no significant differences concerning gender, age, marital status, employment status, or education level: $\chi^2(2–6) = 0.59$ to 4.59, $p = .46$ to $.74$.

Repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of time (T1 and T2), group (control and intervention), and self-control changes (Improvers, Stables, and Reducers) on WtFI. The within-subjects factor was time, and the between-subjects factors were group and self-control changes. Since there was a difference between groups in the baseline scores on stress at T1, we treated stress at T1 and self-control at T1 as covariates.

The multivariate tests and within-subjects effects analysis showed that the main effect of time was not significant, indicating that WtFI did not change significantly from T1 to T2 across all participants ($\Lambda = .996$, $F(1, 427) = 1.611$, $p = .205$). The interaction between time and self-control at T1 was significant ($\Lambda = .988$, $F(1, 427) = 5.330$, $p < .05$), indicating that the initial levels of self-control at T1 had a significant effect on WtFI over time. Specifically, participants with higher self-control at T1 tended to show different changes in WtFI from T1 to T2 compared to those with lower self-control at T1.

The between-subjects effects analysis revealed a significant difference in stress levels between groups, $F(1, 427) = 149.824$, $p < .001$, with higher stress levels in the control group – replicating the group effects. However, there were no significant differences between the intervention and the control group in terms of WtFI ($F(1, 427) = .055$, $p = .82$), meaning that the intervention itself did not produce any significant overall effects. Despite the lack of intervention effects, the hypothesized three-way interaction between time, group, and self-control changes was significant ($F(2, 427) = 2.497$, $p = .04$). This suggested a potential combined effect of group and self-control changes on WtFI over time and supported the hypothesized intervention's effects being more pronounced among individuals who improved their self-control compared to those whose self-control remained stable or declined.

Specifically, for participants who experienced positive changes in self-control (*Improvers*), there was a significant increase in WtFI from T1 ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 0.12$) to T2 ($M = 2.73$, $SD = 0.13$), $\Lambda = .983$, $F(1, 427) = 7.238$, $p < .01$, for Improvers in the intervention group but not in the control group (T1: $M = 2.51$, $SD = 0.09$; T2: $M = 2.54$, $SD = 0.10$), $\Lambda = 1.000$, $F(1, 427) = .11$, $p = .75$; see Figure 4.2).

Figure 4. 2

Estimated Means of Work-to-Family Interference at T1 and T2 for Improvers
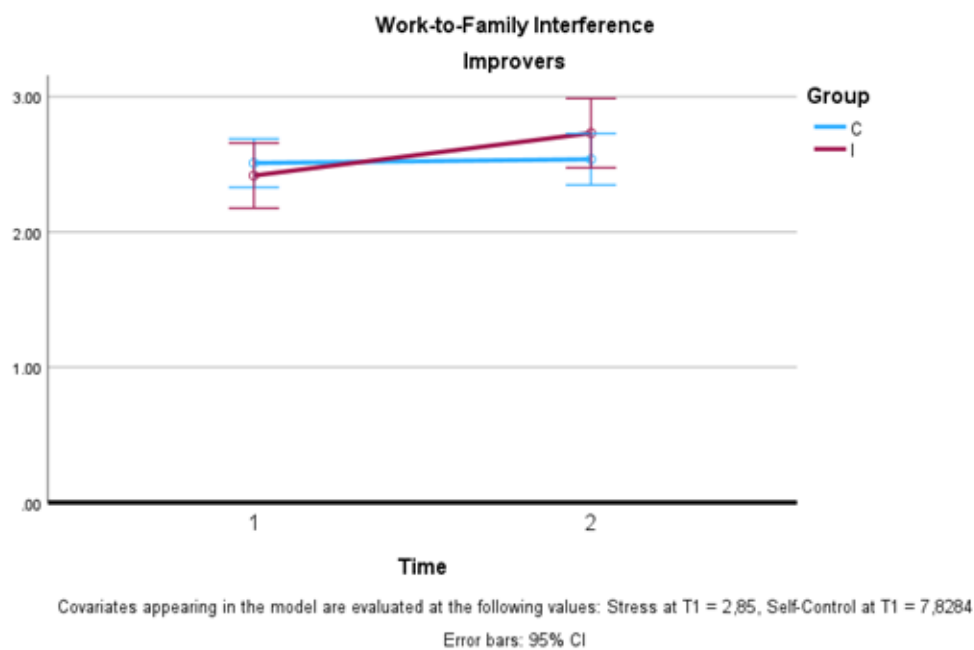
For participants who experienced a decrease in self-control (*Reducers*), there were no significant changes over time or between the intervention group (T1: $M = 2.55$, $SD = 0.10$; T2: $M = 2.47$, $SD = 0.11$) and control groups (T1: $M = 2.39$, $SD = 0.10$; T2: $M = 2.43$, $SD = 0.10$; see Figure 4.3).

Figure 4. 3

Estimated Means of Work-to-Family Interference at T1 and T2 for Reducers

Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Stress at T1 = 2,85, Self-Control at T1 = 7,8284

Error bars: 95% CI
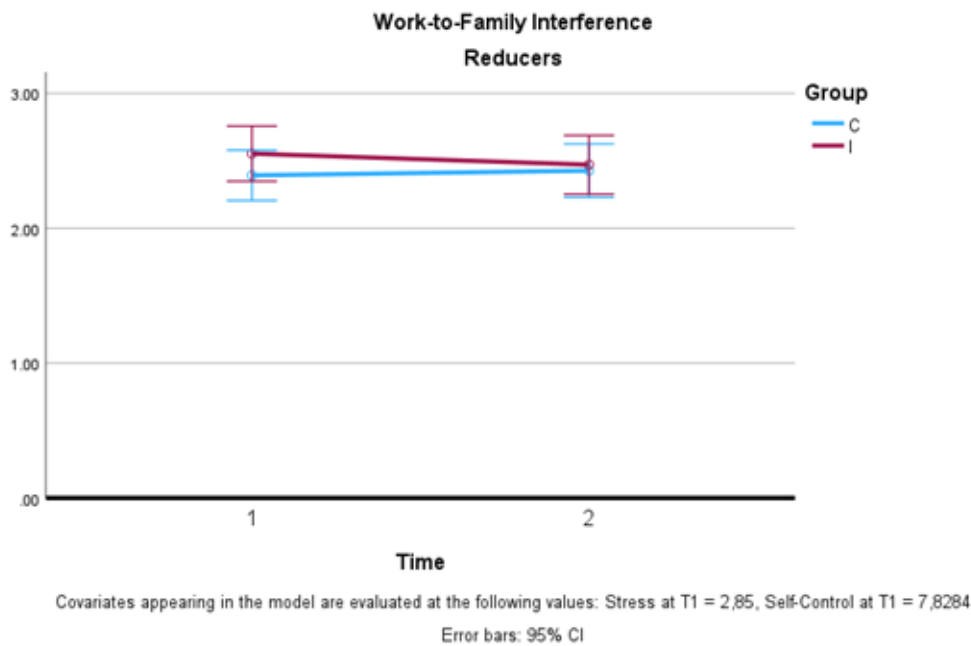
Similarly, for participants who did not experience any changes in self-control (*Stables*), there were no significant changes over time or between the intervention (T1: $M = 2.36$, $SD = 0.10$; T2: $M = 2.32$, $SD = 0.11$), and the control group (T1: $M = 2.43$, $SD = 0.09$, T2: $M = 2.45$, $SD = 0.09$; see Figure 4.4). However, a pairwise comparison revealed a significant difference in WtFI between Improvers and Stables within the intervention group at T2, with Improvers reporting higher interference levels (Mean Difference = 0.41, $SE = 0.17$, $p < .05$, 95% CI [0.00, 0.81]).

Figure 4. 4

Estimated Means of Work-to-Family Interference at T1 and T2 for Stables
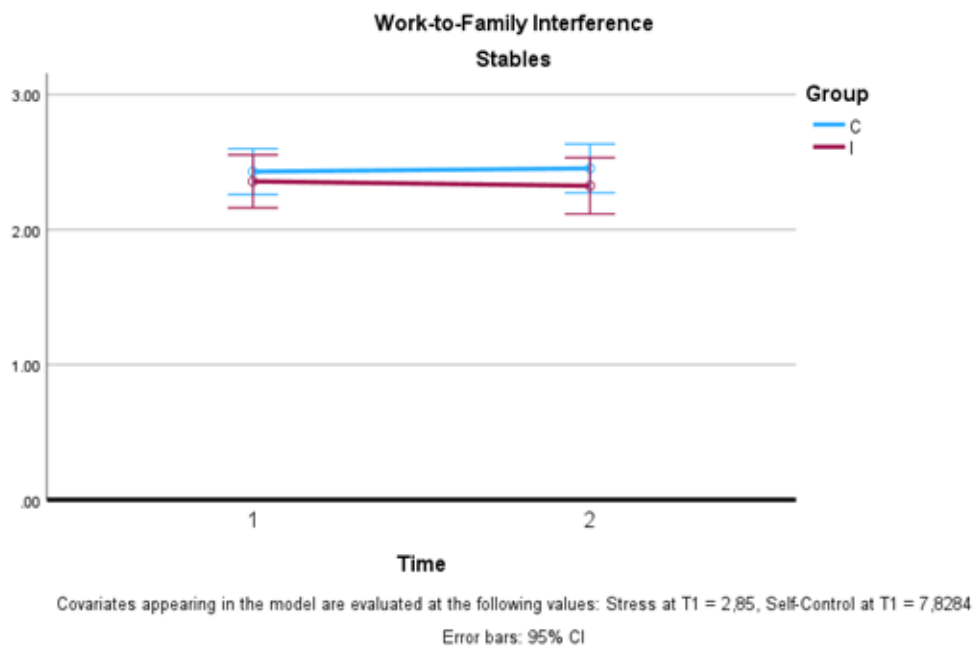
Threshold Effects of Self-Control on WtFI: A Spline Regression Analysis

Although the previous results offered some insight into individuals whose self-control improved, a spline regression analysis was conducted to capture better the effect of varying degrees of change in self-control on WtFI (T2). Specifically, thresholds were set at values greater than 0 and greater than .75, and splines were generated accordingly. These splines, along with the change in self-control scores, were entered into the model while controlling for initial WtFI and stress levels.

