

# **The relation between work-life balance crafting, work engagement and life satisfaction of dual-earner couples.**

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between work-life balance crafting and work engagement as well as life satisfaction, with work-life balance as mediator. Due the increase of dual-earner couples in the society, this study also focuses on crossover between partners. In total 55 German dual-earner couples participated in this study (55 women, 55 men). The results of the study showed, that work-life balance crafting is related to life satisfaction. The work-life balance was mediating this relation. Work-life balance crafting was not related to work engagement. Moreover, there is a crossover for life satisfaction and work engagement, but not for work-life balance crafting. It can be concluded that work-life balance crafting does increase one's life satisfaction and that there is a relation between life satisfaction and work engagement indicating that spillover might occur between the work domain and the general life domain. Another conclusion is, that one's life satisfaction and work engagement is related with his/her partner's life satisfaction and work engagement.

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Work-Life Balance

During the last years, psychologists are focussing more and more on the health and well-being of employees rather than just on increasing their performance (Peeters, de Jonge, & Taris, 2014). One aspect which influences the well-being of people is the "work-life balance" (Kinnunen, Rantanen, Mauno, & Peeters, 2014). Work-life balance is described as 'good functioning and satisfaction at home and at work' (Campbell Clark, 2000). According to the literature, work can have influence on non-work-related life situations and vice versa. This is known as the "work-to-family interference" or "family-to-work interference", which can either have positive or negative influences on the person's well-being. According to Kinnunen et al. (2014) in the last 20 years, the borders have become blurrier between people's professional life and their non-work life. This is because people tend to have everywhere excess to work related situations. This reduces their personal recovery time which is affecting their well-being. Another factor that influences the well-being of dual-earner couples is, that both partners want to work but also want to be involved in family life simultaneously. Currently, employees emphasize the values of free time and social interaction within their immediate community to focus on the social aspects of life (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2013). Factors like the increase of dual earner families and single parents, the excess to work due to modern technology, flexible work as well as the global competitive market for organisations and employees, increased the attention of work psychologists for balancing the demands of family and work (Kinnunen, Rantanen, Mauno, & Peeters, 2014).

Research shows that work-life balance can have impact on the perceived satisfaction and motivation of employees (Sturges, 2012; Dex & Scheibl, 1999; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). An employer or an organization is able to provide several official techniques and policies to foster the work-life balance of the employees, like flexible work time as well as a flexible workplace, part-time contracts and maternal/paternal leave (Sturges, 2012; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2013). However, what can employees themselves do to balance their professional and non-work life? An option for employees would be work-life balance crafting.

### 1.2 Work-Life Balance Crafting

#### *1.2.1 Definition*

According to Sturges (2012) there has not been much research about work-life balance crafting. Work-life balance crafting can be seen as behavior or individual activities and unofficial techniques to create a balance between work and family life, like creating clear lines between work and family related situations. By actively crafting a balance, people are fulfilling both work and family demands and they also create more opportunities for recovery, which supports their well-being. Sturges (2012) also explains that crafting the work-life balance is considered to be proactive (Campbell Clark, 2000), self-initiated (Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999) and goal oriented behaviour (Parker, Bindl, & Strauss, 2010). People can apply different, unofficial techniques on physical, cognitive, and relational level to craft their balance. Therefore, work-family balance crafting has similarities with job crafting (Sturges, 2012).

### *1.2.2 Job Crafting*

Job crafting is described as an individual process to shape one's job by changing the perception of one's task or by making physical changes (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Demerouti & Bakker, 2014). People craft their job to create an individual healthier work environment, to improve their work motivation and to create a better person-job fit (Petrou, Demerouti, Peeters, Schaufeli & Hetland, 2012; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2011).

According to the job demands-resources model (JD-R model) of Bakker and Demerouti (2007) job crafting can take three forms: 1) increasing challenging job demands and 2) increasing job resources as well as 3) decreasing of hindering job demands (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012). For increasing job resources Tims et al. (2012) made a differentiation between social job resources and structural job resources. Tims et al. (2012) investigated that job crafting, in terms of increasing challenging job demands and job resources, is positively correlated with work engagement. The fact that job crafting is positively correlated with work engagement (Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2012) and that work-life balance crafting has some similarities with job crafting (Sturges, 2012) makes it interesting to examine if crafting the work-life balance also increases work engagement.

