

Capitalising on Positive Work Events by Sharing them at Home

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The authors integrate existing theory on work–family integration and interpersonal capitalisation on positive work events by examining the effects of sharing positive work events with one’s spouse on employee life satisfaction. A field study was conducted with 131 employees of a large Midwestern university, who completed surveys online. Participants provided accounts of their most important positive event during the prior week and indicated whether they had shared this event with their spouse. They also retrospectively rated their positive affect and life satisfaction over the course of the study. Results based on hierarchical regression analysis indicated that having shared that event with one’s spouse was positively associated with positive affect and life satisfaction after controlling for personality and event characteristics. These results were corroborated in a subsample of 99 employees whose spouses provided independent reports of whether the event was shared with them. This research reveals that sharing positive events with others has unique and significant contributions to positive affect and life satisfaction. More importantly, these findings show that the interpersonal act of sharing is effective when conducted cross-domain: the act of sharing positive *work* events with *family* members increases positive affect and life satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Recent research endeavors have been committed to studying emotions and affect in the workplace as evidenced by journal articles and special issues (e.g. Fisher & Ashkanasy, 2000; Sonnentag & Ilies, 2011; Weiss, 2001; Xanthopoulou, Bakker, & Ilies, 2012), and books (e.g. Ashkanasy, Härtel, & Zerbe, 2000; Lord, Klimoski, & Kanfer, 2002). This interest has been

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stimulated by Affective Events Theory (AET; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996), which proposes that events at work influence affective states at work, and by empirical evidence demonstrating that mood and satisfaction have positive relationships with constructs that have important consequences for organisations and individuals (e.g. job performance and physical health; Faragher, Cass, & Cooper, 2005; Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). Nevertheless, in order to understand the impact of work events and experiences on employees' functioning and well-being in a broader sense, more research is needed in this area, as we explain below.

Although evidence supports the idea that employees are emotionally responsive to events that they perceive as pleasant or rewarding (e.g. Grandey, Tam, & Brauburger, 2002; Mignonac & Herrbach, 2004), such events typically yield only modest correlations with indicators of well-being, such as affect and satisfaction (Emmons, 1991). Hence, it may be that factors other than events contribute to additional variance in states of well-being. In this article, we contend that besides positive events themselves, *how employees respond to these events* is also important for their well-being.

Interpersonal capitalisation refers to the process by which individuals share positive events with others, and has been found to produce hedonic benefits that surpass those generated by the events themselves (Gable, Reis, Impett, & Asher, 2004; Langston, 1994). Recently, Ilies, Keeney, and Scott (2011) proposed that discussing positive work events in the family, or what they termed *work-family interpersonal capitalisation*, is an important behavioral strategy that adds to the beneficial effects of positive work events on employee well-being. Indeed, these authors found that work-family interpersonal capitalisation influenced job satisfaction over and above the effects of the pleasantness of the events themselves.

The purpose of the present study is to examine whether work-family interpersonal capitalisation contributes to influencing not only affective states but also general subjective well-being. Specifically, we examine the effects of sharing positive work events with one's spouse on employee positive affect and life satisfaction. In doing so, we seek to extend the contribution of Ilies et al. (2011) by examining whether the effects of work-family interpersonal capitalisation reach beyond ratings of job satisfaction to employees' life satisfaction which is a much broader indicator of well-being than is job satisfaction (Heller, Watson, & Ilies, 2004).

In developing our hypotheses, we follow recent conceptual models of employee well-being that consider experiences on and off-work, and propose that work events and experiences affect broader life satisfaction evaluations (e.g. Ilies, Schwind, & Heller, 2007a). Our goal is to contribute to knowledge on the positive aspects of work-family integration and the implications for life satisfaction, which we believe are important to consider when developing recommendations to employees on how to manage work and family roles. In

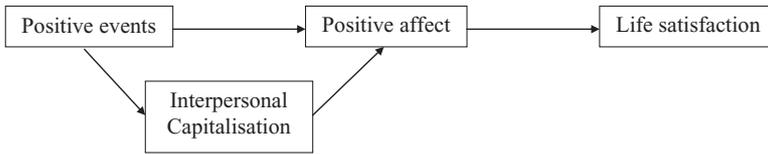


FIGURE 1. Conceptual model of work–family interpersonal capitalisation.

short, we test a cross-domain model of capitalisation, examining the effects of sharing a positive event that has occurred in the work domain with a role member of the family domain (i.e. spouse), or work–family interpersonal capitalisation, on employees’ life satisfaction. Figure 1 presents the conceptual model described in the remainder of the paper.