The results provided more nuanced and precise insights, supporting the hypotheses. Specifically, for both the intervention and control groups, initial WtFI was a significant predictor of WtFI at T2 ($B = 0.56$, $t(174) = 8.090$, $p < .001$ for the intervention group; $B = 0.62$, $t(249) = 11.899$, $p < .001$ for the control group), as were initial stress levels ($B = 0.17$, $t(174) = 2.402$, $p < .05$ for the intervention group; $B = 0.14$, $t(249) = 2.625$, $p < .01$ for the control group). However, the effect of self-control change was not significant in either group ($B = 0.04$,

$t(174) = 0.366$, $p = .72$ for the intervention group; $B = -0.07$, $t(249) = -0.777$, $p = .44$ for the control group).

In the control group, the effect of the splines was insignificant, both for changes greater than 0 ($B = 0.12$, $t(249) = 0.882$, $p = .38$) and changes greater than .75 ($B = -0.15$, $t(249) = -1.445$, $p = .15$). The overall model for the control group was significant, $F(5, 249) = 47.221$, $p < .001$, explaining 48% of the variance in WtFI.

In contrast, for the intervention group, changes in self-control above 0 had a marginally significant positive effect ($B = 0.32$, $t(174) = 1.769$, $p = .08$), while changes greater than .75 had a significant negative effect ($B = -0.32$, $t(174) = -2.421$, $p < .05$). The overall model for the intervention group was also significant, $F(5, 174) = 28.182$, $p < .001$, explaining 43% of the variance in WtFI.

4.4. Discussion

This study aimed to test the role of a self-regulation intervention in improving self-control and overall well-being among white-collar employees, specifically in relation to WtFI. The aim was to address a lack of previous findings concerning work-family interference (Kossek, 2016; Richardson, 2017) by employing an intervention approach to assess the role of self-control. Despite the well-intentioned intervention, the results showed no clear intervention effects but rather revealed a complex picture supporting the hypothesized interaction effects.

Firstly, the intervention did not result in a significant overall improvement in self-control skills among participants. The numbers of Improvers, Reducers, and Stables were similar across the intervention and control groups, suggesting that the intervention might not have been robust enough to produce substantial differences in self-control compared to natural variations in the control group. Considering the theoretical and practical instructions provided by the intervention to facilitate action planning and action control, these outcomes were unexpected. Possible reasons for these unexpected outcomes, as we will discuss below, could include

insufficient duration of the intervention, lack of participant engagement, external factors influencing self-control, or the complexity of changing established skills.

It was demonstrated that self-control in the control group correlated with stress at T1 with $r = .13$ ($p < .05$): Those employees in the control group who had more stress at T1 were more likely to change their self-control scores while this was not the case in the intervention group ($r = -.07$, $p = .36$). Although we hypothesized that the intervention would enhance self-control, leading to a relationship between changes in self-control and WtFI for the intervention group, this correlation was observed only in the control group, $r = .16$ ($p = .01$). While the intervention aimed to increase self-control, its effects on subsequent WtFI were multifaceted and warranted a detailed discussion.

Despite the absence of significant overall effects, a deeper analysis revealed notable interaction effects. When investigating the effects of the intervention accordingly in terms of self-control, it was found that there was a hypothesized interaction effect. By controlling for initial self-control scores, we aimed to account for the regression to the mean effect, ensuring that changes resulting from individuals with extreme initial scores moving towards the average are not misinterpreted as the effects of the intervention.

For Improvers in the intervention group, there was a significant increase in WtFI from T1 to T2. These improvements can be primarily attributed to (besides due to chance) the structured action planning and action control exercises that encouraged participants to set clear goals, monitor their progress, and develop consistent behaviors. This suggests that the initial phase of adopting new strategies to improve self-control may have temporarily increased cognitive and emotional demands, exacerbating feelings of interference between work and family responsibilities. The spline regression analysis provided additional insights, showing that the degree of self-control change had a significant impact on WtFI. Specifically, participants who experienced moderate improvements in self-control showed a positive

association with increased WtFI, meaning that as self-control improved, WtFI also increased. This finding aligns with existing literature, where greater exertion of self-control may deplete cognitive resources, leading to perceived interference due to the additional effort required (Externbrink et al., 2019). This result may highlight the potential "dark side" of self-control. Individuals who improved their self-control in the short term might have taken on additional responsibilities (Koval et al., 2015), leading to over-commitment (Hetland et al., 2012) and increased vulnerability to WtFI.

Interestingly, the results also showed that for participants who experienced higher increases in self-control, there was a negative relationship with WtFI, indicating that as self-control continued to increase significantly, WtFI actually decreased. This suggests that once individuals overcame the initial cognitive load associated with moderate self-control improvements, they may have developed more effective strategies to manage both work and family responsibilities. This finding supports the idea of Muraven and Baumeister (2000), who suggest that the benefits of self-control are most pronounced when there is a substantial change in self-regulatory behaviors.

These findings highlight a critical distinction in how self-control changes impact WtFI. Moderate increases in self-control may lead to short-term increases in WtFI due to the higher cognitive and emotional demands of self-regulation. However, larger increases in self-control seem to provide longer-term benefits, reducing WtFI as individuals develop more sustainable strategies for balancing these domains.

Notably, participants categorized as Reducers and Stables did not exhibit significant changes in WtFI over time, regardless of whether they were in the intervention or control group. These findings indicate that both a reduction and stability in self-control did not translate into noticeable fluctuations in WtFI, possibly due to established coping strategies or routines that

mitigate the impact of fluctuations in self-control (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007).

4.4.1. Limitations and Implications for Future Interventions

The findings underscore the complexities involved in changing self-control and WtFI through a self-regulation intervention. The results align with previous meta-analysis findings, indicating that repeated practice improves self-control with a smaller effect size than general treatment effects (Friese et al., 2017). This small effect size can be attributed to several factors: the design and implementation of the intervention, the intervention's length and duration, the measurement methods, and the inherent stability of the targeted behaviors and attitudes.

Previous research suggests that longer interventions are generally more effective (de Ridder et al., 2020). Although many previous training studies also used the strength model of self-control and a period of two weeks or less (Friese et al., 2017), this period may be too short in the current study to fully evaluate the training's effectiveness in achieving its goals. Future interventions should be designed with longer durations and increased intensity to produce more significant behavioral changes. Short-term interventions such as the one in the current study may not be sufficient to impact deeply ingrained behaviors and attitudes overall.

The self-control scale used may not have been ideal for capturing changes in our primary variable, with subjective measurements potentially leading to participants overestimating their abilities in initial assessments. Combining self-report measures with objective indicators (e.g., habit tracker, objective stress indicators) could offer a more comprehensive evaluation of the intervention's effects, mitigating biases associated with self-reports. The time and effort required to improve self-control, coupled with the absence of immediate benefits, may have led to participant disengagement, hindering the intervention's long-term positive effects (Ouellette & Wood, 1998). Moreover, the use of a single-item scale to measure stress presents another limitation. This choice was made for economic reasons, considering the length of the

questionnaire and the time required to complete it. Addressing these issues in future studies could enhance the understanding of the true efficacy of self-regulation interventions and their impact on self-control. Due to limited control over whether participants actually engaged in the intervention in the current study, incorporating advanced technological platforms for real-time monitoring and feedback on self-control in future studies can further improve adherence and data accuracy, helping to overcome limitations associated with remote interventions (e.g., Reinke & Ohly, 2024).

Despite these limitations, these findings underscore the importance of designing self-regulation interventions that not only enhance self-control skills but also address the cognitive and emotional demands placed on participants. While improving self-control is beneficial, moderate improvements may initially exacerbate WtFI as individuals adjust to new self-regulation strategies. Future interventions should aim to prevent over-commitment and cognitive overload, ensuring that the benefits of self-control on well-being are sustained in the long term. By considering the risk of taking on excessive responsibilities, we can develop more effective strategies that enhance employee well-being and work-life balance.