### *1.2.3 Life Satisfaction*

As already mentioned, the definition of work-life balance includes the satisfaction of people at home and at work (Campbell Clark, 2000), hence it does have impact on the satisfaction of people (Sturges, 2012; Dex & Scheibl, 1999; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). Since work-life balance crafting can be seen as proactive, self-initiated and goal oriented behavior of an individual (Sturges, 2012) it might as well increase the individual life satisfaction.

Therefore the first two hypotheses for this study are (see Figure 1):

Hypothesis 1a. Work-life-balance crafting relates positively with work engagement.

Hypothesis 1b. Work-life-balance crafting relates positively with life satisfaction.

#### *1.2.4 Work-Life Balance as Mediator*

Over the last years there has been much research about the relation between job demands and exhaustion as well as the mediating effect of work-to-family interference. On one hand, Demerouti, Bakker and Schaufeli (2005) showed that work-to-family interference fully mediated the relation between exhaustion and job demands. On the other hand, they did not find any significant evidence for work-to-family interference as mediator of the relationship between life satisfaction and job demands (Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005). Therefore it is important to consider the mediational influence of work-life balance on the relationship between work life balance crafting and work engagement as well as life satisfaction. For example, if a person does already have a good work-life balance due to official policies of his/her employer, to what extent would he/she use individual and unofficial techniques to craft his/her work-life balance? Another fact why the work-life balance might mediate the relationship, is that people, who have a good work-life balance which influences their well-being, might rather be able to behave in a proactive, self-initiative and goal oriented way to craft their balance. Hence, it is necessary to test if work-life balance is partially mediating the relationship between work-life balance crafting and work engagement. The mediating effect of work-life balance might also be true for the relation of work-life balance crafting and life satisfaction. This is supported by the fact that research has shown that work-life balance has impact on satisfaction (Sturges, 2012; Dex & Scheibl, 1999; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999).

Thus the next two hypotheses for this study are (see Figure 1):

Hypothesis 2a. Work-life-balance partially mediates the relationship between work-life-balance crafting and work engagement.

Hypothesis 2b. Work-life-balance partially mediates the relationship between work-life-balance crafting and life satisfaction.

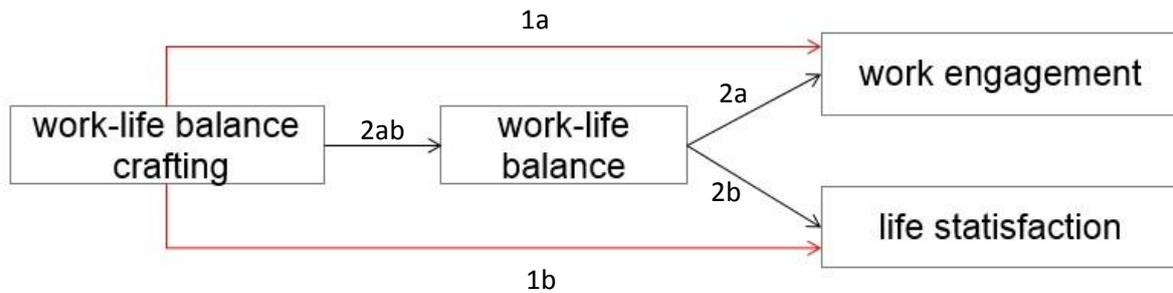


Figure 1: Research model (partly)

### 1.3 Crossover and Spillover

Crossover is defined as an inter-individual process in which experience of one person leads to reactions of another person within the same domain (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2013). For example, if a person experiences exhaustion in a non-work life situation, the partner's experience of exhaustion can also be affected in the non-work life situation. Crossover can be either positive and effective or negative and disruptive. In general there has not been much research about crossover (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2013).

Another related effect is spillover (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2013). Spillover is defined as intra-individual process in which skills, emotions, or behaviour of one domain influence the person's emotions, skills, or behavior in another life domain (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2013). For example, if a person experience stress at work, he/she will also experience stress at home. Like crossover, spillover can be either positive and effective or negative and disruptive (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2013).