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

Linking Work and Family Domains

Theoretical postulations from AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) and spillover theory (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000) offer us insight into the affective linkages between work and family. When positive events occur at work, they induce positive affect at work (AET; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). According to Ilies, Schwind, Wagner, Johnson, DeRue, and Ilgen (2007b), work affect triggers congruent cognitions, which in turn induce affect in the home (see also Edwards & Rothbard, 2000).

Recent empirical studies lend support to the affective connection between work and family. Ilies and his colleagues demonstrated that work and family can be linked via daily affective spillover. For example, Ilies et al. (2007b) showed that daily workload negatively impacted affect at work, which in turn was carried over to the home domain, and influenced home affect. Ilies, Wilson, and Wagner (2009), in a longitudinal, multisource, multi-method study, found evidence for the spillover of job satisfaction from work to family, and the spillover was stronger for those who have highly integrated work and family roles. This, and other research (e.g. Judge & Ilies, 2004; Judge, Ilies, & Scott, 2006), evidenced that affective spillover interconnects work and family domains.

Furthermore, recent research by Culbertson, Mills, and Fullagar (2012) demonstrated how positive affective spillover can be more effectively harnessed using interpersonal capitalisation. They showed that daily work engagement promotes positive family dynamics via positive mood spillover; work engagement creates positive moods in employees at work, which transfer over to the home domain, resulting in better family dynamics. More

revealingly, they showed that the relationship between work engagement and work-family facilitation was moderated by work-family interpersonal capitalisation which strengthened the positive work-family effects. This study, like that of Ilies et al. (2011), suggests that employees can effectively capitalise on positive work events and experiences and reap greater benefits for their well-being.

Interpersonal Capitalisation

We propose that one possible way to magnify the positive work-family connection to improve one's general well-being is through interpersonal capitalisation, the sharing of positive events with others. It is human nature to want to share our experiences with others. Researchers have established that individuals regularly seek others with whom to share emotional events, both positive and negative (Rimé, Mesquita, Philippot, & Boca, 1991; Rimé, Philippot, Boca, & Mesquita, 1992). While people share both positive and negative events, Luminet, Zech, Rimé, and Wagner (2000) found that people are particularly emotionally involved when relaying positive accounts as opposed to negative experiences.

There are several mechanisms by which interpersonal capitalisation may enhance well-being. First, by telling a story about a positive event, a person in effect relives the event and therefore increases its salience and accessibility in working memory (Gable et al., 2004). Presumably, the event would then be more influential on short-term mood and evaluations (i.e. satisfaction with work) than if it were not retold or, if important enough, possibly be influential on broader and more general evaluations (i.e. life satisfaction). The memory explanation received some support from Gable et al. (2004) who found that individuals' recall for positive events was enhanced when the events had been previously discussed with others. A different potential explanation relates to the concept of social verification. Hardin and Higgins (1996) explain how people seek validation of their subjective experiences from others. Sharing an event with others and having them recognise its significance (e.g. agreeing that it is indeed favorable) establishes the event as a valid one, thereby reinforcing the positive thoughts and feelings created by the event.

Langston (1994) found that behavior such as seeking social contact or rewarding oneself after a positive event was significantly associated with positive affect. He concluded that positive events represent opportunities on which individuals may capitalise. Importantly, Gable and colleagues replicated the findings of Langston (1994) showing that interpersonal capitalisation was a unique predictor of positive affect and life satisfaction, even after accounting for participants' personality and the number of positive events they had experienced.

Work–Family Interpersonal Capitalisation

While research in social psychology shows that interpersonal capitalisation increases positive affect and life satisfaction, it has not clearly documented whether the effects are replicated when capitalisation is done across the work and family domains, and has relied primarily on college student samples. The only organisational study on interpersonal capitalisation on positive work events (Ilies et al., 2011) found effects on job and relationship satisfaction, but did not examine the ultimate effects on life satisfaction. Thus, in this study, we aim to fill these research gaps by examining how employees' work–family interpersonal capitalisation on positive work events influences their life satisfaction.