4.4.2. Conclusion

The findings of this study underscore the intricate nature of self-regulation interventions and their impact on WtFI. The data revealed that moderate improvements in self-control initially increase WtFI due to the cognitive demands of self-regulation; higher self-control gains appear to have long-term benefits, reducing WtFI. These findings underscore the importance of carefully considering the cognitive costs associated with self-regulation interventions and suggest that sustainable improvements in self-control may lead to better outcomes in managing work-family dynamics over time. The observed stability among Reducers and Stables indicates that existing coping mechanisms play a crucial role in managing

work-family dynamics. This highlights the importance of considering individual differences in baseline self-control and coping strategies when designing interventions.

By delving into the role of self-control, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how it interacts and influences work-family dynamics. This research lays the groundwork for developing more effective interventions aimed at improving health and well-being through sustainable behavior changes. By considering these factors, we can formulate strategies that better enhance employee well-being and work-life balance, ultimately leading to a more productive and satisfied workforce.

Chapter 5: General Discussion

5.1. Main Research Objectives and Outcomes

The scientific investigation of life goals and work-family interference, while different views depending on the background discipline, is prevalent; this thesis mainly integrates perspectives from Psychology and Sociology, as well as multiple theoretical frameworks to understand and predict their role in improving employee well-being. Utilizing the Work-Home Resources model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), the Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989), the Strength Model of Self-Regulation (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), and the Personal Resource Allocation framework (Grawitch et al., 2010), this thesis sought to answer and test the following research questions and hypotheses in Table 5.1 and Table 5.2.

Three distinct interconnected studies were conducted to address these research questions. The first study (Chapter 2) explored the theoretical link among work-family interference, well-being, and life goals, aiming to understand these relationships between all genders. Using data from Wave 8 (2015/2016) and Wave 10 (2017/2018) of the German Family Panel Survey (pairfam), structural equation modeling analyses were conducted. These results suggest that life goals may be one of the personal resources that can be used to manage work and family demands in the Work-Home Resources model (ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). The first study demonstrated that life goals significantly moderate the negative impacts of work-family interference on life satisfaction, showing that interference across life domains reduces overall satisfaction, particularly when primary life goals disrupt other domains. Specifically, those who prioritize agentic goals are negatively affected by work-to-family interference (WtFI) on life satisfaction, while those who prioritize communal goals are negatively affected by family-to-work interference (FtWI) on life satisfaction.

Table 5. 1

Research Questions and Hypotheses Across Studies

Research Question	Study (Chapter)	Hypothesis
1) How do life goals shape the relationship between work-family interference and well-being, and in what ways do they impact this relationship?	Study 1 & 2 (Chapter 2 & 3)	• Individuals predominantly pursuing agentic life goals are prone to experiencing more pronounced negative impacts of WtFI on life satisfaction compared to those primarily focused on communal goals or maintaining a balance between them (Moderation). • Individuals predominantly pursuing communal life goals are prone to experiencing more pronounced negative impacts of FtWI on life satisfaction compared to those primarily focused on agentic goals or maintaining a balance between them (Moderation). • Pursuing agentic life goals has a positive relationship with well-being. However, these goals may negatively impact well-being through WtFI (Mediation). • Pursuing communal life goals has a positive relationship with well-being. However, these goals may negatively impact well-being through FtWI (Mediation).
2) How do different gender roles in different cultural contexts (i.e., Turkish and German cultures) modify the relationship among the pursuit of different life goals, work-family interference, and overall well-being?	Study 1 & 2 (Chapter 2 & 3)	• Women who focus primarily on agentic life goals are likely to experience more substantial negative effects of WtFI on life satisfaction than their counterparts who predominantly pursue agentic life goals (in Germany). • Men who focus primarily on communal life goals are likely to experience more substantial negative effects of FtWI on life satisfaction than their counterparts who predominantly pursue communal life goals (in Germany). • Turkish women who pursue agentic life goals are likely to experience weaker positive effects on well-being and more negative effects from WtFI compared to German women with agentic life goals. • German men who pursue communal life goals are likely to experience weaker positive effects on well-being and more negative effects from FtWI compared to Turkish men with communal life goals.
3) How do varying levels of self-control modify the relationship among the pursuit of different life goals, work-family interference, and overall well-being?	Study 2 & 3 (Chapter 3 & 4)	• Individuals who pursue agentic life goals and have high self-control are likely to experience stronger positive effects on well-being and weaker positive effects on WtFI compared to those with lower self-control. • Individuals who pursue communal life goals and have high self-control are likely to experience stronger positive effects on well-being and weaker positive effects on FtWI compared to those with lower self-control.
4) What role do self-regulation interventions play in managing work-family interference?	Study 3 (Chapter 4)	• Individuals who improve their self-control through the intervention are likely to experience stronger positive effects from a reduction in WtFI compared to those whose self-control remained stable or reduced.

Table 5. 2

Summary of Hypotheses and Their Empirical Results

Hypothesis	Support Status
• Individuals predominantly pursuing agentic life goals are prone to experiencing more pronounced negative impacts of WtFI on life satisfaction compared to those primarily focused on communal goals or maintaining a balance between them (Moderation).	• Supported.
• Individuals predominantly pursuing communal life goals are prone to experiencing more pronounced negative impacts of FtWI on life satisfaction compared to those primarily focused on agentic goals or maintaining a balance between them (Moderation).	• Partially supported.
• Pursuing agentic life goals has a positive relationship with well-being. However, these goals may negatively impact well-being through WtFI (Mediation).	• Partially supported.
• Pursuing communal life goals has a positive relationship with well-being. However, these goals may negatively impact well-being through FtWI (Mediation).	• Partially supported.
• Women who focus primarily on agentic life goals are likely to experience more substantial negative effects of WtFI on life satisfaction than their counterparts who predominantly pursue agentic life goals (in Germany).	• Not supported.
• Men who focus primarily on communal life goals are likely to experience more substantial negative effects of FtWI on life satisfaction than their counterparts who predominantly pursue communal life goals (in Germany).	• Not supported.
• Turkish women who pursue agentic life goals are likely to experience weaker positive effects on well-being and more negative effects from WtFI compared to German women with agentic life goals.	• Partially supported.
• German men who pursue communal life goals are likely to experience weaker positive effects on well-being and more negative effects from FtWI compared to Turkish men with communal life goals.	• Not supported.
• Individuals who pursue agentic life goals and have high self-control are likely to experience stronger positive effects on well-being and weaker positive effects on WtFI compared to those with lower self-control.	• Not supported.
• Individuals who pursue communal life goals and have high self-control are likely to experience stronger positive effects on well-being and weaker positive effects on FtWI compared to those with lower self-control.	• Partially supported.
• Individuals who improve their self-control through the intervention are likely to experience stronger positive effects from a reduction in WtFI compared to those whose self-control remained stable or reduced.	• Not supported.

These findings aligned with Noor's (2004) study on role centrality, indicating that emphasizing goals in a specific domain increases sensitivity to stressors in that area, leading to heightened negative impacts on life satisfaction due to a perceived lack of control. While some literature indicated that individuals are willing to tolerate higher levels of work-family interference for domains they value more (Greenhaus et al., 2001; Matthews et al., 2012), current results showed that if the interference persists, the lack of return on resource investment and a sense of losing control over the targeted domain result in a greater decline in satisfaction compared to those who have not invested resources in that domain. It was found in the current study that there was no significant gender disparity in the influence of work-family interference on life satisfaction among individuals primarily focused on agentic or communal life goals. Namely, women and men with primarily agentic goals were similarly affected by the impact of WtFI on life satisfaction, and women and men with primarily communal goals were similarly affected by the impact of FtWI on life satisfaction. The social role theory (Eagly & Wood, 2012) posits that there are differences between men and women due to traditional gender roles. These differences are more pronounced in less egalitarian countries and less noticeable in more gender-egalitarian countries like Germany, where stereotypical gender expectations are less influential (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Kosakowska-Berezecka et al., 2023). In this respect, these results are consistent with social role theory, which says that in cultures where traditional gender roles are less dominant, the shared challenges of balancing demanding professional aspirations with family responsibilities might explain these similarities. In cultures where traditional gender roles are less dominant, the shared challenges of balancing demanding professional aspirations with family responsibilities might explain these similarities. Therefore, it is the centralization of specific life goals, regardless of gender roles in more egalitarian societies, that strengthens the negative impact of interference caused by the prioritized domain on life satisfaction.

Initial findings validated that life goals play a crucial role in shaping the association between work-family interference and life satisfaction. The specific content of life goals and the alignment of personal resources significantly influenced how individuals navigate work-family interference and maintain well-being. Building on these insights, the second study (Chapter 3) shifted the focus from examining life goals as a moderating factor to investigating them as a predictor. Understanding life goals as a predictor allowed us to explore how primary life goals shape the interplay between work-family interference and well-being. This approach is guided by existing literature, which highlights the importance of considering various dimensions of life goals in predicting outcomes related to well-being (Sheldon et al., 2004; MacLeod, 2012). These guided findings indicate that life goals can have both direct and indirect effects. It has been shown that individuals who prioritize family goals over work and leisure goals experience higher life satisfaction, mediated by family satisfaction, highlighting the direct impact of family-oriented life goals on well-being (Masuda & Sortheix, 2012). These results underline the importance of considering the mediating role of work-family interference, as the pursuit of life goals dictates how personal resources are allocated across different life domains.

