The Costs of Networking in Nonwork Domains: A Resource-based Perspective

Hans-Georg Wolff

University of Cologne

Sowon Kim

Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland

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Author Note

Hans-Georg Wolff, Department of Psychology, University of Cologne, Germany; Sowon, Kim, Ecole hôtelière de Lausanne, University of Applied Sciences Western Switzerland, Switzerland.

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Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to: Hans-Georg Wolff, University of Cologne, Organisations- und Wirtschaftspsychologie, Bernhard-Feilchenfeld-Str. 11., 50969 Köln, Germany. E-Mail: Hans-Georg.Wolff@uni-koeln.de

Abstract

Purpose

While studies have established that networking is an investment in an individual's career that pays off, recent research has begun to examine the potential costs of networking. This study suggests that prior research is limited in scope as it remains focused on the work domain. Drawing upon the work home resources model (ten Brummelhuis and Bakker, 2012), we broaden this perspective and develop a framework of negative consequences in nonwork domains. The paper proposes that networking generates costs in nonwork domains, because it requires the investment of finite energy resources in the work domain, and people lack these resources in other domains.

Methodology

This study uses structural equation modeling of multisource data from $N = 306$ individuals and their partners to examine how networking affects two distinct nonwork outcomes: work-family conflict and work-life balance.

Findings

Analyses support the general framework: networking is related to time- and strain-based work-family conflict and work time mediates the relationship between networking and these forms of conflict. Moreover, networking exhibits an inverted u-shaped relationship with work-life balance, indicating that excessive networking as well as a lack of networking decrease work-life balance.

Originality

This study adds to the emergent literature on the negative consequences of networking. Findings suggest that employees and organizations should adopt a broader and more balanced

perspective on networking: one that takes the well-known benefits—but also potential costs in work and nonwork domains—into account.

Keywords

Networking, Career Self-Management, Work-family conflict, Work-Life balance, Work Home Resources Model

Paper Type

Research Paper

Introduction

As the responsibility for advancing and promoting one's career has shifted from organizations to the individual, career self-management (CSM) has gained in importance in the literature (e.g. King, 2004, Hall *et al*., 2018). As research shows, one important CSM strategy is networking, which has shown to positively affect career outcomes, for example, salary (Wolff and Moser, 2009), promotions (Forret and Dougherty, 2004), or job mobility (Porter *et al*., 2016). The practitioner literature also echoes this positive view and recommends "networking, networking, networking" (Watanabe, 2004, p. 812; see also Anderson, 2015). Recently, however, scholars have begun to question whether this focus on the positive consequences of networking is too simplistic and have called on researchers to examine the negative outcomes of networking (e.g., Gibson *et al*., 2014). This emerging area of research has found that networking causes moral discomfort (Casciaro *et al*., 2014) and that in their decision to network people do take potential costs into account (Bensaou *et al*., 2013).

In line with this literature, the present paper further examines the potential costs of networking. More specifically, we argue that research has overlooked "opportunity costs" or how networking affects outcomes on nonwork domains, such as work-family conflict or work-life balance. We have limited knowledge about the effects of networking on the interplay of work and home (exceptions include Baumeler *et al*., 2018; Hall, 1972; Sturges, 2008), although there exists a tension between the advice to 'network, network, network' and people struggling to keep up with family demands. We draw on the work home resources (WHR) model (ten Brummelhuis and Bakker, 2012) to link networking to resource investments and outcomes in the nonwork domain. We suggest that networking requires the investment of energy resources and thus reduces the energy available for nonwork demands. This, we predict, creates work-family

conflict (e.g., Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985; ten Brummelhuis and Bakker, 2012) and work-life imbalance (e.g., Casper *et al*., 2018; Gröpel and Kuhl, 2006), two concepts broadly covering the nonwork domain (Beigi *et al*., 2019). We also examine whether one energy resource, the amount of time people invest in work, mediates the relationship between networking and nonwork outcomes.

The study contributes to the literature in three ways. First, it contributes to emerging scholarship seeking to explain why people abstain from networking (e.g., Bensaou *et al*., 2013; Kuwabara *et al*., 2018). Costs are one reason and knowledge about those costs provides a more balanced perspective on networking: it allows people to make informed decisions about how to use networking (or refrain from networking), and may allow organizations to implement more effective network-building HR practices (e.g., Collins and Clark, 2003) that take potential costs into account. Second, we broaden the perspective on networking by showing that the WHR model provides a viable lens to examine networking processes. We thus go beyond statements that networking is linked to resources (Gibson *et al*., 2014; Porter and Woo, 2015) and depict networking as a resource investment that in turn yields resource gains and losses. Finally, this study goes beyond the limited focus on the work domain and links networking to work-family conflict and work-life balance. Given that networking is an important career-self management strategy, we thus heed to calls for CSM scholarship to focus on how careers are embedded into individuals' entire lives (Greenhaus & Kossek, 2014). In sum, we thus hope to contribute to a more fully-developed and balanced discussion of networking among scholars as well as practitioners.