As to why *cross-domain* interpersonal capitalisation is efficacious in well-being enhancement, prior research regarding whom people are likely to select as capitalisation partners provides us with some indication. Rimé et al. (1991) found that people prefer to share their experiences with people who are emotionally close to them, and Gable et al. (2004) found that students shared their positive experiences frequently with friends and romantic partners. Importantly, the most common capitalisation partner by far in a sample of adults was the spouse. Thus, spouses are likely capitalisation partners for positive work events. Nevertheless, because differences exist in the extent to which employees segment their work and family roles (Ilies et al., 2009; Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2005), there likely are substantial differences in the extent to which they discuss positive work events with their spouses. Our general hypothesis is that these differences should be associated with differences in affect and in broad psychological well-being, as indicated by employees' life satisfaction evaluations.

Hypotheses

One assumption on which this paper operates is that positive occurrences at work are accompanied by positive affect. This proposition is supported by AET, which states that events cause short-term fluctuations in affective states and these affective states further influence job satisfaction and work behavior, and by empirical findings (Grandey et al., 2002; Mignonac & Herrbach, 2004). We examine positive affect, specifically, because it is considered more theoretically relevant to the occurrence of positive events than is negative affect (Watson, 2000). Empirically, positive daily events are typically related to positive affect substantially more strongly than they are to negative affect (e.g. $r = .44$ versus $r = .02$; Nezlek & Plesko, 2003).

Weiss and Cropanzano (1996) explain that not all events have affective significance and that employees must appraise an environmental change as favorable in order for pleasant affect to occur. They highlight that specific positive events can vary widely across employees depending on what is

important to them. Hence, in the present study, we allowed employees to self-define a positive event at work that they considered to be important. This methodology allows for flexibility in the types of events that are reported. In a sense, interpersonal capitalisation becomes a positive event in itself and thus should be positively related to positive affect, as specified by AET. The unique contributions to positive affect that result can be construed as an intensification or prolongment of the events' effects. Because of the prominent role that spouses have been shown to play in the sharing of emotional events and our interest in the work-family interface, we focus exclusively on employees' spouses as capitalisation partners.

Hypothesis 1: Work-family interpersonal capitalisation on a positive work event is associated with higher positive affect.

Subjective well-being is conventionally conceptualised as consisting of an affective component, as well as a cognitively laden life evaluation (Lucas, Diener, & Suh, 1996). In addition to investigating the effects of work-family interpersonal capitalisation on positive affect at work, we were interested in assessing whether these effects would extend beyond the workplace to a more global attitude: life satisfaction. As mentioned, Ilies et al. (2011) found that work-family interpersonal capitalisation had a positive effect on job satisfaction but these authors did not examine whether life satisfaction is similarly influenced. Broad well-being indicators such as life satisfaction have become of recent interest to organisational researchers who wish to assess work-family linkages and well-being of the employee as a whole person (e.g. Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005). This interest is not misguided or without merit even from a productivity standpoint, given the finding that broad well-being can be a stronger predictor of employee performance than job satisfaction (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000).

We examine employees' life satisfaction, defined as a "judgmental process, in which individuals assess the quality of their lives on the basis of their own unique set of criteria" (Pavot & Diener, 1993, p. 164). When making life satisfaction judgments, people draw on various sources including memories of past experiences (Schimmack, Diener, & Oishi, 2002) and the experience of positive events (e.g. Suh, Diener, & Fujita, 1996). But our interest lies not as much in examining whether positive work events enhance employees' life satisfaction (a not-very-surprising phenomenon perhaps) but more in studying the effects of capitalising on these positive events, by discussing them with one's spouse, on life satisfaction.

That is, similar to our hypothesis regarding positive affect, we propose that work-family interpersonal capitalisation influences employees' life satisfaction. Sharing an event is presumed to make the event a more potent influence not only on mood, but also on cognitive evaluations of one's life. Talking to

one's family about a positive work event provides social verification and increases the event's salience, putting the person in a better mood but also affecting their cognitive evaluations about their life in general. Finally, to extend AET, we propose that work–family interpersonal capitalisation influences life satisfaction through its influence on positive affect. The link between positive affect and life satisfaction is supported by mood congruency theory (Bower, 1981) which suggests that positive emotions impose an organisational structure on concepts in memory and stimulate positively valenced memories and cognitions, thereby influencing cognitive evaluations such as life satisfaction. Empirical findings also show that affective feelings color individuals' life satisfaction ratings (e.g. Heller, Watson, & Ilies, 2006.).