In their own research about crossover and spillover Bakker, Demerouti and Burke (2009) investigated that workaholics do face spillover from work to private life and that this led to a crossover in their partnership, since the partners were less satisfied with their relations. Thus it might be interesting to investigate if dual-earner couples do face spillover between life satisfaction and work engagement. Another research of Demerouti, Bakker and Schaufeli (2005) showed that there is spillover and crossover between partners when it comes

to life satisfaction and job exhaustion in relation with job demands and work-to-family interference as mediator. They investigated that being confronted with high job demands will negatively interfere with family life. This had an increasing effect on women’s feeling of exhaustion and a decreasing effect on men’s life satisfaction, which were consequently transferred to their partners (Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005). Hence it might be interesting to examine, if there is also crossover of work-life balance crafting between partners. This would imply that the work-life balance crafting of partner A is related to the work-life balance crafting of partner B which results in a crossover of work engagement and life satisfaction of both partners. Due to the fact that this study was conducted among partners who both are actively involved in the labour market, it is expected that the crossover is bi-directional (Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005).

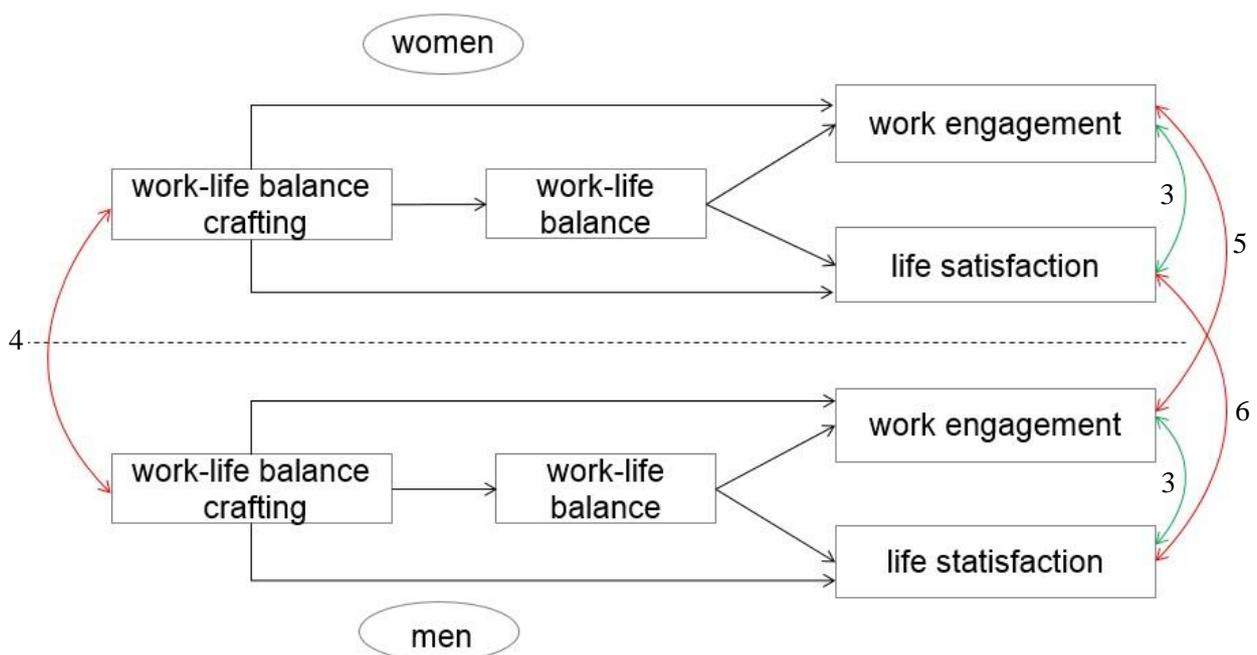
The final four hypotheses for this study are (see Figure 2):

Hypothesis 3. There is spillover between work engagement and life satisfaction in such a way that there is a positive relationships between both variables.

Hypothesis 4. There is bi-directional crossover of work-life balance crafting between both partners.

Hypothesis 5. There is bi-directional crossover of work engagement between both partners.

Hypothesis 6. There is bi-directional crossover of life satisfaction between both partners.



*Figure 2: Spillover (green line) and crossover (red line) of work-life balance crafting, work engagement and life satisfaction between both partners.*

## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Procedure

The data was collected by an online survey which was provided by the website [www.thesistools.com](http://www.thesistools.com). The link of the survey was send in April 2014 to the participants by email or via Facebook and the test persons were able to fill in the survey online. The email addresses were provided via several networks. The first network was a guest list of people who attended a course during January and April 2014 at an adult education centre in Donndorf. The other networks, which were used to collect email addresses, are a car rental company from Munich, the German protestant church in Amsterdam, two high schools in Thuringia, inhabitants of Kleve and the Kyffhäuser region as well as personal contacts across Germany. The link of the website was send to more than 200 couples but the response rate was low. In total 55 dual-earner couples participated. Every partner was asked to fill out the survey independently. To link the response of both partners, the test persons were asked to fill in the first two letters of the given name in addition to last to numbers of the birth year of both partners (e.g. ka73ma69). After collecting and matching the data the personal code was replace by a couple number (1-55). By using those methods the participation was voluntary and the collection of data was anonymously.