Theoretical Background

Networking

Networking is defined as "goal directed behavior, both inside and outside of an organization, focused on creating, cultivating, and utilizing interpersonal relationships" (Gibson *et al*., 2014: 150). Examples include attending social events in the organization, calling contacts that can provide valuable information (Michael and Yukl, 1993), or playing golf with clients or coworkers (Forret and Dougherty, 2004). Networking is related to, but distinct from social capital (e.g., Adler and Kwon, 2002; Coleman, 1988). It is an individual-level construct focusing on individual agency (Bensaou *et al*., 2013) whereas research on social capital adopts a social network perspective focusing on structural features such as network size or network brokerage (e.g., Soda *et al*., 2018). Yet, networking behaviors should result in a social network with resourceful contacts. The goal of networking is the acquisition of instrumental resources, including task advice, strategic information, and visibility (Podolny and Baron, 1997; Wolff *et al*., 2008), but not necessarily to increase expressive resources or emotional support (see e.g., Bensaou *et al*., 2013, Wolff and Moser, 2006; Wolff *et al*., 2008). The accumulation of instrumental resources in turn facilitates the attainment of more distal career outcomes for instance, salary and promotions (e.g., Forret and Dougherty, 2004).

Even though networking is thus a means to acquire work related resources, it is plausible that networking also yields negative outcomes. For example, Porter *et al*. (2015) showed that external networking increases the likelihood of turnover, which results in costs to organizations. For the individual, we suggest that networking requires the investment of resources, such as energy and time in building and maintaining contacts or doing contacts a favor. These concurrent investments might keep people from networking and from (potentially) receiving resources in the future. Moreover, the notion of opportunity costs illustrates that investments into networking

might be tied to missing out on investments into other things, such as completing work tasks, or spending time with the family. In line with these suggestions, Bensaou *et al*. (2013) report findings from a qualitative study, that unlike active, dedicated networkers, other respondents indicated that networking costs time and effort or that they had abstained from networking to maintain their work-life balance. Based upon these initial findings, we turn to the work home resources model (ten Brummelhuis and Bakker, 2012) to further develop this line of thinking and derive our hypotheses on potential costs of networking in nonwork domains.

Networking and the work home resources model

Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker's (2012) work home resources model (WHR) has its origins in conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll *et al*., 2018), and adopts the premise that people strive to acquire and retain resources because they help them attain their goals (Halbesleben *et al*., 2014). The WHR model proposes four classes of resources: (1) *objects and conditions* are stable structures that surround individuals, for example, a home, employment, or a social network, (2) *constructive resources* represent stable individual characteristics such as skills, health, knowledge, or optimism, (3) *energy resources* are volatile individual conditions such as physical or cognitive energy, mood, or time, and (4) *social support* refers to task advice, emotional backing, or instrumental help from others. Note that the WHR model does not distinguish between instrumental and expressive support, though scholars propose that networking yields instrumental rather than expressive resources (see previous section on networking). With regard to these four resource classes, networking represents a constructive resource (i.e., a skill) that helps to attain other work-related resources such as instrumental social support (e.g., strategic information) or even objects (e.g., employment, social network).

"Networkers" have better access to resources, because they can draw on their contacts to acquire resources with less effort or even exclusively (Bensaou *et al*., 2013; Wolff and Moser, 2009).

The WHR model further delineates resource-based mechanisms across domains. Specifically, changes in energies and constructive resources (summarized as personal resources) represent the mechanism linking work and home domains (Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker, 2012). Because some personal resources such as time and energy are finite and, once invested, are not available in other domains, their gain and drain leads to enrichment and conflict across domains, respectively. Work-home conflict results when demands (e.g., high workload) in one domain deplete personal resources (e.g., energy drain due to higher effort at work), and this hinders resource investments in the other domain (e.g., energy for "quality time" with one's partner). Likewise, the availability of resources in one domain (work or home) facilitates positive outcomes in the other domain, which represents a process of enrichment across domains.

Whenever people network, they invest temporal and cognitive resources (i.e., energies) into the work domain. While this potentially yields work-related resources, people simultaneously forgo the opportunity to invest energies into other domains, specifically nonwork domains. In this vein, they incur (opportunity) costs in nonwork domains. As networking represents voluntary behavior, people have considerable leeway in allocating their energy resources to networking or other things (e.g., socializing with colleagues after work vs. playing football with their children; see also Porter and Woo, 2015).

Here we examine two work-nonwork outcomes, work-family conflict (WFC) and work-life balance (WLB) to broadly represent the nonwork domain. In Beigi *et al*.'s (2019) taxonomy of work-nonwork concepts, WFC represents a narrow concept (i.e., restricted to "family") that focuses on negative consequences. Nevertheless, WFC is a mature concept with a large research

base, clear definitions and operationalized measures. Beigi *et al*. classify WLB as a broader, but still immature concept, with scholarly agreement that WLB refers to an overall assessment of the work-nonwork interface (e.g., Casper *et al*., 2018).

