



All in the name of work? Nonwork orientations as predictors of salary, career satisfaction, and life satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Career development increasingly demands a successful integration of work and nonwork domains. Based on work-nonwork conflict and enrichment theories, this study explored the relationship between nonwork orientations (i.e., family, personal life, and community) and both objective (i.e., salary) and subjective (i.e., career satisfaction) career success and life satisfaction over a period of six months among a sample of 548 employees from Germany. The results generally support the enrichment perspective. Family orientation showed a positive relationship with career satisfaction. All three nonwork orientations, especially family orientation, were positively related to life satisfaction. We also explored gender and age effects but found no differences in nonwork orientations between young employees aged 25–34 years and older workers aged 50–59 years. Men showed lower levels of personal life orientation than women, but no differences in family or community orientation based on gender were found. We also did not observe gender x age interaction effects. We discuss the study's implications for a whole-life perspective on career development, career success, and well-being.

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1. Introduction

The increase in flexible work arrangements, the raising number of women in the workforce, and generational shifts in work values have led to increased interrelatedness between the work and nonwork domains (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014). As a result, most people's career development is strongly influenced by nonwork roles as many work decisions, such as whether to enter or exit a job, whether to pursue self-employment, or whether to expatriate, are affected by factors outside the work domain (Powell & Greenhaus, 2010). However, existing research has largely focused on work-family issues and has not sufficiently accounted for the potentially profound effects of other nonwork domains besides the family domain on individuals' careers (Hall, Kossek, Briscoe, Pichler, & Lee, 2013). Moreover, while investigations on multiple role commitment have generally shown positive effects on well-being (Barnett, 2008), research has largely ignored, or produced contradictory results, regarding how consideration of diverse nonwork roles affects career outcomes (Graves, Ohlott, & Ruderman, 2007; Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002; Weer, Greenhaus, & Linnehan, 2010). To understand the nature of contemporary careers, it is vital to obtain a better understanding of how individuals consider nonwork roles when managing their careers and of what such a consideration implies for career outcomes (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014).

In an attempt to deepen the understanding of how career development is linked with nonwork roles, Hall et al. (2013) proposed that research must consider individual differences in people's orientations toward various life roles, including—but not

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limited to—family roles. Such nonwork orientations (NWOs) refer to the degree of concern that one has for other roles relative to one's career (Hall et al., 2013). However, the extent to which these NWOs are related to career and well-being outcomes remains unexamined. This gap is important to address because a work-nonwork perspective on careers urges researchers to examine whether employees who take nonwork considerations into account when managing their careers experience greater satisfaction in their careers and their lives (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014).

Drawing on theories of work-nonwork conflict and enrichment, we addressed this issue and investigated the extent to which NWOs are related to objective (i.e., salary) and subjective (i.e., career satisfaction) indicators of career success. Moreover, we examined how NWOs are related to life satisfaction. In addition, we considered gender and age as potentially important factors to explain individual differences in NWOs and their functioning. Addressing these issues makes several contributions to the literature. First, it significantly advances our understanding of how the endorsement of NWOs is related to career success and well-being outcomes. Second, it enriches our understanding of individual differences in the endorsement of NWOs for different gender and age groups. Third, it provides novel insights into whether NWOs have differential effects on career success and well-being for different types of employees. As such, our paper makes a contribution to the more general understanding of contemporary forms of work and careers that are at the intersection of the work and nonwork spheres of life (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014).

1.1. NWOs as a new construct linking nonwork roles and career outcomes

Hall et al. (2013) introduced the concept of NWOs as a reaction to the nonspecific treatment of diverse nonwork related domains (e.g., family, self, community, or leisure) in past research. The authors conceptualized NWOs in contrast to a solely career-focused orientation and to assess concerns for nonwork roles relative to career. Based on a literature review and qualitative case studies, three different types of NWOs were proposed. A *family orientation* was defined as “the degree to which one attaches importance to family needs relative to one's career role” (Hall et al., 2013, p. 541). An orientation toward *personal life* was defined as “a focus on the time for oneself to pursue personal interests (e.g., hobbies, learning, the arts, and exercise), whereas at the same time engaging in a career” (Hall et al., 2013, p. 541). Finally, a *community service orientation* was described as a “high concern for being able to engage in service to the community where one lives at the same time one is pursuing a career” (Hall et al., 2013, p. 541). Hall et al. (2013) then developed an NWO scale that captures these three dimensions. The three dimensions were distinct but moderately interrelated. Furthermore, the validation study showed positive relationships of the three NWOs with a protean career orientation, a self-directed orientation and a values-driven orientation toward career management.

Although empirical research on NWOs specifically is only emerging, many studies have investigated consequences of the closely related constructs of role centrality, role commitment, and role involvement, mostly regarding the job and family roles. Role centrality has been defined as the relative value the individual places on a role identity and the time and energy invested in a role (Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy, & Hannum, 2012). Role commitment can be defined as the extent to which somebody is willing to commit personal resources to assure success in the role or to develop the role (Amatea, Cross, Clark, & Bobby, 1986). Role involvement is defined as the degree to which the individual identifies with a role and the importance of the role in one's life (Brown, 1996). Although these concepts show nuanced differences, they can be regarded as specific indicators of a more general role commitment construct (Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005).

Meta-analyses investigating job and family involvement have shown that people with higher job involvement generally report more work-family conflict while smaller or nonsignificant effects have been observed for family involvement (Byron, 2005; Michel, Kotrba, Mitchelson, Clark, & Balties, 2011). However, other meta-analyses suggest that a higher involvement in the work role is generally positively related to job satisfaction and performance (Brown, 1996; Cooper-Hakim & Viswesvaran, 2005; Lee, Carswell, & Allen, 2000). Moreover, meta-analysis on career success showed that job involvement, work centrality, and occupational commitment are positively related to salary (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005; Ng & Feldman, 2014a), promotions (Ng et al., 2005) and subjective career success (Ng & Feldman, 2014b; Ng et al., 2005). However, these studies did not examine effects of involvement in other life roles relative to the involvement in the work role.

Research investigating effects of involvement in multiple roles generally supported the expansionist hypotheses, that engagement in multiple roles is generally positively related to increased well-being and resilience (Barnett, 2008). These effects are likely to occur because multiple roles can buffer negative effects of one role by success and satisfaction in another role, increase self-complexity, and provide multiple opportunities for success experiences and a sense of confidence in various roles (Barnett, 2008). However, while several studies reported positive effects of involvement in multiple roles on general well-being, as well as on job and family satisfaction (e.g., Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Grawitch, Maloney, Barber, & Mooshegian, 2013; Kirchmeyer, 1992; Ruderman et al., 2002), few studies have investigated how commitment to multiple roles is related to career success outcomes. Moreover, the few existing studies provided inconclusive results. Ruderman et al. (2002) found that among female managers, commitment to multiple roles was positively related to an increased sense of effectiveness in the management role in addition to higher life satisfaction, self-esteem, and self-acceptance. In a study among male and female managers Graves et al. (2007) found that family role commitment was not related to family-to-work interference but had a positive effect on career satisfaction and performance, partially mediated by family-to-work enhancement. However, in a study of female legal secretaries, Weer et al. (2010) found that an extensive commitment to nonwork roles was overall negatively related with job performance because of negative effects of expended emotional energy on nonwork roles that surpassed the more minor positive indirect effects through resources acquired from nonwork roles. Hence, there is a need to better understand how the involvement in multiple life roles is related to career success outcomes.

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