Hypothesis 2: Work–family interpersonal capitalisation on a positive work event is associated with higher life satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3: The positive relationship between work–family interpersonal capitalisation on a positive work event and life satisfaction is mediated by positive affect.

METHOD

Participants

One hundred and thirty-one employees of a large Midwestern university in the United States participated in the study. Spouses of 99 of these participants also took part in the study. The list of potential participants was created by randomly selecting employees from the university's directory. Participants responded to the email invitation if they were interested in participating in the study. In the recruitment letter, participants were informed about the general purpose of the study (i.e. to learn about the positive events that employees experience in the workplace and their impact on feelings and satisfaction). The majority of the focal sample (i.e. the employees) was female (78%) with a mean age of about 44 years. Participants held diverse job titles including Administrative Assistant, Broadcast Engineer, and Operations Manager. A large proportion of participants had a college degree (68%).

Procedure

The focal participants signed up and completed the study online over a two-week period. At the beginning of the study, they provided self-ratings of personality traits. At the end of the second work week (i.e. the following Friday), they retrospectively rated their positive affect at work and life satisfaction over the course of that week. At this time, they also completed a

checklist of positive work events for that week, provided accounts of their most important positive work event, rated its pleasantness, and indicated whether they had discussed it with their spouse.

Upon sign-up, participants provided contact information for their spouses. At the end of the second week, we mailed a survey with an event title and brief description to spouses (i.e. this was customised based on the account each employee had given us via the online survey) and asked them to indicate whether or not they recalled having this event shared with them. Thus, we were able to obtain independent reports of work-family interpersonal capitalisation.

Measures

Personality. Self-reports of extraversion and neuroticism were obtained using the respective 10-item measures from the International Personality Item Pool (IPIP; Goldberg, 1999). These measures have been found to be reliable and highly correlated with their corresponding NEO-PI scales (Johnson, 2005).

Positive Affect. Employees' experience of positive affect over the prior week at work was assessed using 10 adjectives from the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988). Employees rated the extent to which they felt the way indicated by each adjective (e.g. enthusiastic, excited) on a 5-point scale (1 = *Very slightly or not at all* to 5 = *Extremely*).

Life Satisfaction. The degree to which employees felt satisfied with their life over the prior week was assessed using the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985) consisting of five items with a 5-point response scale (1 = *Strongly disagree* to 5 = *Strongly agree*). Sample items include: "The conditions of my life were excellent during this past week", and "This past week, I have been satisfied with my life."

Positive Event. Employees were asked to provide a title and description of the most important positive work event they had experienced over the previous week.

Event Pleasantness. Event pleasantness for the most important positive work event was assessed using three items (e.g. "This event was quite pleasant") with a 5-point response scale.

Other Positive Events. To serve as a control variable, employees rated the frequency with which they experienced a variety of other positive events

at work (excluding the event that they had provided and described) that week using an extensive checklist developed for this study. The checklist contained 85 events, such as “A co-worker expressed liking to work with me” and “Asked to join a desirable project.” We used the sum of all events experienced by individuals in our analyses.

Self-Reported Work–Family Interpersonal Capitalisation. Employees indicated whether or not they had discussed the most important positive work event of the week with their spouse.

Spouse-Reported Work–Family Interpersonal Capitalisation. Spousal reports of work–family interpersonal capitalisation were assessed with one personalised item. As an example, a spouse would receive a survey that said “Did Samantha talk to you about the following work event: Received financial support for proposed community project?”

Controls

When examining effects at the between-person level, it is important to control for individual differences that could be systematically related to both the predictor and the outcome and artificially inflate the relationship of interest (Gable, Reis, & Elliot, 2000). In testing the proposed hypotheses, we control for two personality variables that are of particular relevance to the experience of events and well-being: extraversion and neuroticism. Extraversion has been found in past studies to correlate with an individual’s propensity to share events with others (Bryant & Veroff, 2007) and is an established correlate of positive affective states (Canli, 2004; Ilies & Judge, 2002; Watson, 2000). Conversely, neuroticism is known to dampen responses to success (Ross, Stewart, Mugge, & Fultz, 2001; Wood, Heimpel, & Michela, 2003) and correlate negatively with subjective well-being (DeNeve & Cooper, 1998; Watson, 2000).