Networking and work-family conflict

WFC results from competing demands in work and family domains that cannot be fulfilled simultaneously (e.g., Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). Several meta-analyses (e.g., Byron, 2005; Michel *et al*., 2010) and reviews (Eby *et al*., 2005) have summarized the literature. Scholars distinguish three forms of conflict and two conflict directions (Carlsen *et al*., 2000; Eby *et al*., 2005; Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985). Considering conflict forms, time-based conflict results from incompatible temporal demands from work and family roles (e.g., when people work long hours and have no time to do household chores), whereas strain-based conflict refers to fatigue experienced in one role impeding fulfillment of demands from other roles (e.g., when people feel too strained from work to play with their children). Behavior-based conflict occurs when role behaviors are incompatible (e.g., talking to subordinates as if they were children). Considering the direction of WFC, people attribute the cause of a conflict to one of the domains and either perceive that work interferes with family or that family interferes with work (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Here, we focus work interfering with family, because networking is rooted in the work domain and thus conflict experiences should be attributed largely to this direction of WFC.

We hypothesize that networking affects time-based and strain-based WFC. Based on the WHR model (Ten Brummelhuis and Bakker, 2012), networking requires the investment of finite energies into the work domain that cannot be used to fulfill family demands. Because networking costs time, it results in time-based WFC, for example, when people participate in a networking

event, thus missing their children's school performance. Likewise, the cognitive effort invested in networking (e.g., active listening, remembering names, emotional labor, impression management, Wingender and Wolff, 2017) represents a demand that depletes energy resources. Thus people may feel too drained to invest further energy into fulfilling family demands, resulting in experiences of strain-based conflict. For instance, networking attempts might tire individuals to the extent that—even if they are physically present with their family during mealtime—they might be too fatigued to carry on an engaged conversion or actively listen to what their kids have experienced during the day.

H1. Networking positively affects a) time-based WFC and b) strain-based WFC.

One mechanism that might explain our proposed direct association between networking and time-based and strain-based WFC, is work time. As networking entails the investment of temporal and cognitive resources into the work role, we expect a positive association between networking and work time of individuals. Forret and Dougherty (2004) provide evidence for this relationship and time was also a prominent cost of networking in Bensaou *et al*.'s (2013) study. Likewise, Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) argue that time invested in work is unavailable for other roles and this might lead to WFC. This implies a mediation account where networking might affect time-based WFC, because it requires temporal investments.

Moreover, we also propose that work time mediates the relationship between networking and strain-based WFC. Greenhaus and Beutell state that "time involvement in a particular role also can produce strain symptoms" (1985: 81) and that, though they represent distinct constructs, time- and strain-based WFC share time as a common source. Likewise, Spector *et al*., (2007)

argue that work time is an indicator not only of temporal investments, but also of investments of physical and cognitive energies, and the resulting depletion of energies produces strain. People who invest more time into networking might thus experience more strain. For example, attending a networking event consumes time including preparation, travel, and follow up. At the event, people may exert cognitive effort because of impression management (e.g., pitching their skills) or listening carefully, which leads to a depletion of resources (Wingender and Wolff, 2017). People may thus not only have less time with their family, but also feel more strained or exhausted when they return home.

H2. Work time mediates the relationship between networking and a) time-based WFC, and b) strain-based WFC.

Networking and work-life balance

Broadening the perspective beyond the family domain, we also examine how networking affects WLB. The concept is still immature (Beigi *et al*., 2019) and a variety of definitions and measures of balance exists in the literature (Casper *et al*., 2018). In using this concept, we adopt several suggestions by Casper *et al*., that the concept of balance should be clearly explicated and include a notion of either satisfaction, involvement, effectiveness, or fit. In addition, concepts should conceptualize the nonwork domain broadly, and research should use multiple-item measures and multi-source data. Casper *et al*., also found that most WLB measures exhibit convergent validity, but are distinct from WFC.

Here we use Gröpel and Kuhl's (2006, 2009) concept of WLB, because it aligns well with our perspective on resource investments (for a similar approach see Kirchmeyer, 2000). The

concept employs the notion of fit, as balance refers to the appropriateness of resource allocations to four major life domains: (1) work/achievement, (2) contacts/relationships, (3) health/body, and (4) meaningfulness of life. People experience balance when allocations across these four domains fit their needs (i.e., are appropriate).

This study predicts an inverted u-shaped relationship between networking and WLB for two reasons. First, focusing too much on networking may decrease WLB, because it implies inappropriately large investments of resources into the work domain, at the expense of other domains (ten Brummelhuis and Bakker, 2012). Second, it is important to note that refraining from networking also results in imbalance, because it implies inappropriately low investments into the work domain. Following Porter and Woo's (2015) expectancy value framework on the motivation to network, such a divestment of resources might occur when people place little value on work and career goals or even lack such goals. For example, when people do not feel committed to their work or career (e.g., Colarelli and Bishop, 1990) they invest too few resources into networking and the work domain. Because work and its latent functions are a central pillar of our current lives (e.g., Paul and Batinic, 2010), this underinvestment may decrease WLB as well. As a result, we assume that a moderate amount of networking results in balance whereas either too much or too little networking yields imbalance.

H3. The relationship between Networking and WLB follows an inverted u-shaped relationship. Low and high networking result in lower WLB than medium networking.