Building on the theories mentioned above, the second study investigated the predictor role of life goals on work-family interference and their cumulative impact on life satisfaction and stress, including the moderator role of culture and self-control. It aimed to address the first three research questions mentioned above. The research focused on white-collar employees from both Germany and Türkiye and utilized cross-sectional and self-report survey data for analyses. The findings indicated that prioritizing specific life goals leads to one domain taking precedence, causing interference in other areas of life, and this interference, regardless of the type of life goal, indirectly reduced overall well-being. Specifically, as individuals place greater value on agentic goals, they experience more WtFI, while as they place greater value on

communal goals, they experience more FtWI, which ultimately negatively impacts their well-being.

In this study, a dual-perspective approach was employed: There were two narratives of the story. On the one hand, pursuing any life goal enhanced life satisfaction and presented a positive narrative. Confirming self-regulation theories, having goals brings a sense of fulfillment and life satisfaction (Emmons, 2003). On the other hand, excessive pursuit can lead to stress (Toth et al., 2018), especially when goals highlight deficiencies (Mayser et al., 2008). Since these pursuits require resource allocation, the more people prioritize a specific life goal, the more they experience a specific direction of work-family interference. Consequently, their life satisfaction levels decrease, and stress levels increase, forming a negative narrative. These findings align with previous boundary management research showing that individuals with a greater work focus experience more WtFI, while those with a stronger family focus face more FtWI (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kossek et al., 2012). Similarly, other research indicates that overworking, even voluntarily or because of motivation, can impair mental health, as the risks, such as WtFI, are often underestimated (Kuroda & Yamamoto, 2019; Virtanen et al., 2018).

Another aspect of the second study focused on the (cultural) differences between German and Turkish societies, using citizenship measurement to minimize the response burden. It is found that incongruence between life goals and societal gender role expectations negatively affects well-being. Specifically, German women enhance life satisfaction and eliminate stress by pursuing agentic goals valued by their community, consistent with previous literature (Myers & Diener, 1995; Sedikides et al., 2003). For Turkish women, endorsing agentic goals increases stress and reduces life satisfaction, suggesting misalignment with societal expectations suppresses positive effects. In contrast, there is no difference between German and Turkish men in the pursuit of communal goals concerning well-being, aligning with

literature suggesting that valuing communal goals is crucial for well-being regardless of cultural background (Abele, 2014; Le et al., 2018).

There was no significant difference in the impact of WtFI on the well-being of Turkish and German women with agentic goals. However, the effect of FtWI on life satisfaction, but not on stress, differed significantly between Turkish and German men with communal goals, with Turkish men experiencing more detrimental effects. These findings suggest that WtFI uniformly harms the well-being of women with agentic goals across cultures, as supported by the findings of a previous study (Kusnierz et al., 2022). However, in societies with pronounced gender inequalities, men who see themselves as family providers may experience a greater negative impact on life satisfaction from FtWI compared to those in more gender-equal societies (Allen et al., 2015).

The second study also examined the differences between low and high self-control groups. The findings showed no differences between these groups for individuals who prioritize agentic goals, suggesting that agentic life goals may already manifest themselves through a greater level of self-focus (Garcia et al., 2015; Saragovi et al., 1997). A significant difference was observed for those valuing communal goals, but contrary to expectations: The high self-control group experienced more FtWI than the low self-control group when emphasizing communal goals. High self-control individuals often take on more responsibilities (Koval et al., 2015), potentially leading to an underestimation of demands and an overestimation of their capacities (Hetland et al., 2012). Their confidence in handling their responsibilities might lead them to underestimate the actual demands they face, resulting in greater FtWI as they stretch themselves too thin across different domains. Additionally, consistent with existing literature, focusing on communal goals correlated with higher life satisfaction for the high self-control group compared to the low self-control group (de Ridder et al., 2012; Tangney et al., 2004). This dual aspect of self-control—both as a source of taking

on more responsibilities and as a buffer against stress—highlights the complex role self-control plays in managing work-family dynamics.

Drawing from the rather negative narrative, it was demonstrated that preventing work-family interference requires individuals to allocate their resources effectively while pursuing their goals. This means ensuring that the needs of both the work and family domains are met. One could imagine that achieving healthy resource allocation necessitates strong self-control skills (Baumeister et al., 2007; Muraven et al., 2006). Even though it has been shown before that higher self-control is associated with lower work-family interference (Chen et al., 2021), the current findings cross-sectionally revealed that individuals with relatively high self-control tend to experience greater FtWI. This counterintuitive result suggests that high self-control may not be sufficient alone to mitigate interference between family and work responsibilities. Consequently, a self-management training program was proposed with the aim of altering how individuals experience and manage work-family interference.

Lastly, the third study evaluated a novel intervention aimed at enhancing self-control to reduce WtFI among the same group of German white-collar employees from the second study, using longitudinal and self-report survey data for analysis. This experimental approach investigated valuable insights into the role of self-control in managing work-family dynamics, addressing a crucial gap in current research. The intervention was designed based on self-regulation theory (Vohs & Baumeister, 2004), implementation intentions (Gollwitzer et al., 2004), and Behavior Change Techniques (BCTs; Michie et al., 2013). Three groups were identified: Those whose self-control skills improved as an effect of the intervention, those whose skills remained the same, and those whose skills decreased, possibly due to gaining a more realistic understanding of self-control and reporting more accurate scores. The intervention was expected to have a more significant impact on the first group, as improved self-control would lead to better planning and control over actions, particularly in resource

allocation. The results provided a detailed understanding of how changes in self-control can influence WtFI.

Although the intervention did not significantly impact the self-control levels of the experimental group, and there was no significant difference in self-control levels between the experimental and control groups post-intervention, there was a notable difference in WtFI levels depending on changes in self-control. It was found that participants who improved their self-control during the two-week intervention initially experienced heightened WtFI. Upon closer examination, it was revealed that those with moderate self-control improvements experienced a temporary rise in WtFI, likely due to increased cognitive and emotional demands. However, participants with more substantial self-control improvements eventually experienced a decrease in WtFI, indicating that greater improvements may offer long-term benefits by reducing interference. In contrast, individuals whose self-control remained stable or declined showed no significant changes in WtFI, likely due to maintaining consistent coping mechanisms. These findings suggest that improving self-control, especially through interventions, can initially increase cognitive and emotional demands, temporarily heightening WtFI until new strategies become habitual and less taxing. Previous studies (Reinke & Ohly, 2024) demonstrated that engaging in action control and planning exercises enables the management of work-family dynamics, with the benefits of self-control being most pronounced when there is a substantial change in self-regulatory behaviors (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000).

5.2. Main Contributions

One of the primary contributions of this thesis is its elucidation of how life goals function as both predictors and moderators of work-family interference and its subsequent impact on well-being. While the work-family interference literature has underexplored individual factors influencing these dynamics (see Allen et al., 2020; Byron, 2005 for an overview), this thesis incorporates the concept of life goals, which provide direction and purpose to people's lives

(Baumeister, 2008). Life goals, alongside self-regulatory resources, are crucial for managing professional and personal demands, thereby maintaining overall well-being. However, the freedom to choose life goals also brings the freedom to choose one's struggles. Similar to how social support is examined in the literature as both a predictor and a moderator, life goals can directly determine resource loss and also serve as a mechanism to cope with this loss (French et al., 2018; Seiger & Wiese, 2009). By examining different types of life goals, such as agentic (career-oriented) and communal (family-oriented), this thesis highlights their significant influence on work-family interference and its subsequent effects on well-being. This dual role emphasizes the importance of understanding life goals not just as catalysts of interference but also as elements that modulate the impact of this interference on individual well-being. This thesis could also make a significant contribution to research on voluntary usage of information and communication technology. Individuals' perceptions of Information and Communication Technology use are shaped by their motivations (Schöllbauer et al., 2021); namely, those aiming for career advancement tend to use Information and Communication Technology more during non-work hours, increasing WtFI (Schlachter et al., 2018). Current results may suggest that individuals with communal goals may use non-work-related technology during work hours voluntarily, resulting in more FtWI.

This thesis further illuminates the critical impact of cultural and societal norms on the management of work-family interference and its repercussions on well-being. Previous studies have suggested that gender roles influence the effects of work-family interference differently, but the findings have been inconsistent (Hagqvist et al., 2017; Shockley et al., 2017). This thesis addresses this by considering the differential impact of work-family interference on men and women across various cultural contexts. By measuring individuals' pursued goals rather than relying solely on stereotypical cultural orientations, the research offers a more valid assessment, potentially explaining existing inconsistencies in the literature. The results

demonstrate that men and women, whether pursuing agentic or communal life goals, experience similar levels of impact from work-family interference on their well-being within the same society, as observed in Germany. However, societal expectations and cultural norms, especially in less egalitarian societies, can exacerbate these challenges (e.g., Drobnič et al., 2010). This is evident in the comparison between German and Turkish cultures; in more gender-equal societies like Germany, women who pursue agentic goals receive societal support, enhancing their life satisfaction. Conversely, in less egalitarian societies like Türkiye, traditional gender roles impose additional challenges for women with agentic goals, leading to reduced well-being. These cultural differences highlight the role of societal norms in shaping individual experiences of work-family interference and the varied well-being outcomes while pursuing life goals. Although cultural expectancies and gender roles may predispose certain groups to behave in specific ways, considering individuals' current circumstances within these contextual factors provides a better understanding of the outcomes. This thesis makes an important contribution to the literature by showing that the disparities observed are not merely gender-based but are deeply rooted in cultural values and expectations. Similar gender roles require different behavioral patterns in different societies, resulting in varied well-being outcomes. The empirical evidence from cross-cultural studies and the theoretical frameworks on cultural norms provide a robust basis for these conclusions[6].