To strengthen our tests of the formal hypotheses proposed herein, we also controlled for characteristics of the focal positive event (i.e. that for which work–family interpersonal capitalisation was reported) and for other positive events that occurred during the same time period at work. Specifically, we reasoned that the more positive a work event is, the more likely an employee would be both to share it with others and to experience increases in well-being. Therefore, we measured employees’ perceived desirability or pleasantness of the focal (positive) work event. We also controlled for the number of other positive events experienced that week at work to address concerns that differences between jobs (e.g. perhaps some jobs are generally more positive in nature) or differences among employees’ interpretation or reporting tendencies (e.g. some employees are likely to tend to interpret or report more

work events as being positive than others) may act as “third-variable” influences creating a spurious association between work–family interpersonal capitalisation and positive affect and life satisfaction.

RESULTS

The correlations between the study variables and the scale reliabilities are presented in Table 1. As can be seen from the mean of self-reported work–family interpersonal capitalisation (.48), about half of participants reported sharing this event with their spouse. Self- and spousal reports of interpersonal capitalisation were significantly related ($r = .32, p < .01$). Although this correlation seems weaker than one would expect, this same relationship expressed in the form of a tetrachoric correlation is .51. As expected, extraversion was positively, and neuroticism was negatively, related to positive affect and life satisfaction. Neither personality variable was related to work–family interpersonal capitalisation.

To test the first hypothesis with positive affect as the dependent variable, a hierarchical regression was performed with personality variables entered in the first step, event characteristics in the second step, and self-reported work–family interpersonal capitalisation in the last step (see Table 2). As predicted by AET, the pleasantness of the most important positive event and the number of other positive events predicted positive affect. Furthermore, work–family interpersonal capitalisation was found, in the full model, to significantly predict positive affect above and beyond the effects of personality and events (standardised $\beta = .16, p < .05$). Similar results were obtained from substituting spouse-reported interpersonal capitalisation into the regression (standardised $\beta = .17, p < .05$; see Table 3). Thus, in support of Hypothesis 1, employees who shared their most positive event of the week with their spouse experienced higher positive affect that same week, compared to those who did not share their most important positive work event.

To test the second hypothesis, life satisfaction was similarly regressed on the two personality variables, event characteristics and self-reported work–family interpersonal capitalisation (see Table 2). Hypothesis 2 was also supported by the data. Self-reported interpersonal capitalisation significantly predicted life satisfaction after controlling for individual differences in extraversion and neuroticism, the pleasantness of the most important positive event, and the number of other positive events (standardised $\beta = .16, p < .05$). These results were replicated using the spouse-reported capitalisation variable (standardised $\beta = .22, p < .05$; see Table 3).

We tested the third hypothesis by adding positive affect as a predictor to the regression that was used to test the second hypothesis. Positive affect emerged as a strong and positive predictor of life satisfaction (standardised $\beta = .38, p < .01$), and the standardised coefficient for work–family interpersonal

TABLE 1
Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Study Variables

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Life Satisfaction (past week)	3.51	.94	(.91)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Positive Affect (at work, past week)	3.46	.78	.56**	(.91)	—	—	—	—	—	—
3. Extraversion	3.25	.73	.26**	.38*	(.87)	—	—	—	—	—
4. Neuroticism	2.44	.77	-.50**	-.42**	-.34**	(.88)	—	—	—	—
5. Event Pleasantness	6.42	.80	.31**	.28**	.17	-.18*	(.80)	—	—	—
6. Number of other Positive Events	104.59	58.56	.24**	.41**	.36**	-.26**	.06	—	—	—
7. WF Interpersonal Capitalisation-SR	.48	.50	.17*	.19*	.15	.03	.14	-.02	—	—
8. WF Interpersonal Capitalisation-OR	.71	.45	.25*	.21*	.06	.02	.12	.02	.32**	—

Notes: *N* = 99–131. Reliabilities are reported across the diagonal. PA = Positive affect. WF = Work-family. SR = Self-reported. OR = Other (spouse)-reported. * *p* < .05 (two-tailed); ** *p* < .01 (two-tailed).