Methods

Sample

We sampled German employee-spouse dyads collecting networking data from *focal respondents* who had to be working full time (i.e., > 30hrs,/week) and additional data from their *partners* to reduce threats of common source bias.

Students distributed 485 questionnaires to couples as part of a course project and 389 were returned (response rate 80%). Analyses use data from N = 306 couples, excluding 83 couples because they had missing data in study variables (5 couples) or did not fulfill sampling criteria. Following other studies (e.g., Bensaou *et al*., 2013; Forret & Dougherty, 2004) we focus on persons in full time employment. We thus excluded 42 focal respondents employed part time and 36 self-employed focal respondents, because they might have different career goals and show different patterns of career-related behaviors. Of the focal respondents, 240 (79%) were male, 65 (21%) were female (1 missing). Their average age was 39.9 years (SD = 12.65) and 118 individuals (39%) had a university degree. Focal respondents' average organizational tenure was 10.4 years (SD = 10.29) and 115 (38%) were in a supervisor position. They worked in a variety of business sectors; the most frequent were production (35%), service sector (19%), and public services (14%).

There were 242 (79%) female and 63 (21%) male partners (1 missing). Partners' average age was 38.3 years (SD = 12.42) and 74 (24%) had a university degree. Many partners worked full time (82, or 27%) or part time (105, or 35%); 117 (39%) were not in paid employment. On average, couples had been in the relationship for 15.3 years (SD = 12.06) and 258 (85%) were living together. About half (138, 45%) had one or more children, 160 couples (54%) had no children (8 missing values).

Measures

Focal respondents completed networking and WFC measures and indicated their work time. Partners provided information on focal respondents' work-life balance and work time.

Networking. We used Wolff and Moser's (2006, 2009) multidimensional 44-item measure, that had originally been developed and validated in Germany (four-point scale, 1 = *never / very seldom*, 4 = *very often / always*). It consists of six subscales, (1) building internal contacts (6 items, e.g., "I use company events to make new contacts" $\alpha = .81$), (2) maintaining internal contacts (7 items, e.g., "I catch up with colleagues from other departments about what they are working on" , $\alpha = .76$), (3) using internal contacts (8 items, e.g., "I discuss upcoming organizational changes with colleagues from other departments" , $\alpha = .79$), (4) building external contacts (7 items, e.g., "I accept invitations to official functions or festivities out of professional interest" , $\alpha = .81$), (5) maintaining external contacts (7 items, e.g., "For business purposes I keep in contact with former colleagues." , $\alpha = .79$), and (6) using external contacts (8 items, e.g., "I exchange professional tips and hints with acquaintances from other organizations" , $\alpha = .83$). With regard to construct validity, we replicated Wolff and Moser's (2006) CFAs using the same 21 item parcels: a six-factor model with a single higher-order factor provided adequate fit to the present data, $Chi^2(183) = 425.13$, $p < .001$ root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = 0.066, comparative fit index (CFI) = 0.97, standardized root mean squared residual (SRMR) = 0.066, parsimony normed fix index (PNFI) = 0.83 and was more parsimonious than a correlated first-order factor model, $Chi^2(174) = 333.62$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.055, CFI = 0.98, SRMR = 0.050, PNFI = 0.80, (see PNFI, cf. Wolff and Moser, 2006). Accordingly, we summed the networking scales into an overall networking score (composite reliability = .94, see Nunnally 1978: 246).

Work-family conflict. Focal respondents completed nine items from Carlson *et al*.'s (2000) WFC measure (translated into German by Wolff & Höge, 2011) that assessed work interfering with family. To provide evidence for the validity of the translated version, Wolff and Höge replicated the original factor structure and also replicated meta-analytical evidence from the WFC literature, for example, that WFC is higher for persons with children, shiftworkers, and lower for those with higher availability of leisure time. Items form three 3-item subscales that distinguish the domain of conflict: time-based conflict (e.g., "My work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like.", $\alpha = .80$), strain-based conflict (e.g., "Due to all the pressures at work, sometimes when I come home I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy.", $\alpha = .86$), and behavior-based conflict (e.g., "The problem-solving behaviors I use in my job are not effective in resolving problems at home." $\alpha = .87$). A CFA showed that a 3-factor model provided good fit, $Chi^2(24) = 38.63$, $p = .03$ RMSEA = 0.045, CFI = 0.99, SRMR = 0.038, whereas a single factor model did not, $Chi^2(27) = 524.15$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.246, CFI = 0.71, SRMR = 0.18.