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[6] As previously noted, the agentic and communal values supported by societies are not mutually exclusive. These values represent tendencies in how individuals may behave in certain situations. In every society, individuals can prioritize and pursue both life goals depending on the context. However, the structure of collectivist cultures may expose individuals to settings that promote communion norms more frequently, thus shaping their life goals in that direction. Additionally, the reasons for pursuing particular life goals are also significant. For example,

Lastly, this thesis explores the potential "dark side" of self-control in the context of work-family interference, revealing that while high self-control is generally seen as beneficial, it can paradoxically increase interference in certain conditions. The findings demonstrate that moderate increases in self-control can lead to heightened WtFI, likely due to the heightened cognitive and emotional demands associated with regulating both work and family life. However, the results also indicate that more substantial improvements in self-control can mitigate the negative effects, leading to reduced interference. This research challenges the conventional view that self-control uniformly reduces strain and highlights the importance of considering the short-term cognitive costs involved in improving self-regulatory capacity. By doing so, the thesis contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between self-control and work-family interference, suggesting that self-regulation interventions must account for these transitional costs to avoid unintended negative outcomes such as burnout. This perspective enriches the existing literature by emphasizing that the benefits of self-control are not immediate and may require sustained effort and becoming more habitual before yielding positive long-term outcomes.

Overall, this doctoral thesis contributes to the understanding of life goals, work-family interference, and well-being by offering a comprehensive framework that integrates key personal and macro-cultural resources. From an interdisciplinary viewpoint, the psychological and sociological foundations of the thesis provide insights into individual differences, perspectives on self-regulation and resource allocation, and the impact of cultural norms and societal expectations. This comprehensive approach not only enriches the theoretical landscape

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agentic life goals may be adopted for communal reasons, such as being successful at work to serve the family. The current hypotheses in this thesis have been developed with the aim of comparing the relative importance of these life goals across different cultures.

but also offers practical implications for individuals and organizations aiming to foster a better work-family balance and improve overall life satisfaction.

5.3. Practical Recommendations

It is crucial to consider practical contributions that can be implemented based on these findings. One significant area of focus is managing work-family interference by understanding life goals and their impact on employee well-being.

First, understanding life goals as both a predictor and moderator allows us to explore how life goals directly influence the interplay between work-family interference and well-being and exacerbate the impact of work-family interference on well-being. Recognizing how their goal endorsements influence their tendencies can empower employees to manage their work and family dynamics more effectively. To support this, targeted training and support systems such as coaching and mentoring programs, advisory services, and workshops designed to align personal and professional goals can equip employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to identify their unique needs based on their life goals and manage work-family interference. The role of social support is also crucial in managing work-family interference and enhancing well-being. Employees with agentic life goals tend to experience and be affected by WtFI, impacting their well-being. Instead of focusing solely on work to control this interference, they can seek support from their coworkers and managers to mitigate these effects. Conversely, employees with communal life goals tend to experience and be affected by FtWI, impacting their well-being. These individuals can benefit from increased support from family and friends, helping to prevent personal domain stressors from interfering with their work.

Recognizing the good and bad outcomes that life goals can lead to is crucial not only for individuals but also for organizations. To manage the well-being of their valuable workforce, developing tailored interventions for individuals with different goal endorsements is more effective. For organizations, the findings offer practical strategies for managing work-family

conflict and enhancing well-being. Tailored interventions focusing on managing WtFI specifically for employees with agentic life goals are crucial. Organizations should encourage familial support systems and promote a family-friendly workplace environment, especially for employees with communal life goals. Improving human resources professionals' skills to understand the diverse needs of employees based on their agentic and communal life goals and to recognize their work-family interference experiences. Organizations should also develop targeted guidelines for Information and Communication Technology use that accommodate different life goals. For instance, employees with agentic goals might benefit from structured breaks and clear boundaries for Information and Communication Technology use during non-work hours. Conversely, those with communal goals might need policies that allow for limited, purposeful use of non-work-related technology during work hours to manage family-related tasks without compromising work performance. This understanding enables professionals to offer the necessary support effectively.

Understanding the diverse needs of employees based on their life goals, gender, and cultural background is vital for effectively managing work-family interference and enhancing overall well-being. In different cultural settings, especially in gender-unequal contexts, women pursuing agentic goals and men pursuing communal goals experience varying impacts on well-being, as demonstrated by current findings. Therefore, cross-cultural sensitivity and tailored interventions are necessary to address these differences effectively. Promoting gender equality through programs and support groups can help mitigate the impact of societal gender norms on work-family dynamics. Cultural sensitivity in multinational companies is crucial. Organizations should adapt their practices to fit local cultural contexts, ensuring that interventions are relevant and effective across different regions. Increasing cross-cultural awareness among managers and employees can improve the effectiveness of work-life balance

strategies. Localized interventions that consider cultural differences can help create supportive environments that accommodate diverse life goals and work-family dynamics.

Additionally, while self-control is generally beneficial for managing demands, the current results reveal a more complex picture. Employees who moderately improved their self-control experienced an initial increase in work-family interference due to heightened cognitive and emotional demands. To mitigate this, employees should set realistic goals and be mindful of the potential for over-commitment. Programs aimed at managing work-family dynamics should focus not only on stress management and resource utilization but also on gradual, sustainable self-control development. Organizations should focus on developing the self-control skills of employees with lower levels of self-control while being mindful of the initial burden such efforts may impose. Interventions should be designed to gradually build self-control without overwhelming employees and should be offered over extended periods, allowing for a smoother integration of strategies into daily routines. This approach minimizes cognitive and emotional strain, leading to long-term improvements without the risk of burnout or negative outcomes.

In conclusion, implementing these practical contributions will create more supportive and balanced work environments, thereby enhancing employee well-being and organizational success while enabling people to pursue their life goals. By fostering an environment that recognizes and supports the diverse needs of employees, including training line managers, fostering a supportive climate, and providing managerial or collegial support, organizations can achieve sustainable success and maintain a competitive edge.

5.4. Main Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This doctoral thesis has several limitations that must be acknowledged to clarify the scope and areas for improvement. Firstly, while the first study utilized large-scale representative survey data from Germany, the primary data collected in the second study might

not fully represent the broader population. Future studies should strive to achieve a better balance in representativity. In the future, it is crucial to include more diverse samples, especially from various cultural contexts, to evaluate the universality of these findings effectively.

The cross-sectional design of the second study provides only a static snapshot of data, limiting the ability to make causal relationships and observe temporal dynamics. This design constrains the understanding of how life goals influence work-family interference and well-being, as well as the moderating roles of gender and culture. Additionally, common method bias may be present due to the reliance on self-reported data collected at a single point in time (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To better establish these causal relationships, future studies should adopt longitudinal designs, capturing temporal dynamics and causal relationships more comprehensively, thus enriching the understanding of the variables' interrelations.

Another critical issue is the measurement of some variables, and only subjective measures were taken. The use of a single-item self-control and life satisfaction instrument across all studies raises potential reliability concerns. Additionally, the method of measuring life goals by distributing 15 importance points among different domains has been criticized for potentially introducing biases in the first study. Using citizenship as a criterion for measuring culture is also insufficient. Future studies should consider more comprehensive measures, accounting for time and cost, and include both subjective and objective measures. Employing multi-item scales for measuring self-control, well-being, and culture will enhance the measurement reliability and reduce potential biases from the methods used in this study.

Furthermore, the design and duration of the intervention in the last study may have contributed to the small effect sizes observed in self-control improvements. Longer and more intensive interventions are generally more effective (Friese et al., 2017), suggesting that the current intervention duration might have been insufficient. Participant engagement posed

another challenge, particularly in the longitudinal studies. The demands on time and effort, coupled with the absence of immediate, noticeable benefits, may have led to participant disengagement, hindering long-term positive effects. Future interventions should extend the duration and intensity to produce significant behavioral changes. Extended follow-up assessments are needed to determine if the effects of training persist over time (Lippke et al., 2021). Maintaining participant engagement is crucial, and future interventions should incorporate strategies such as motivational elements and real-time feedback mechanisms to sustain engagement over time. Integrating advanced technological platforms for real-time monitoring and feedback could improve adherence and data accuracy, enhancing the effectiveness of interventions and providing continuous support to participants (e.g., Reinke & Ohly, 2024).