### 2.2 Participants

For this quantitative research German speaking couples were asked to participate. A requirement for the participation was to be active in the labour market. There was no distinction made between part time, fulltime, employee or self-employed. The only two premises were, that the participants needed to be in a relationship and that both partners needed to work. For participation, there were no restrictions made about the minimum number of working hours. In total 55 couples participated ( $N_{couple} = 55$ ;  $N_{women} = 55$ ;  $N_{men} = 55$ ;  $N_{total} = 110$ ). The average age of the participants is 39 years ( $M_{women} = 38$  years;  $M_{men} = 40$  years) with a minimum of 23 years and a maximum of 74 years ( $SD = 13$  years). In terms of education 61,8% of the participants (women = 67,3%; men = 56,4%) do have accomplished scientific tertiary education (degree of university/university of applied science) whereas 34,5% of the

persons have just accomplished secondary education ( e.g. *Abitur*, *Realschulabschluss*) or lower (women = 29,1%; men = 40%). The average duration of a relationship is 14 years with a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 43 years ( $SD = 13$  years). 26,4% of the participating couples have children who are currently living with them in one household. On average the participants are working 44 hours a week ( $SD = 12$  hours/week;  $M_{women} = 42$  hours/week;  $M_{men} = 46$  hours/week). This average of 44 hours a week, is higher than the official 40-hours-work-week of the German industry and German labour union. 49,1% of the couples do have a net income of more than 4000€ a month. 43,7% of the couples earn net between 2000€ and 4000€ a month and 7,3% earns net less than 1000€ a month.

## 2.3 Measures

The survey consisted of 33 questions (see attachment) which were based on previously used and tested questionnaires including a demographic questionnaire. All questions were translated into German since the participants were native German speakers.

*Work-life balance.* This scale was developed by Steenbergen (2014). Participants were asked to rate on a seven-point-lickert-scale (1= not true at all, 7= totally true) seven statements, about how they experience their work-family balance. Exemplary items are: “In general I do have a good balance between work and private life,” and “In general does my combination of work and private life reflect my personal priorities in life.” This questionnaire was originally in Dutch and it was for this study translated into German. The Cronbach’s alpha for this test construct is 0.95.

*Work-life balance crafting.* The questionnaire about work-life balance crafting was develop by Peeters and Demerouti (2014). This questionnaire consists of nine questions about work-family balance crafting which need to be rated on a five-point-lickert-scale (1=never, 5= very often). An example item for work-life balance crafting is ‘If I receive a work-related phone call during my free time (private life) which doesn’t suit me, I will let the caller know.’ This questionnaire was originally in Dutch and it was for this study translated into German. The Cronbach’s alpha for this construct is 0.81.

*Work engagement.* To measure the work engagement of the participant a shortened version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003) was used. This shortened version is built up of nine statements about how often the employee experiences work engagement, like ‘My job inspires me’ and ‘I am proud on the work that I do’ (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2003). Responses could be made on a seven-point-lickert-scale (1=never, 7=daily).

Cronbach's alpha for this construct is 0.94. Schaufeli and Bakker (2003) published a German version of the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale, which was used for this study.

*Life satisfaction.* To measure the life satisfaction, the participants were asked to rate one statement about their general life satisfaction on a ten-point-lickert-scale (1= very dissatisfied, 10= very satisfied). This single item ' How satisfied are you with your life in general?' was already used during research of Lance, Lautenschlager, Sloan, and Varca (1989) as well as during a study about crossover and spillover by Demerouti, Bakker and Schaufeli (2005) who argued that already Diener (1984) proofed validity for measuring global satisfaction by a single item. This question was originally published in English and it was for this study translated into German.