Work-life balance. Partners completed the 18-item Life Balance Checklist (LBC, Gröpel, 2005; Gröpel and Kuhl, 2006) in its original German version. The LBC operationalizes work-life balance as the appropriateness of temporal investments devoted to four important domains, work/achievement (4 items, e.g., "work"), social contacts/ relationships (5 items, e.g., "seeing friends/acquaintances"), health/body (5 items, e.g., "recreation"), and meaningfulness of life (4 items, e.g., "thinking about one's own life"). Gröpel and colleagues (Gröpel, 2005; Gröpel and Kuhl, 2006) have provided evidence for the reliability, factor structure, and validity of the scale. For example, the LBC is meaningfully associated with feelings of control, general stress perceptions, health problems, and life satisfaction. Following these authors, partners answered items on a ten-point scale, which we collapsed into a 5-point scale indicating appropriate time

allocation (1 = *inappropriate allocation* , 5 = *appropriate allocation*). In a CFA, the hypothesized four-factor model exhibited satisfactory fit, $Chi^2(129) = 278.79$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.063, CFI = 0.94, SRMR = 0.079, whereas a single factor model did not fit well, $Chi^2(135) = 779.33$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = 0.127, CFI = 0.76, SRMR = 0.10. Following Gröpel, we averaged items into a single WLB score ($\alpha = .83$).

Work time. Focal respondents reported their average weekly working hours (including overtime). Also, partners estimated the average time focal respondents spent on work-related activities on a weekday and on the weekend, respectively. We calculated weekly working hours from these data. As both measures correlated highly ($r = .55$, $p < .01$), we averaged them into a single measure ($\alpha = .71$).

Control Variables: We considered gender; number of children, education and age (e.g. Byron, 2005; Wolff *et al*., 2008) as potential control variables. All of these variables exerted a significant effect on at least one of our dependent variables. Yet, because their inclusion did not substantively alter our findings, we report our findings without control variables.

Analyses

We employ SEM, following Klein and Moosbrugger's (2000, see also Kelava *et al*., 2008) latent moderated structural equation approach to model the hypothesized curvilinear relationship between networking and WLB. Although the sample is sizeable, it is too small to model six constructs with 73 items and a complex model structure (i.e., latent interaction). Following the examination of the measures' properties as reported in the measures section, we focused our analyses on the structural model using a single indicator model (e.g., Bollen, 1989; Williams, Vandenberg, & Edwards, 2009). We account for measurement error by setting the variance of the indicator to one minus the reliability multiplied by the variance of the respective scale. We

report one-tailed tests for significance where appropriate, but unless stated otherwise, p-values represent two-tailed tests.

Though we did not employ power analysis to determine our sample size, we ran several analyses using Zhang's (2004) bmem package for R to gauge the power of our analyses given the current sample size. Note that bmem cannot account for latent interactions, which we accordingly had to exclude from these calculations. Findings indicate that our analyses have adequate power (i.e., power = .80) for parameters of $\beta > 0.16$. With regard to our mediation hypotheses of work time, the literature (Forret and Dougherty, 2004; MacCallum, Forret, & Wolff, 2014) reports correlations between networking and work hours of $0.11 < r$ 0.39 (median r = 0.29), and meta-analyses (e.g., Byron, 2005) estimate the relationship between work time and work to family conflict measures at $\rho = 0.26$. Assuming both effects at $\alpha = \beta = 0.20$ for a mediated effect of $\alpha\beta = 0.04$, the power is 0.87.

Finally, note that analyses include behavior-based WFC as a nonequivalent dependent measure to strengthen the validity of the study design (Shadish *et al.*, 2002: 158). Networkers easily adapt their behavior to a wide range of different social situations (i.e., are high self-monitors, Wolff and Moser, 2006) and therefore networking should be independent from behavior-based WFC. Yet, behavior-based WFC correlates with other WFC measures and should be subject to similar validity threats (e.g., common method bias, response bias, reactivity, selection effects). If effects of networking are limited to time-based and strain-based WFC, this differential pattern provides stronger evidence for our theorizing, because alternative explanations (i.e., validity threats) must also account for this pattern.

Results

Insert Table 1 here

Table 1 shows correlations between study variables, Figure 1 depicts the model of our substantive hypotheses. Note that while Figure 1 depicts standardized coefficients, we report unstandardized coefficients in the text. Hypothesis 1 predicts direct effects of networking on (a) time-based and (b) strain-based WFC. As networking is unrelated to time-based WFC, $b = 0.12$, $se = 0.23$, $p = .303$ (one-tailed), Hypothesis 1a receives no support. Supporting Hypothesis 1b, networking is positively associated with strain-based WFC, $b = 0.04$, $se = 0.02$, $p = .015$ (one-tailed).

Hypothesis 2 predicts mediating effects of work time between networking and (a) time-based and (b) strain-based WFC. The indirect paths are significant, as networking is significantly associated with work time, $b = 3.68$, $se = 1.15$, $p < .001$, and work time is significantly associated with time-based WFC, $b = 0.10$, $se = 0.02$, $p = .008$, and also strain-based WFC, $b = 0.55$, $se = 0.26$, $p = .030$. To test for significance, we examine the product of indirect effects (labelled *ab*) using nonparametric bootstrapping (10.000 replications). The indirect effect of networking via work time on time-based WFC is significant, $ab = 0.36$, 95% CI [0.15, 0.63], and also the indirect effect on strain-based WFC, $ab = 0.16$, 95% CI [0.05:0.36]. Thus Hypotheses 2a and 2b receive support. With no direct effect of networking on time-based WFC, work time fully mediates the effect of networking on time-based WFC, whereas the significant direct effect of networking on strain-based WFC indicates partial mediation. Of further note, neither networking nor work time are associated with behavior-based WFC.