Future research should also consider additional factors, such as the role of collegial and family support, as well as the alignment between the life goals of employees and their partners. Social support can significantly buffer the impact of life goals on work-family interference and, in turn, the effects of work-family interference on overall well-being (French et al., 2018; Seiger & Wiese, 2009). The alignment between partners' life goals can further mitigate conflicts and enhance mutual support, fostering a more harmonious balance between work and family life (Booth-LeDoux et al., 2020; Schooreel & Verbruggen, 2016). Understanding how the pursuit of life goals and self-control leads to various outcomes can provide deeper insights into managing work-family dynamics and overall well-being. Future research should also explore the long-term effects of voluntary Information and Communication Technology use on work-family interference across different life goals. A longitudinal study could provide deeper insights into how these dynamics evolve over time, considering both agentic and communal goal endorsements. In addition, incorporating qualitative approaches in future research could offer a more comprehensive perspective, uncovering the underlying mechanisms and personal

contexts that shape these complex relationships. While goal endorsements may appear dichotomous at the surface level, deeper qualitative analysis could reveal the fundamental processes, highlighting why both life goals are important and the purposes they serve.

In summary, addressing these directions in future research will help develop more robust and generalizable findings, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding and improvement of balance between life domains and overall well-being while pursuing life goals. Combining the strengths of cross-sectional, longitudinal, and experimental designs offers a comprehensive approach to studying these intricate relationships.

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Appendix

Appendix of Chapter 2
Table A2. 1
Descriptive Statistics

Life-Goal Groups		WtFI Range 4–20 Mean (*SD*)	FtWI Range 4–20 Mean (*SD*)	Life Sat. T1 Range 1–10 Mean (*SD*)	Life Sat. T2 Range 1–10 Mean (*SD*)
Low Agentic–High Communal	Men (*n* = 673)	9.86 (3.43)	6.49 (2.44)	7.74 (1.53)	7.70 (1.50)
	Women (*n* = 634)	9.25 (3.56)	6.42 (2.62)	7.74 (1.53)	7.78 (1.42)
	Total (*n* = 1307)	9.57 (3.51)	6.46 (2.53)	7.74 (1.53)	7.74 (1.46)
High Agentic–Low Communal	Men (*n* = 375)	9.76 (3.54)	6.65 (2.34)	7.45 (1.53)	7.42 (1.57)
	Women (*n* = 312)	9.17 (3.60)	6.37 (2.63)	7.54 (1.67)	7.58 (1.54)
	Total (*n* = 687)	9.49 (3.58)	6.52 (2.48)	7.49 (1.59)	7.49 (1.56)
High Agentic–High Communal	Men (*n* = 313)	9.79 (3.26)	6.64 (2.54)	7.68 (1.27)	7.63 (1.35)
	Women (*n* = 349)	9.21 (3.76)	6.60 (2.61)	7.62 (1.46)	7.60 (1.58)
	Total (*n* = 662)	9.49 (3.54)	6.62 (2.58)	7.65 (1.38)	7.61 (1.48)
Total	Men (*n* = 1361)	9.82 (3.42)	6.57 (2.44)	7.64 (1.48)	7.61 (1.49)
	Women (*n* = 1295)	9.22 (3.62)	6.46 (2.62)	7.66 (1.55)	7.68 (1.50)
	Total (*n* = 2656)	9.53 (3.53)	6.51 (2.53)	7.65 (1.51)	7.64 (1.49)

Table A2. 2

Correlation Matrix

	Gender	LA_HC	HA_LC	HA_HC	WtFI	FtWI	Life Sat. T1	Life Sat. T2
Gender								
LA_HC	-.005							
	.800							
HA_LC	-.040*							
	.042							
HA_HC	.046*							
	.019							
WtFI	-.084***	.011	-.006	-.007				
	<.001	.582	.767	.737				
FtWI	-.021	-.022	.002	.024	.330***			
	.275	.248	.921	.217	<.001			
Life Sat. T1	.006	.056**	-.064***	.000	-.260***	-.216***		
	.747	.004	.001	.984	<.001	<.001		
Life Sat. T2	.026	.063***	-.061**	-.011	-.194***	-.158***	.474***	
	.187	.001	.002	.559	<.001	<.001	<.001	

Note: *p ≤ 0.05; **p ≤ 0.01; ***p ≤ 0.001.

Figure A2. 1

Changes in Mean Values of WtFI from T1 to T2 for Different Life-Goal Groups
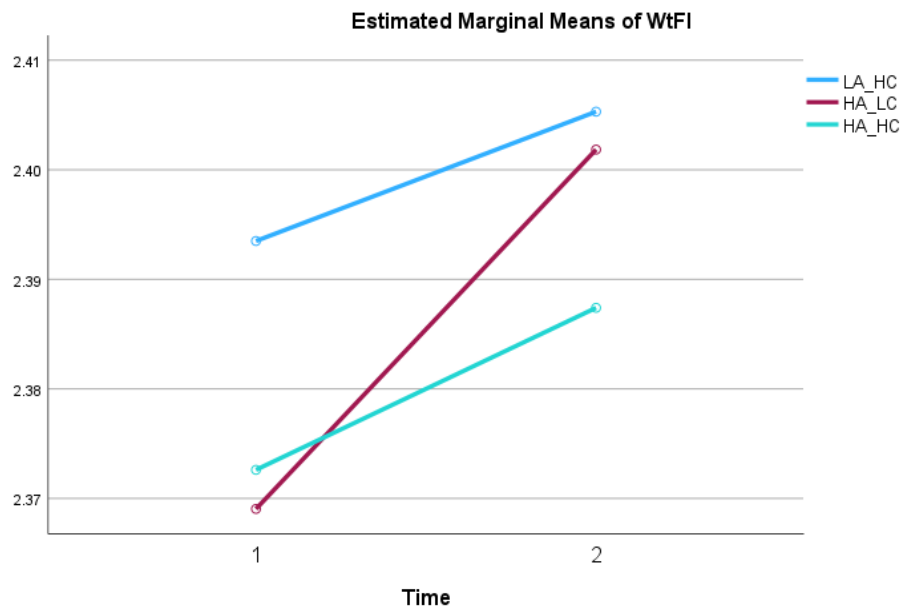
Estimated Marginal Means of WtFI

Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Married = ,5230, Full-Time Employed = ,6638, Have a Child = ,5994

Figure A2. 2

Changes in Mean Values of FtWI from T1 to T2 for Different Life-Goal Groups
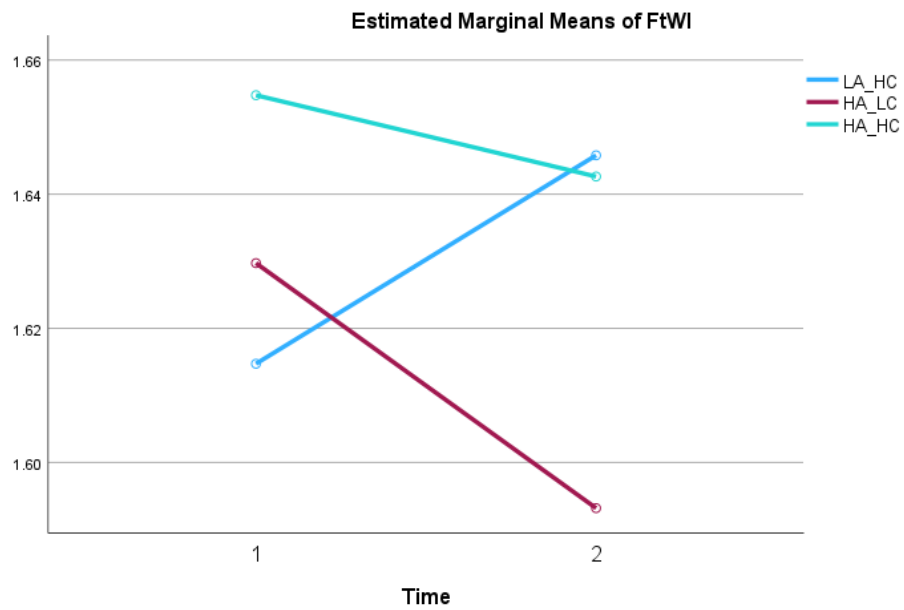
Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Married = ,5230, Full-Time Employed = ,6638, Have a Child = ,5994

Figure A2. 3

Changes in Life Satisfaction from T1 to T2 for Different Life-Goal Groups
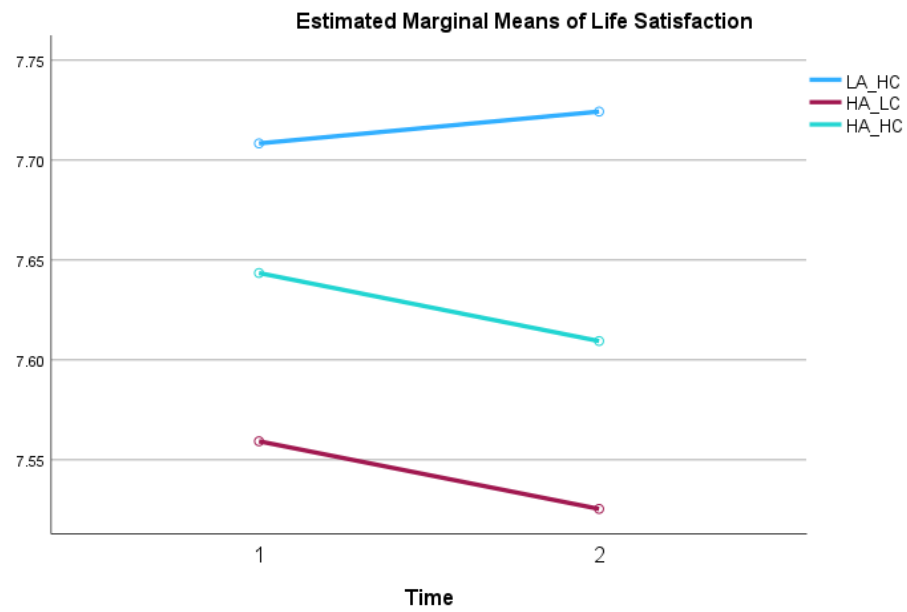
Estimated Marginal Means of Life Satisfaction