## 2.4 Data Analysis

The data was analysed by using SPSS. To test the partial mediating role of work-life balance in the relation between work-life crafting and both work engagement and life satisfaction, the techniques of Baron and Kenny (1986) were applied. First of all, it was tested by regression analyses if there is a correlation a) between work-life balance crafting and work engagement and b) between work-life balance crafting and life satisfaction. Secondly, it was measured by bivariate regression analyses, if there is a significant relation between the independent variable (work-life balance crafting) and the mediator (work-life balance). By multiple regression it was analysed to what extent the mediator (work-life balance) and the independent variable (work-life balance crafting) do relate to the dependent variables ( a) work engagement; b) life satisfaction). According to Baron and Kenny (1986) there is a partially mediation, if the direct influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable is not equal to 0 but is reduced in absolute size, when the mediator is introduced. This was tested by using the Sobel test (Preacher & Leonardelli, 2014). To analyse the spillover of work engagement and life satisfaction, the responses on work engagement were correlated with the responses on life satisfaction. To test the crossover of the work-life balance crafting, work engagement and life satisfaction, the data of the partners were matched (as explained in 2.1 Procedure) and then the scores of both partners on every single variable (work-life balance crafting, work engagement, life satisfaction) were correlated.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Descriptive Statistics

The mean scores and the corresponding standard deviations, as well as the correlations and reliability indices (Cronbach's alpha) of the study variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. *Descriptive Statistics, Correlations and Reliability Estimates of the Main Variables.*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.
1. Work-life balance crafting (1-5)	3.05	0.71				
2. Work-life balance (1-7)	4.76	1.32	.28**			
3. Work engagement (1-7)	5.39	1.13	.13	.23*		
4. Life satisfaction (1-10)	8.01	1.63	.35**	.58**	.38**	-

*Note.*  $N = 110$ . \* $p < .05$  (two-tailed), \*\* $p < .01$  (two-tailed).

Table 1 indicates that there is a strong correlation between work-life balance crafting and life satisfaction. There is no significant correlation between work-life balance crafting and work engagement. Furthermore Table 1 shows that there is a strong correlation between life satisfaction with work-life balance as well as work engagement. Work engagement also significantly correlates with work-life balance. The mean score of the participants on life satisfaction is high.

#### 3.2. Work Engagement

In Hypothesis 1a it was expected that there is a correlation between work-life balance crafting and work engagement. The results show that there is no relationship between work-life balance crafting and work engagement ( $r = .13$ , ns.). So this means that Hypothesis 1a cannot be confirmed. In Hypothesis 2a it was expected that work-life balance partially mediates the relationship between work-life balance crafting and work engagement. One of the assumptions to have a mediation effect is, that there is a relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The results show that there is no relationship between work-life balance crafting and work engagement, hence the first assumption for a mediation cannot be confirmed. So this means that also Hypothesis 2a cannot be confirmed. However, results in Table 2 show that work-life balance significantly predicted work engagement scores ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $t(110) = 2.15$ ,  $p < .05$ ), so although the independent variable did

not correlate significantly with the dependent variable, the mediator and the dependent variable did relate significantly.

Table 2. *Summary of Regression Analyses and Partial Mediation of Work-Life Balance Crafting and Work-Life Balance on Work Engagement.*

	Model 1	Model 2
	$\beta$	$\beta$
Work-life balance crafting	.13	.08
Work-life balance		.21*
<i>F</i>	1.97	3.34*
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.02	.06

*Note.*  $N_{total}=110$ . \* $p < .05$  (two-tailed).

### 3.3. Life Satisfaction

In Hypothesis 1b it was expected that there is a correlation between work-life balance crafting and life satisfaction. The results of Model 1 show that there is a significant relationship between work-life balance crafting and life satisfaction ( $r = .35$ ,  $t(110) = 3.89$ ,  $p < .01$ ). So this means that Hypothesis 1b can be confirmed (see Table 3).

In Hypothesis 2b it was expected that work-life balance partially mediates the correlation between work-life balance crafting and life satisfaction. The results in Table 3 show that there is still a significant relationship between life satisfaction and work-life balance crafting ( $\beta = .21$ ,  $t(110) = 2.61$ ,  $p < .05$ ) when work-life balance is included as mediator ( $\beta = .53$ ,  $t(110) = 6.61$ ,  $p < .01$ ). However, adding work-life balance to Model 2, lessens the relations between work-life balance crafting and life satisfaction (beta drops significantly from .35 to .21,  $p < .01$ ). Model 2, with work-life balance crafting and work-life balance, also explains 38% of the total variance of life satisfaction scores ( $R^2 = .38$ ,  $F(1,110) = 32.46$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Thus adding work-life balance to Model 2 increases 26% of the  $R^2$  value ( $r^2$ -change = .26). So this means that work-life balance partially mediates the relation between work-life balance crafting and life satisfaction. Thus, Hypothesis 2b, that work-life-balance partially mediates the relationship between work-life-balance crafting and life satisfaction, could thus be confirmed.