Insert Figure 1 here

Hypothesis 3 predicts an inverted u-shaped effect of networking on WLB. We model this nonlinear relationship using a linear and a quadratic effect. Both, the linear effect of networking on WLB, $b = 0.21$, $se = 0.09$, $p = .012$ (one-tailed) and more importantly the quadratic effect are significant, $b = -0.28$, $se = 0.14$, $p = .024$ (one-tailed). In addition, deletion of the squared effect significantly reduces model fit, $-2\Delta LL(1) = 5.83$, $p = .015$, indicating that it adds explanatory power over and above the linear effect. Figure 2 shows individuals' factor scores on networking and WLB and the line denotes predicted values derived from model parameters. Its inverted u-shape supports Hypothesis 3.

Insert Figure 2 here

Post hoc analyses

While our theorizing focused on networking in general, we also examined the relationships between the networking facets and both the WFC measures and work time. Table 2 depicts correlations between these variables. We do not show correlations of networking with work-life balance, because our hypotheses refer to a nonlinear effect and linear correlations are uninformative here.

Insert Table 2 here

Overall, findings appear to follow a meaningful pattern, and we note four properties here. First, external networking more consistently exhibits higher relationships with time-based and strain-based WFC. All facets representing external networking are significantly, or in one case marginally significantly, related to the WFC measures. With regard to internal networking maintaining internal contacts is significantly related to the WFC measures and there is a

marginally significant relationship between using internal contacts and strain-based WFC. Building internal contacts does not appear to contribute to WFC. Possibly, the former facets represent those networking behaviors that are more often shown outside of regular work hours and thus require additional energies and have a stronger impact on WFC. Second, no relationship between networking facets and behavior-based WFC is significant, and this further corroborates our focus on time-based and strain-based WFC. Third, there is a consistent pattern of relationships between networking facets and work time as building and maintaining internal as well as external contacts, but not using contacts is related to work time. This might indicate that people can save time be if they can draw on the resources made available by their contacts. Finally, we note all correlations are small or small to medium, at best, a finding not uncommon for non-strain-based constructs in WFC research (e.g., Byron, 2005).

Discussion

Recently, scholars have started to examine the potential negative consequences of networking and this study shows that negative consequences are not limited to the work domain, but extend into the nonwork domain. On a broader level, the study shows that the WHR model (and its base: conservation of resources) provides viable lens to shed further light on networking. We believe that this is an important strength, because it fills the blank space in career theories on how networking, or more broadly career self-management, is related to outcomes such as WFC. Availability and lack of personal resources are hardly domain specific and thus represent a mechanism or "currency" by which effects are transmitted across domains.

Our study is the first to examine the costs of networking and shows that beyond anecdotal evidence, networking is related to negative consequences in two ways. First, networking is

associated with negative outcomes in non-work domains, WFC and also WLB. The study adds to scholarship showing that constructs that yield benefits in the work domain sap resources and thus affect nonwork domains (e.g., Halbesleben *et al*., 2014). While networking yields career benefits such as salary, promotions, and job mobility, networkers' focus on the work domain comes at a cost that is evident in difficulties to meet conflicting demands from the family domain. Networking has therefore negative consequences beyond work-related attitudes and feelings (Casciaro *et al*., 2014; Kuwabara *et al*., 2018); consequences extend into the nonwork domain, because energy resources are finite and cannot be invested twice. Corroborating our theorizing, this applies in particular to strain-based and time-based WFC, but not behavior-based WFC and alternative explanations (e.g., common source bias) would have to account for this pattern of findings.

Second, we identify an important mediator, showing that the employment of networking behaviors is associated with an investment of energy resources, as networking is related to longer work time. While Bensaou *et al*.'s (2013) show that people are aware of these costs, our findings show that these costs are not mere subjective impressions, but also become manifest in more objective measures of effort, such as work time. Findings literally highlight the word stem *work* in networking, that individuals should consider potential benefits in the light of potential costs of networking. In this vein, work time is associated with both time-based and strain-based WFC and this finding supports assumptions (e.g., Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) that work time is a broad indicator of energy invested into work (i.e., of "work") and thus affects not only time-based, but also strain-based WFC,

The study also shows that, though hardly considered, the general linkages between work and nonwork apply to networking, and, on a broader level, to CSM. Scholars often neglect

potential negative consequences, in particular those in nonwork domains (cf. Greenhaus and Kossek, 2014), and we show that evaluating the benefits of networking and CSM need to take nonwork consequences into account. Given that careers increasingly require CSM, it might well be reframed as an additional demand that stands in conflict with nonwork demands. Note that a thorough assessment requires information on positive spillover caused by networking. Recently, and while this study was already in progress, Baumeler *et al*. (2018) showed that some networking behaviors result in work-family enrichment. As the Baumeler *et al*. study and our study considered only one direction each, neither allows the calculation of a net effect of costs and benefits.