TABLE 2
 Hierarchical Regression of Employee Well-Being on Personality, Event Characteristics, and Self-Reported Work-Family Interpersonal Capitalisation

Predictor\Criteria	Positive Affect				Life Satisfaction			
	B	β	t	ΔR^2	B	β	t	ΔR^2
Step 1								
Extraversion	.15	.14	1.70		.03	.02	.29	
Neuroticism	-.28	-.27**	-3.47	.241**	-.52	-.43**	-5.33	.255**
Step 2								
Event Pleasantness	.17	.17*	2.31		.23	.20*	2.62	
Number of other Positive Events	.00	.28**	3.56	.094**	.00	.11	1.36	.053*
Step 3								
Self-Reported WF Interpersonal Capitalisation	.25	.16*	2.13	.024*	.29	.16*	2.09	.023*

Notes: N = 131. Above parameters are the final estimates from the full model. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 3
 Hierarchical Regression of Employee Well-Being on Personality, Event Characteristics, and Spouse-Reported Work-Family Interpersonal Capitalisation

Predictor\Criteria	Positive Affect				Life Satisfaction			
	B	β	t	ΔR^2	B	β	t	ΔR^2
Step 1								
Extraversion	.17	.16	1.71		.05	.04	.44	
Neuroticism	-.27	-.27**	-2.96	.241**	-.52	-.43**	-4.69	.255**
Step 2								
Event Pleasantness	.16	.16	1.87		.21	.18*	2.06	
Number of other Positive Events	.00	.27**	2.96	.094**	.00	.10	1.06	.053*
Step 3								
Spouse-Reported WF Interpersonal Capitalisation	.29	.17*	2.00	.028*	.46	.22*	2.63	.048*

Notes: N = 99. Above parameters are the final estimates from the full model. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

capitalisation decreased in magnitude (from .16 to .10 for self-reported capitalisation, and from .22 to .16 for spouse-reported capitalisation) and became non-significant in the case of self-ratings, yet remained significant ($p < .05$) for spouse-ratings of work-family interpersonal capitalisation. We further tested

the mediated effects using Preacher and Hayes' (2008) bootstrapping method. Both mediated effects were significant: for predicting self-reported capitalisation, the 95% confidence interval for the indirect effect ranged from 0.0004 to 0.2622, whereas for predicting spouse-reported capitalisation, the 95% confidence interval ranged from 0.0150 to 0.0223. As neither of these intervals contain zero, the bootstrapping results indicate that there were significant mediated effects as hypothesised (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). These results support the third hypothesis and, for the spouse-ratings, indicate partial mediation.

Finally, we conducted some additional analyses. Because the sample was composed predominantly of female employees, we conducted analyses to examine whether gender moderates the effects that we observed, but no such moderated effects were supported by the data. We also examined whether the two personality traits measured in this study moderated the effects of (a) interpersonal capitalisation and (b) the pleasantness of the focal event, on life satisfaction. None of these interactions were statistically significant.

DISCUSSION

The present study adds to the literature linking work and family by testing the hypothesis that talking with one's spouse about a good day at work is more beneficial than keeping good news to oneself. The results support this hypothesis and indicate that employees can capitalise on the effects of positive work events by sharing them with their spouses, and this effect extends beyond increasing job satisfaction (Ilies et al., 2011) to broader indicators of employee well-being such as life satisfaction. That is, work-family interpersonal capitalisation explained a significant portion of the variance in employees' positive affect and, consequently, life satisfaction. Results obtained in this study are consistent with those obtained by Langston (1994) and Gable et al. (2004) and extend the contribution of Ilies et al. (2011).

We offer several contributions to the literature on employee well-being. With respect to AET, we move beyond a descriptive approach, which posits that positive events influence affective states experienced at work, to a prescriptive approach that specifies what employees can do to maximise such effects. In addition, AET constrains employees' behavioral and affective reactions to work events to the workplace. Although this constraint is reasonable for a theory of job satisfaction, and work-family interpersonal capitalisation is relevant for job satisfaction as shown by Ilies et al. (2011), developing a more comprehensive model of work events and employee well-being requires that we bridge the work-non-work divide.

As such, this study highlights the cross-domain effects of interpersonal capitalisation. While Culbertson et al. (2012) showed that interpersonal capitalisation can strengthen the effects of positive affective spillover, the study

still focused on the effects confined to evaluations specific to the family and work domains. We took this further and showed that the effects of interpersonal capitalisation are not limited to these domains, but benefit the employees in a more extensive manner by influencing global life satisfaction. This focus on life satisfaction also contributes to the general literature on subjective well-being (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). In particular, by focusing on life satisfaction, rather than job and relationship satisfaction, this study explores how one can exert cross-domain effects such that a general and global evaluation can be influenced.