Table 3. *Summary of Regression Analyses and Partial Mediation of Work-Life Balance Crafting and Work-Life Balance on Life Satisfaction.*

	Model 1	Model 2
	$\beta$	$\beta$
Work-life balance crafting	.35**	.21*
Work-life balance		.53**
<i>F</i>	15.16**	32.46**
<i>R</i> <sup>2</sup>	.12	.38

Note.  $N_{total}=110$ . \*\* $p < .01$  (two-tailed), \* $p < .05$  (two-tailed).

### 3.4. Spillover

In Hypothesis 3 it was expected that there is spillover between work engagement and life satisfaction. The results of Table 1 show that there is a significant positive correlation between work engagement and life satisfaction ( $r = .38, p < .01$ ). This result is support against the null hypothesis. So this means that there is a spillover and that Hypothesis 3 thus can be confirmed.

### 3.5. Crossover

To test the hypotheses (Hypotheses 4, 5 and 6) that there exists crossovers of work-life balance crafting, work engagement as well as life satisfaction between both partners, the scores of the couples were correlated (see Table 4).

Table 4. *Correlation between Work-Life Balance Crafting, Work Engagement and Life Satisfaction of both Partners.*

	$N_{couple}$	<i>r</i>
Work-life balance crafting	55	.16
Work engagement	55	.33*
Life satisfaction	55	.37**

Note. \*\* $p < .01$  (two-tailed), \* $p < .05$  (two-tailed).

First of all, Table 4 shows, that there is no significant correlation between work-life balance crafting of both partners ( $r=.16$ ,  $N_{couple} = 55$ ,  $p = ns$ , two-tailed). With this result there is no evidence found that there is crossover of work-life balance crafting between both partners. Hypothesis 4 could thus not be confirmed.

Secondly, according to Table 4 there is a significant correlation between work engagement of both partners ( $r=.33$ ,  $N_{couple} = 55$ ,  $p <.05$ , two-tailed). This result indicates, that there is a crossover of work engagement between both partners, which is confirming Hypothesis 5.

Furthermore Table 4 indicates, that there is a significant correlation between life satisfaction of both partners ( $r=.37$ ,  $N_{couple} = 55$ ,  $p <.01$ , two-tailed). This result confirms the Hypothesis 6, that there is a crossover of life satisfaction between both partners.

#### 4. Discussion

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not work-life balance crafting relates to work engagement and to life satisfaction. It also tested, if work-life balance mediate the relation between work-life balance crafting, life satisfaction and work engagement. Since work-life balance crafting is an unofficial self-initiated technique, the knowledge of the effects of work-life balance crafting might give new insights how to improve work-life balance by not just using official techniques and policies.

Another purpose of this study was to examine the relation between work-life balance crafting, work engagement and life satisfaction of partners. In the last few years the number of dual-earner couples is increased. As today's work psychology strives to maximize the well-being of employees, it is necessary to focus also on dual-earner couples. In the past there have been studies about bi-directional crossover and the effect of it amongst dual-earner couples (Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005). This present study might give new insights about work-life crafting and crossover of dual-earner couples which might be helpful for further research about well-being of dual-earner couples.

This study shows that the life satisfaction of an employee does relate to the persons' individual behaviour of creating a balance between work and non-work life. The results also show, that the employees' work-life balance has a positive relation with his/her life satisfaction, which confirms the hypothesis and also proves the findings of previous studies

(e.g. Dex & Scheibl, 1999; Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999). According to the finding of this study, the work-life balance of an employee partially mediates in how far his/her crafting behavior relates to his/her life satisfaction. In other words, if an employee does increase his/her crafting of the work-life balance, his/her work-life balance as well as the persons' life satisfaction also increases. The better the employees' work-life balance is, the higher is his/her life satisfaction. An interesting fact, which might refer to this mediating relationship, is that employees, who increase their work-life balance and life satisfaction through crafting, might be people who would rather have an internal than an external locus of control. This might be true because people with an internal locus of control think that their personal effort will lead to reward and positive outcome (Gazzaniga, Heatherton, & Halpern, 2011). Thus they might believe that their personal behavior has more influence on their perception of life satisfaction. So a person who actively crafts his/her work-life balance also expects to be more satisfied than when he/she is not crafting the work-life balance at all.