Given this potential caveat, our findings on WLB may alleviate some of these concerns. Some scholars (cf. Beigi *et al*., 2019) suggested that balance indicates that enrichment processes outweigh conflict, and imbalance indicates the opposite pattern. WLB may thus provide an integrative assessment of costs and benefits. Indeed, going beyond the negative relationship between networking and WFC, WLB may be an indicator of a net effect. An average amount of networking behaviors yields the highest balance and little as well as excessive networking yield lower WLB. In light of this curvilinear relationship with WLB, networking is not per se detrimental and intermediate amounts of networking contribute to WLB, because individuals obtain satisfaction and positive spillovers from work (e.g., Baumeler *et al.*, 2018). Yet, costs outweigh benefits for those who show excessive networking behaviors. The adage that there is "too much of a good thing" is also true for networking.

Practical implications

Individuals, scholars and practitioners need to take the full range of potential consequences into account. Those considering career advancement through networking should be aware that

this requires investments into their work role and potentially conflicts with demands from other roles. Although we encourage people to network to manage their career, we do not recommend an excessive focus on networking because of its negative effects on WFC and WLB. Furthermore, knowledge on the costs of networking should be included in networking training programs and the practitioner literature should provide individuals with a balanced view on networking. Organizations that intend to further employees' networking due to its positive effects on job performance (e.g., by implementing network-building talent management practices, Collins and Clark, 2003), should be aware of networking costs and might take measures to alleviate production and opportunity costs (e.g., scheduling networking events at family friendly times). Managers set the context in which networking takes place and a combination of network-building talent management practices and measures aimed at improving the work/nonwork boundary might reduce costs and yield better results than practices that focus on networking alone.

Limitations and future research suggestions

While our framework advanced knowledge on costs of networking, it is not without limitations. Our findings are limited to "psychological costs" (Casciaro *et al*., 2014: 723) and we cannot attach a monetary value to our findings, whether costs truly exceed benefits or vice versa. Also, the model does not provide an exhaustive list of potential costs. For instance, while we do think that there might be opportunity costs incurred in the work domain, we have not further elaborated on this point (see e.g., Luthans, 1988 on effective vs. successful managers). Rather, this study aims to provide a starting point to show that costs do exist; thus, we suggest future research to integrate both cost and benefit perspectives in order to assess the net benefit of networking. Furthermore, in relation to the lack of direct association between networking and

time-based WFC, future research might further theorize upon effects of the functional distinction of building, maintaining, and using contacts that we explored in a post hoc fashion.

Another limitation is that some data come from the same source and might be biased by common method variance, even though we obtained data from both, focal respondents and their partners. Specifically, this might apply to the relationships between networking and work-family conflict as focal respondents answered both measures. Yet, focal individuals are an adequate source to measure WFC, because role conflict is a perceptual construct (Katz and Kahn, 1978). In addition the use of behavior-based WFC as a nonequivalent dependent variable and the resulting pattern of effects can hardly be explained by common source bias alone (cf. Shadish *et al*. 2002).

Future research might further elaborate on networking using resource-based models. Conservation of resource theory's notion of resource caravans or gain and loss spirals (e.g., Hobfoll *et al.*, 2018) might be particularly fruitful to delineate how resource gain and drain in the short term might eventually yield long-term outcomes. This might shed further light on how people attain positive distal outcomes (e.g., a promotion), but more importantly provide a mechanism to link networking to extremely negative outcomes, such as burnout. Future research and theorizing might also take networking facets into account. Our post hoc analyses show consistent associations that need to be replicated. In addition, future research might further examine mediating mechanisms beyond work time. While its broad effects on time-based as well as strain-based WFC highlight that it is a good starting point, other mediators, for example different forms of emotional labor associated with networking might also yield additional insights into strategies to reduce WFC. With regard to boundary conditions, individual

dispositions, for example extraversion, might moderate the relationships between networking and WFC.

Conclusion

This study represents a call to academics and practitioners to adopt a balanced perspective on networking. It shows that networking is not the ultimate, consequence-free CSM strategy. Acknowledging that networking does yield work and career benefits, it also represents an investment that yields costs beyond the work domain. In contrast to the optimism pervading the practitioner literature and public media, our study shows that the current picture of networking is oversimplified and a more balanced evaluation of networking and its consequences is viable.

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Table 1.
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations of Study Variables.

Variable	M	SD	1)	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)	7)	8)	9)
1) Networking	2.12	0.41	(.94)								
Work to family conflict											
2) Time-based	3.31	1.46	.13*	(.80)							
3) Strain-based	3.24	1.57	.17**	.54**	(.86)						
4) Behavior-based	3.94	1.81	-.01	.25**	.17**	(.87)					
5) Life balance [c]	3.90	0.60	.04	-.20**	-.17**	-.15**	(.83)				
6) Work time	46.18	7.16	.20**	.40**	.19**	.08	-.24**	(.71)			
Control variables											
7) Gender[a]	1.79	0.41	-.09	-.09	-.10	.09	-.04	.12*	--		
8) Age	39.94	12.68	-.24**	.09	.08	.08	-.21**	.09	.23**	--	
9) Number of children	0.45	0.78	-.06	.18**	-.01	.07	-.15**	.12*	.19**	.21**	--
10) Education[b]	1.39	0.49	.18**	.16**	.08	-.02	-.03	.28**	.05	.07	.03

Note. $N = 306$ for study variables, and $298 < N < 306$ for control variables. Reliabilities are shown in brackets on the diagonal, when appropriate.