We further contribute to the literature on linkages between work and family domains by showing that behavioral actions that link these two life domains can generate positive affect which has important implications for global well-being. This also contributes to the broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), which posits that positive emotions expand and broaden individual cognition and behavior, build on personal (social and psychological) resources, and in turn facilitate personal functioning. In particular, our study shows that the positive emotions due to work-family interpersonal capitalisation influenced a broader, more global form of self-evaluation (i.e. life satisfaction), instead of concentrating its effects on the core domains of work and family. This is an encouraging finding that deserves more exploration.

The present line of investigation answers a call by several researchers to examine how subjective well-being is maintained over time (Diener, Lucas, & Scollon, 2006; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). Several studies have shown that experiencing more positive events relative to negative ones, reacting more intensely and for a longer duration to positive events, and recalling these events at a higher rate are all conducive to enhanced subjective well-being (Seidlitz & Diener, 1993; Seidlitz, Wyer, & Diener, 1997). Our findings suggest that work-family interpersonal capitalisation is associated with more intense or enduring reactions to positive work events. Hence, our findings reinforce the notion that although good fortune does make a difference in subjective well-being, behavioral reactions to this good fortune are also important.

Our confidence in the results is boosted by several methodological strengths. First, we obtained reports of capitalisation from spouses, and the results obtained using these reports corroborate those using participants' accounts. This demonstrates that when participants engage in work-family interpersonal capitalisation, it is also recognised and acknowledged by their spouses, which validates participants' reports. In addition, given that our well-being measure, life satisfaction, is thought to be more stable than affect and broader than job satisfaction (Heller et al., 2004), we asked employees to consider their well-being over the course of a five-day work week, whereas previous studies sampled daily job satisfaction (Ilies et al., 2011). George and

Jones (2000) recommended taking into consideration the time period over which subjective experiences are aggregated; effects over a longer time period indicate more enduring phenomena. Thus, our findings underscore the importance of work–family interpersonal capitalisation for employees' general well-being.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

As with all studies, there are several limitations in ours that we would like to discuss. First, our sample size (131 participants) is somewhat small considering the number of predictors we have, which could have limited our ability to uncover certain effects due to reduced statistical power. However, even with this sample size, we managed to detect small effect sizes (Cohen, 1992), which increases our confidence that the results would be similar should a larger sample size be used. Second, ratings were made retrospectively, which raises the possibility of memory decay or distortion since retrospective reporting involves some level of memory reconstruction (see Schwarz & Sudman, 1994).

Other limitations of the study pertain to more substantive issues. One limitation of the present study is that this design cannot permit inferences of causality. Although theory suggests that work–family interpersonal capitalisation would increase subjective well-being, it is also possible that employees who were happier felt like talking about work with their families. We controlled for this possibility to some extent by measuring employees' self-perceived pleasantness of the event, and their levels of extraversion and neuroticism. Sharing work events with one's spouse was associated with well-being regardless of individuals' personality and how positive the actual event was perceived. Furthermore, event pleasantness was not significantly related to sharing of the event, which shows that participants were not more likely to share more pleasant events. Nevertheless, it is possible that other event characteristics besides pleasantness (e.g. self-promoting events such as being praised by others or winning awards vs. other-promoting events such as colleagues helping you solve a problem) could predict work–family interpersonal capitalisation. Future research should study capitalised events in-depth to understand what predicts capitalisation efforts.

It is also possible that good spousal relationships predict both work–family interpersonal capitalisation and well-being. Unfortunately, we did not measure or control for the quality of spousal relationships and we cannot examine this possibility directly. However, we controlled for personality factors (extraversion and neuroticism), which have known associations with relationship satisfaction (positive and negative, respectively) (e.g. Scollon & Diener, 2006). We found that work–family interpersonal capitalisation was not predicted by either personality variable, which suggests that the effect of

relationship satisfaction (at least the dispositional component associated with personality factors) on capitalisation efforts is somewhat limited. Nonetheless, it remains an empirical question as to how quality of spousal relationships predicts and affects interpersonal capitalisation efforts.