The results of this study confirm the expectation of having a significant spillover. The findings show that employee's life satisfaction relates to his/her work engagement. For example, if a person has a high life satisfaction he/she also has a high work engagement. And vice versa. This positive relation is conform to the positive effect of work-to-family/family-to-work interference theory. This result does have similarities with the findings of Bakker, Demerouti and Burke (2009), who investigated that workaholics do face spillover of work and private life.

Another finding of this study is that an employees' work engagement positively relates with the work engagement of his/her partner, thus there is a significant crossover. What is interesting is that although partners do not necessarily work at the same organization or in the same field, their work engagement is still related. One assumption might be, that most people who are in a relationship, are quite similar to their partner (Baron, Branscomebe, & Byrne, 2009) because people are more attracted to people with the same attachment style and with similar attitudes (Klohn & Luo, 2003; Byrne, Ervin, Lambert, 1970; Hewstone, Stroebe, & Jonas, 2008). This might also influence how a single person deals with job demands and job resources. Hence a person might be similar to his/her partner in terms of dealing with demands and perceiving work engagement. Another assumption might be, that if a person experiences work engagement, he/she comes home with a positive and motivating attitude which might stimulate his/her partner. This could also be perceived as increasing the partner's resources, which also leads to an increase of work engagement.

Besides the results for the crossover of work engagement, the study also shows a significant crossover of life satisfaction. This means that, the way people experience life satisfaction relates to the life satisfaction of their partner. This positive relation indicates that a person will be very satisfied with his/her life, if his/her partner has a high life satisfaction and vice versa. This result confirms the findings of previous studies about the crossover of life satisfaction (e.g. Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005; Bakker, Demerouti, & Burke, 2009).

Even though the findings are not able to confirm a relation between crafting and the employees' work engagement, this study investigates that the employees' work-life balance is related to his/her work engagement. In other words, an employee who has a good work-life balance also develops engagement through his/her work. An explanation for this effect might be that by having a good work-life balance an employee is increasing his/her resources, which will lead to an increase of work engagement - according to the JD-R model of Bakker & Demerouti (2007).

The purpose of this study was also to investigate how much the crafting behavior of an employee is related to the work-life balance crafting of his/her partner. In contrast to the expectations, there was no significant crossover of work-life balance crafting between partners found in this study. This means that the individual technique a person uses to create a better work-life balance, does not relate to the crafting behaviour of his/her partner.

This study did not investigate the causality of the different variables. It is an interesting topic to examine the causality of the variables by an experimental or longitudinal research design. For example, two groups of dual-earner couples could be examined over a longer time (e.g. 2 years), while one group is a control group and the other group would receive information, stimulation and training about how to craft one's work-life balance. By repeated measure the work-life balance and the life satisfaction of the two groups would be investigated and compared with each other.

With knowledge of this study, it might be interesting to do further research about how an organization or an employer might stimulate its employees to start crafting their work-life balance. By doing this an organization could create a new opportunity to stimulate the well-being as well as the work-life balance and thus the work engagement of their employees. Were one to do further research about this topic, one should not simply focus on how to stimulate employees, but also how to stimulate their partners.

Another aspect which could be further investigated is the possible consequence for the relationship of both partners; for example about the success and failure of a relationship of partner who do craft their work life balance. Due to the increasing diversity of employees, it is important to focus not only on the similarities. Using a bigger sample size would make it interesting to investigate, if there are differences between gender and age or between couples with a different sexual orientation, since all participating couples were heterosexual. It might also be interesting to investigate if the positive relation between work-life balance crafting and life satisfaction is influenced by having children. Further research might also consider on the impact of the duration of the relationship on the crossover. The duration of a relationship might also have influence on, how similar partners are, in terms of dealing with demands. This might be, because crossover between partners takes place due to the empathic reaction of the partner, the common experienced stressors and because it is an indirect interaction process (Westman, 2006; Bakker & Demerouti 2007).