Covariates appearing in the model are evaluated at the following values: Married = ,5230, Full-Time Employed = ,6638, Have a Child = ,5994

Appendix of Chapter 3

Table A3. 1
Descriptive Statistics

Nationality		Agentic Goals Range 1-5		Communal Goals Range 1-5		WtFI Range 1–5		FtWI Range 1–5		Satisfaction Range 1-11		Stress Range 1-5		Self-Control Range 1-11	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Turkish	Male (*n* = 292)	3,97	0,60	4,09	0,55	2,89	1,07	2,48	0,96	7,13	2,26	3,23	1,22	8,07	1,63
	Female (*n* = 295)	4,09	0,61	4,11	0,56	3,09	1,06	2,37	0,90	7,02	2,10	3,33	1,22	8,06	1,63
	Divers (*n* = 3)	3,36	0,43	3,97	0,55	3,94	0,69	3,28	1,17	7,33	3,22	3,67	1,53	8,00	2,85
	Total (*n* = 590)	4,02	0,61	4,10	0,56	2,99	1,07	2,43	0,93	7,07	2,18	3,28	1,22	8,06	1,63
German	Male (*n* = 358)	3,25	0,70	3,44	0,66	2,49	0,99	2,11	0,92	7,47	1,86	2,83	1,12	7,95	1,54
	Female (*n* = 304)	3,14	0,66	3,64	0,54	2,56	0,99	2,01	0,89	7,50	1,93	3,04	1,13	7,71	1,65
	Total (*n* = 662)	3,20	0,68	3,53	0,61	2,52	0,99	2,06	0,91	7,48	1,89	2,92	1,13	7,84	1,59
Total	Male (*n* = 650)	3,57	0,75	3,73	0,69	2,67	1,05	2,28	0,95	7,32	2,05	3,01	1,18	8,00	1,58
	Female (*n* = 599)	3,61	0,79	3,87	0,60	2,82	1,06	2,19	0,91	7,26	2,03	3,18	1,18	7,88	1,65
	Divers (*n* = 3)	3,36	0,43	3,97	0,55	3,94	0,69	3,28	1,17	7,33	3,22	3,67	1,53	8,00	2,85
	Total (*n* = 1252)	3,59	0,77	3,80	0,65	2,74	1,05	2,24	0,93	7,29	2,04	3,09	1,18	7,94	1,61

Table A3. 2
Mean Level Differences

		Turkish - German	Male - Female	Turkish Male - Turkish Female	German Male - German Female	Turkish Male - German Male	Turkish Female - German Female
Agentic Goals	t-Test	22.677***	-.847	-2.324*	1.903*	14.039***	18.118***
	Latent Structure	20.206***	-.677	-2.438**	2.113*	12.941***	15.917***
Communal Goals	t-Test	17.331***	-3.785***	-.400	-4.286***	13.832***	10.560***
	Latent Structure	13.074***	-3.897***	-1.196	-4.247***	10.190***	8.326***
WtFI	t-Test	8.107***	-2.560**	-2.314*	-.896	4.889***	6.347***
	Latent Structure	7.991***	-2.541**	-2.290*	-1.017	4.774***	6.462***
FtWI	t-Test	7.032***	1.711	1.406	1.481	4.973***	4.986***
	Latent Structure	6.815***	1.621	1.219	1.613	4.530***	5.058***
Life Satisfaction	t-Test	-3.523***	.502	.629	-.167	-2.076*	-2.914**
One-Item	Latent Structure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Stress	t-Test	5.335***	-2.534**	-.955	-2.357*	4.320***	3.014***
One-Item	Latent Structure	-	-	-	-	-	-
Self-Control	t-Test	2.483**	1.315	.098	1.890*	1.011	2.588**
	Latent Structure	2.321*	1.225	.224	1.590	.904	2.544**

Table A3. 3

Correlation Matrix

	Agentic Goals	Communal Goals	WtFI	FtWI	Life Satisfaction	Stress
Agentic Goals						
Communal Goals	.704**					
WtFI	.250**	.172**				
FtWI	.281**	.186**	.597**			
Life Satisfaction	.042	.120**	-.327**	-.205**		
Stress	.203**	.170**	.527**	.409**	-.353**	

Note. ** $p < 0.01$

Table A3. 4

The Relationship between Agentic Goals, WtFI, Life Satisfaction, and Stress after Bootstrapping

Std. Indirect Effects	Estimates	Bias-Corrected CI
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	-.120	p=.000, 95% CI: -.155, -.089
Agentic -> Stress	.163	p=.000, 95% CI: .123, .205
Std. Direct Effects		
Agentic -> WtFI	.304	p=.000, 95% CI: .233, .369
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	.146	p=.000, 95% CI: .079, .213
Agentic -> Stress	.075	p=.020, 95% CI: .012, .138
WtFI -> Life Satisfaction	-.394	p=.000, 95% CI: -.452, -.332
WtFI -> Stress	.536	p=.000, 95% CI: .483, .585
Std. Total Effects		
Agentic -> WtFI	.304	p=.000, 95% CI: .233, .369
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	.027	p=.444, 95% CI: -.042, .095
Agentic -> Stress	.238	p=.000, 95% CI: .172, .304
WtFI -> Life Satisfaction	-.394	p=.000, 95% CI: -.452, -.332
WtFI -> Stress	.536	p=.000, 95% CI: .483, .585

Table A3. 5

The Relationship between Communal Goals, FtWI, Life Satisfaction and Stress after

Bootstrapping

Std. Indirect Effects	Estimates	Bias-Corrected CI
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	-.053	p=.000, 95% CI: -.080, -.031
Communal -> Stress	.079	p=.000, 95% CI: .048, .113
Std. Direct Effects		
Communal -> FtWI	.191	p=.000, 95% CI: .115, .265
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	.157	p=.000, 95% CI: .089, .226
Communal -> Stress	.121	p=.000, 95% CI: .055, .184
FtWI -> Life Satisfaction	-.276	p=.000, 95% CI: -.338, -.213
FtWI -> Stress	.413	p=.000, 95% CI: .362, .462
Std. Total Effects		
Communal -> FtWI	.191	p=.000, 95% CI: .115, .265
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	.105	p=.003, 95% CI: .035, .174
Communal -> Stress	.200	p=.000, 95% CI: .133, .264
FtWI -> Life Satisfaction	-.276	p=.000, 95% CI: -.338, -.213
FtWI -> Stress	.413	p=.000, 95% CI: .362, .462

Table A3. 6

The Relationship between Agentic Goals, WtFI, Life Satisfaction, and Stress after

Bootstrapping for Low Self Control Group

Std. Indirect Effects	Estimates	Bias-Corrected CI
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	-.119	p=.000, 95% CI: -.169, -.078
Agentic -> Stress	.152	p=.000, 95% CI: .103, .208
Std. Direct Effects		
Agentic -> WtFI	.310	p=.000, 95% CI: .214, .404
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	.061	p=.182, 95% CI: -.030, .155
Agentic -> Stress	.069	p=.138, 95% CI: -.022, .158
WtFI -> Life Satisfaction	-.384	p=.000, 95% CI: -.459, -.302
WtFI -> Stress	.491	p=.000, 95% CI: .415, .562
Std. Total Effects		
Agentic -> WtFI	.310	p=.000, 95% CI: .214, .404
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	-.058	p=.247, 95% CI: -.148, .037
Agentic -> Stress	.221	p=.000, 95% CI: .125, .313
WtFI -> Life Satisfaction	-.384	p=.000, 95% CI: -.459, -.302
WtFI -> Stress	.491	p=.000, 95% CI: .415, .562

Table A3. 7

The Relationship between Agentic Goals, WtFI, Life Satisfaction, and Stress after

Bootstrapping for High Self-Control Group

Std. Indirect Effects	Estimates	Bias-Corrected CI
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	-.126	p=.000, 95% CI: -.179, -.082
Agentic -> Stress	.185	p=.000, 95% CI: .126, .247
Std. Direct Effects		
Agentic -> WtFI	.324	p=.000, 95% CI: .221, .416
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	.157	p=.001, 95% CI: .058, .262
Agentic -> Stress	.094	p=.042, 95% CI: .004, .182
WtFI -> Life Satisfaction	-.389	p=.000, 95% CI: -.480, -.294
WtFI -> Stress	.570	p=.000, 95% CI: .492, .641
Std. Total Effects		
Agentic -> WtFI	.324	p=.000, 95% CI: .221, .416
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	.032	p=.510, 95% CI: -.066, .142
Agentic -> Stress	.278	p=.000, 95% CI: .180, .368
WtFI -> Life Satisfaction	-.389	p=.000, 95% CI: -.480, -.294
WtFI -> Stress	.570	p=.000, 95% CI: .492, .641