More broadly, there is much about the interpersonal capitalisation process that remains unknown. While we know that interpersonal capitalisation has positive effects on well-being, we do not know why and how these effects come about. Previous research indicates that it is not simply talking that creates positive influences on well-being, as sharing of negative events does not produce the same benefits to subjective well-being (Langston, 1994; Pennebaker, Zech, & Rimé, 2001). Hence, it could be that well-being is improved after capitalisation, because the experience of sharing is pleasant due to receiving acknowledgment, validation or encouragement. It seems plausible that, while an event is pleasant, the experience of sharing was not (e.g. spouse dismissing your efforts). Studies have shown that positive spousal responsiveness to capitalisation efforts improves relationship satisfaction (e.g. Gable et al., 2004), which implies that the experience of capitalising needs to be more closely examined. Besides responsiveness, a sense of spouse's engagement and validation in the process even if responses are limited seems to be important (e.g. being attentive to the employee, listening and observing closely). Validation establishes that the employee is right in feeling positive about these events and her reactions are understandable and acceptable, and can be done simply by being attentive and engaged in listening and responding. This draws out and encourages more sharing (Linehan, 1997); after all, no one likes to share stories with disparaging or disinterested persons.

Although we did not distinguish between the act and the experience of capitalisation efforts, we did demonstrate that by engaging in interpersonal capitalisation, positive affect and life satisfaction are improved. We must emphasise that we do not make claims that the act of work-family interpersonal capitalisation itself is responsible for increasing well-being. That said, we take this opportunity to highlight an important future research direction: to examine the experience of sharing more thoroughly. In particular, researchers should distinguish between the act of sharing and the experience of sharing. If the act and experience of sharing are distinct processes, they will have separate effects on positive affect; however, if they are not, and it is the experience of sharing that matters in determining the outcomes of interpersonal capitalisations, then research efforts would be better off devoting attention to the experience of sharing.

Explicating psychological mechanisms underlying work-family interpersonal capitalisation and relating it to work-family spillover could contribute to the theoretical formulations of work-family research. Within this aim, boundary conditions that could contribute theoretically and empirically to

work–family interpersonal capitalisation should also be explored (Colquitt & Zapata-Phelan, 2007). For example, people who work in teams might benefit less from work–family interpersonal capitalisation as they are more likely to share positive experiences with other team members, thus reducing the psychological need to share with spouses.

Practical Implications

The present findings have practical implications for both employees and organisations. First, the evidence suggests that there are benefits to be gained from integrating the positive aspects of work and family. We, like other researchers, do not argue that integration across the board is desirable for all employees (Ilies et al., 2009). However, integration may be encouraged when there are positive occurrences at work. For example, organisations could involve employees' families in the celebration of their accomplishments. Such targeted action by the organisations could effectively encourage the employees to engage in more work–family interpersonal capitalisation, without having to implement costly blanket policies to create a work–life balance culture.

Organisations could also simply highlight the benefits of work–family interpersonal capitalisation so as to encourage their employees to engage in such activities. By offering and explaining concrete and practical ways (i.e. talk to your spouse more about the good things at work) to improve work–life integration, organisations can empower employees with tools and motivation to do so without having to shoulder the costs. By putting employees in the central role in the intervention (as the sharer), the organisations would transfer the responsibility onto them and empower them to engage in positive work–life integration.

More importantly, this study shows that employees can increase their positive affect and life satisfaction, not just job satisfaction; in other words, not only the organisation benefits from employees' work–life integration, but the employees themselves experience greater well-being. By knowing that such simple action could improve their individual well-being, rather than just job satisfaction, individuals might be more intrinsically motivated to utilise work–family interpersonal capitalisation.

This study highlights the balanced view that researchers must provide to practitioners about potential benefits and costs of work–life management strategies. Work–family integration has typically been studied with the understanding that boundaries are needed to prevent unwanted interruptions and the negative spillover that has been observed in work–family studies (e.g. Ilies et al., 2007b; Kossek et al., 2005). Although psychological detachment from work while at home may provide a necessary respite from work stresses (e.g. Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005), a rigid wall between work and family may prohibit positive linkages that may otherwise occur.

Conclusions

This study demonstrates two key findings: (1) work–family interpersonal capitalisation (i.e. sharing positive events with spouses) makes unique and significant contributions to positive affect, above and beyond that triggered by the positive events; and (2) work–family interpersonal capitalisation contributes to influencing not only affective states but also general subjective well-being, specifically, employees' life satisfaction. Put together, the findings show that not only does work–family interpersonal capitalisation link the work and family domains, its positive effects transcend these two domains and impact on a more general indicator of well-being, life satisfaction.

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