Practical implications of this study are that employees could be informed about the effect of crafting their own work-life balance and thus also be trained in how they could craft their work-life balance. For employers and organizations it is important to notice the relevance of their employees' relationship between work-life balance and life satisfaction as well as work engagement. To foster the well-being of employees, organizations might also motivate their employees to use work-life balance crafting. For dual-earner couples it is important to recognize the relation of their life satisfaction and work engagement and to be aware of the effects of it.

## 5. Conclusion

Consequently one might draw the conclusion that the well-being of employees can be stimulated by having them crafting their work-life balance. Having a good work-life balance is important, since life satisfaction and work engagement are positively related. In order to increase the well-being of dual-earner couples it seems also important to not just focus on the employee but also on his/her partner, because the partners' life satisfaction and work engagement are related with the work engagement and life satisfaction of the employee.

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# Appendix

## 1. Demographic questionnaire

- Was ist Ihr Geschlecht?
- Wie alt sind Sie?
- Wie viele Jahre befinden Sie sich in einer Beziehung mit ihrem jetzigen Partner?
- Haben Sie Kinder die bei sich wohnen?
- Wie viele Stunden arbeiten Sie durchschnittlich pro Woche?
- Wie hoch ist Ihr monatliches Haushaltseinkommen, das Sie und ihr Partner nach Abzug der Steuern und Sozialabgaben (Netto) haben?
- Was ist ihr höchster Bildungsabschluss?

## 2. Work-life balance questionnaire

- Im Allgemeinen habe ich das Gefühl, dass ich genügend Zeit sowohl für meine Arbeit als auch für mein Privatleben habe.
- Im Allgemeinen habe ich das Gefühl, dass ich genügend Aufmerksamkeit für Sachen aus Privat- und Arbeitsleben habe, die mir wichtig sind.
- Im Allgemeinen habe ich ein gutes Gefühl darüber, wie ich die Einteilung von meinem Arbeits- und Privatleben kombiniert habe.
- Im Allgemeinen gibt meine Einteilung von Arbeit und Privatleben gut wieder, was mir persönlich im Leben wichtig ist.
- Im Allgemeinen habe ich ein gutes Gleichgewicht zwischen Arbeit und Privatleben.
- Im Allgemeinen bin ich zufrieden mit der Art und Weise, wie ich meine Arbeit und mein Privatleben miteinander kombiniere.
- Im Allgemeinen bin ich in der Lage, die Verantwortlichkeiten für sowohl meine Arbeit als auch für mein Privatleben zu tragen.

## 3. Work-life balance crafting questionnaire

- Ich schütze meine Privatzeit (z.B. durch unerreichbar sein), sodass ich diese Zeit ungestört nutzen kann.
- Falls während meiner Privatzeit ein arbeitsbezogenes Telefonat nicht passt, gebe ich dieses an.

- Bei der Menge der Arbeit, die ich auf mich nehme, setze ich Grenzen, um mein Privatleben zu schützen.
- Ich schütze meine Arbeitszeit (z.B. durch Bekanntgabe meiner Arbeitszeiten), sodass ich dieser Zeit ungestört arbeiten kann.
- Falls während meiner Arbeitszeit ein privates Telefonat nicht passt, gebe ich dieses an.
- Bei der Menge der privaten Verpflichtungen, die ich auf mich nehme, setze ich Grenzen, um mein Arbeitszeit zu schützen.
- Ich Sorge dafür, dass ich in meiner Freizeit ausreichend Dinge tue, die mich entspannen (z.B. Zeit für mich, Sport, Hobbies etc.).
- Ich Sorge dafür, dass ich in meiner Freizeit ausreichend Aktivitäten unternehme, die mir Freude bereiten (z.B. soziale Aktivitäten, Sport etc.).
- Ich wache über das Gleichgewicht zwischen Arbeit und Privatleben , sodass es zu meinem Leben passt.

#### 4. Work engagement questionnaire

- Auf der Arbeit bin ich voll überschäumender energie.
- Wenn ich arbeite fühle ich mich fit und tatkräftig.
- Ich bin von meiner Arbeit begeistert.
- Meine Arbeit inspiriert mich.
- Wenn ich morgens aufstehe, freue ich mich auf meine Arbeit.
- Wenn ich intensiv arbeite, fühle ich mich glücklich.
- Ich bin stolz auf meine Arbeit.
- Ich gehe völlig in meiner Arbeit auf.
- Meine Arbeit reißt mich mit.

#### 5. Life satisfaction question

- Wie zufrieden sind Sie im Allgemeinen mit ihrem Leben?