Table A3. 8

The Relationship between Communal Goals, FtWI, Life Satisfaction, and Stress after

Bootstrapping for Low Self Control Group

Std. Indirect Effects	Estimates	Bias-Corrected CI
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	-.051	p=.001, 95% CI: -.088, -.020
Communal -> Stress	.062	p=.001, 95% CI: .025, .103
Std. Direct Effects		
Communal -> FtWI	.164	p=.001, 95% CI: .064, .263
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	.068	p=.138, 95% CI: -.023, .162
Communal -> Stress	.143	p=.002, 95% CI: .057, .225
FtWI -> Life Satisfaction	-.309	p=.000, 95% CI: -.385, -.228
FtWI -> Stress	.380	p=.000, 95% CI: .309, .448
Std. Total Effects		
Communal -> FtWI	.164	p=.001, 95% CI: .064, .263
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	.018	p=.694, 95% CI: -.076, .117
Communal -> Stress	.205	p=.000, 95% CI: .116, .291
FtWI -> Life Satisfaction	-.309	p=.000, 95% CI: -.385, -.228
FtWI -> Stress	.380	p=.000, 95% CI: .309, .448

Table A3. 9

The Relationship between Communal Goals, FtWI, Life Satisfaction, and Stress after

Bootstrapping for High Self Control Group

Std. Indirect Effects	Estimates	Bias-Corrected CI
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	-.065	p=.000, 95% CI: -.116, -.031
Communal -> Stress	.124	p=.000, 95% CI: .073, .190
Std. Direct Effects		
Communal -> FtWI	.285	p=.000, 95% CI: .169, .404
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	.169	p=.002, 95% CI: .058, .288
Communal -> Stress	.110	p=.057, 95% CI: -.004, .210
FtWI -> Life Satisfaction	-.229	p=.000, 95% CI: -.327, -.128
FtWI -> Stress	.436	p=.000, 95% CI: .356, .510
Std. Total Effects		
Communal -> FtWI	.285	p=.000, 95% CI: .169, .404
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	.104	p=.053, 95% CI: -.002, .218
Communal -> Stress	.234	p=.000, 95% CI: .131, .332
FtWI -> Life Satisfaction	-.229	p=.000, 95% CI: -.327, -.128
FtWI -> Stress	.436	p=.000, 95% CI: .356, .510

Table A3. 10

The Relationship between Agentic Goals, WtFI, Life Satisfaction, and Stress after

Bootstrapping for German Women

Std. Indirect Effects	Estimates	Bias-Corrected CI
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	-.156	p=.000, 95% CI: -.262, -.076
Agentic -> Stress	.168	p=.000, 95% CI: .083, .270
Std. Direct Effects		
Agentic -> WtFI	.322	p=.000, 95% CI: .161, .482
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	.337	p=.000, 95% CI: .191, .479
Agentic -> Stress	.042	p=.585, 95% CI: -.113, .193
WtFI -> Life Satisfaction	-.484	p=.000, 95% CI: -.609, -.363
WtFI -> Stress	.521	p=.000, 95% CI: .403, .621
Std. Total Effects		
Agentic -> WtFI	.322	p=.000, 95% CI: .161, .482
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	.181	p=.024, 95% CI: .021, .332
Agentic -> Stress	.210	p=.010, 95% CI: .053, .355
WtFI -> Life Satisfaction	-.484	p=.000, 95% CI: -.609, -.363
WtFI -> Stress	.521	p=.000, 95% CI: .403, .621

Table A3. 11

The Relationship between Agentic Goals, WtFI, Life Satisfaction, and Stress after

Bootstrapping for Turkish Women

Std. Indirect Effects	Estimates	Bias-Corrected CI
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	-.076	p=.011, 95% CI: -.147, -.019
Agentic -> Stress	.095	p=.009, 95% CI: .022, .166
Std. Direct Effects		
Agentic -> WtFI	.202	p=.012, 95% CI: .044, .344
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	.035	p=.658, 95% CI: -.105, .168
Agentic -> Stress	.136	p=.036, 95% CI: .008, .256
WtFI -> Life Satisfaction	-.379	p=.000, 95% CI: -.488, -.262
WtFI -> Stress	.470	p=.000, 95% CI: .366, .562
Std. Total Effects		
Agentic -> WtFI	.202	p=.012, 95% CI: .044, .344
Agentic -> Life Satisfaction	-.042	p=.568, 95% CI: -.181, .100
Agentic -> Stress	.230	p=.002, 95% CI: .087, .359
WtFI -> Life Satisfaction	-.379	p=.000, 95% CI: -.488, -.262
WtFI -> Stress	.470	p=.000, 95% CI: .366, .562

Table A3. 12

The Relationship between Communal Goals, FtWI, Life Satisfaction and Stress after

Bootstrapping for German Men

Std. Indirect Effects	Estimates	Bias-Corrected CI
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	-.017	p=.078, 95% CI: -.064, .002
Communal -> Stress	.052	p=.110, 95% CI: -.013, .134
Std. Direct Effects		
Communal -> FtWI	.119	p=.122, 95% CI: -.034, .288
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	.312	p=.000, 95% CI: .161, .448
Communal -> Stress	.048	p=.493, 95% CI: -.093, .182
FtWI -> Life Satisfaction	-.139	p=.019, 95% CI: -.252, -.023
FtWI -> Stress	.434	p=.000, 95% CI: .337, .526
Std. Total Effects		
Communal -> FtWI	.119	p=.122, 95% CI: -.034, .288
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	.296	p=.000, 95% CI: .149, .428
Communal -> Stress	.100	p=.169, 95% CI: -.043, .240
FtWI -> Life Satisfaction	-.139	p=.019, 95% CI: -.252, -.023
FtWI -> Stress	.434	p=.000, 95% CI: .337, .526

Table A3. 13

The Relationship between Communal Goals, FtWI, Life Satisfaction and Stress after

Bootstrapping for Turkish Men

Std. Indirect Effects	Estimates	Bias-Corrected CI
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	-.016	p=.415, 95% CI: -.065, .026
Communal -> Stress	.022	p=.434, 95% CI: -.036, .087
Std. Direct Effects		
Communal -> FtWI	.054	p=.442, 95% CI: -.095, .206
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	.218	p=.001, 95% CI: .089, .336
Communal -> Stress	.091	p=.188, 95% CI: -.046, .221
FtWI -> Life Satisfaction	-.285	p=.000, 95% CI: -.397, -.171
FtWI -> Stress	.400	p=.001, 95% CI: .285, .504
Std. Total Effects		
Communal -> FtWI	.054	p=.442, 95% CI: -.095, .206
Communal -> Life Satisfaction	.203	p=.003, 95% CI: .069, .328
Communal -> Stress	.113	p=.128, 95% CI: -.033, .250
FtWI -> Life Satisfaction	-.285	p=.000, 95% CI: -.397, -.171
FtWI -> Stress	.400	p=.001, 95% CI: .285, .504

Appendix of Chapter 4

Table A4.

Intervention and Control Group Differences Regarding Baseline Self-Control Scores

Group	Self-Control T1				Self-Control T2			
	Below Median	Median	Above Median	Total	Below Median	Median	Above Median	Total
Control	119	26	113	258	120	32	105	257
Intervention	80	23	80	183	94	14	72	180
Total	199	49	193	441	214	46	177	437

Note. No significant differences were found between intervention and control groups in baseline, $\chi^2(2) = .736$, $p = .69$, and in post-intervention, $\chi^2(2) = 2.88$, $p = .24$.

Figure A4.

Action Planning and Action Control Exercise

Planning JOURNAL

Let's think about Alex, who got distracted by notifications on their phone while trying to play with their kids after coming home. Let's see how Alex could have maintained a planning journal:

ACTIONS

- I will turn off notifications for work-related apps on my phone.

WHEN	**WHERE**
At the end of working hours.	At home or on the way there.

IF SOMETHING CROPS UP	**THEN**
I receive a call from my manager,	I will verify whether the call is urgent.
If it's urgent,	I will arrange a time to do the work when the children are in bed.

NEW STRATEGIES FOR THE NEXT TIME

- I will inform my manager about my new decisions.

Declaration of Own Contribution

I hereby declare that this dissertation has been produced by myself. No unauthorized aids were used. I declare that all citations, excerpts, and ideas of others are indicated.

Chapter 2 was co-authored with Sonja Drobnič and Klaus Boehnke, and Chapter 4 was co-authored with Sonia Lippke. I am the corresponding author and made the main contributions to each paper.

I permit the review of the thesis via qualified software in case of an accusation of plagiarism.

No part of the thesis has been accepted or submitted for any other qualification at the University of Bremen, Constructor University Bremen, or any other university.

Gamze Ipek   Bremen,