[a] *1* = female, *2* = male.

[b] 1 = no university degree 2 = university degree

[c] 1 = imbalance, 5 = balance.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Table 2.
Correlations between Networking Facets and Work to Family Conflict.

Variable	1)	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)	7)	8)	9)
Internal netwoking									
1) Building internal contacts	--								
2) Maintaining internal contacts	.44**								
3) Using internal contacts	.43**	.54**							
External networking									
4) Building internal contacts	.50**	.45**	.40**						
5) Maintaining internal contacts	.46**	.46**	.48**	.66**					
6) Using internal contacts	.35**	.40**	.54**	.47**	.66**				
Work to family conflict									
7) Time-based	-.03	.12*	.05	.18**	.10†	.14*			
8) Strain-based	.01	.18**	.10†	.17**	.14*	.17**	.54**		
9) Behavior-based	-.02	.03	.02	.00	-.02	-.06	.25**	.17**	
10) Work time	.12*	.20**	.05	.32**	.15**	.06	.40**	.20**	.08

Note. $N = 306$.
† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

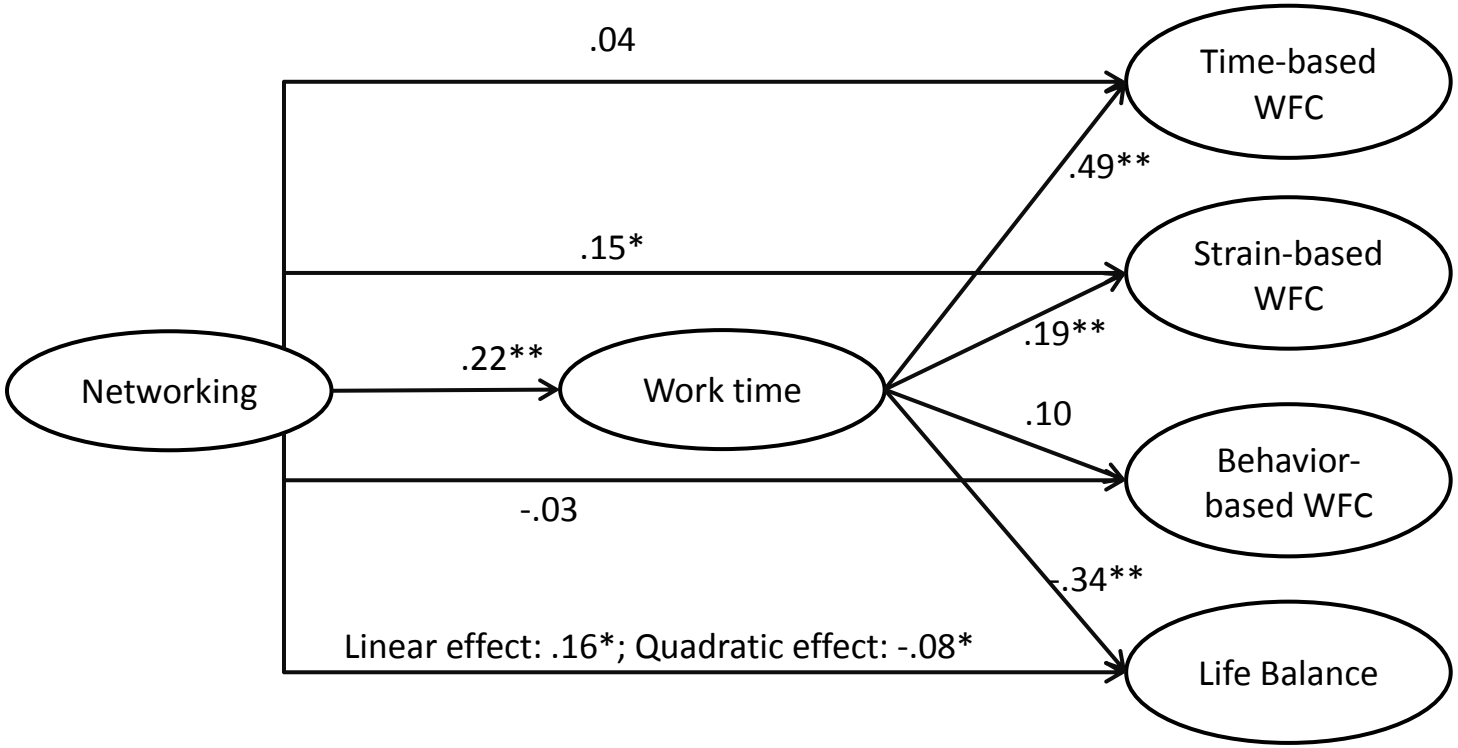

Figure 1. Hypothesized model with standardized coefficients. Correlations between dependent variables are modeled, but not shown. Log-Likelihood = -3092.844; Scaling correction factor = 1.0521; BIC = 6345.949.
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

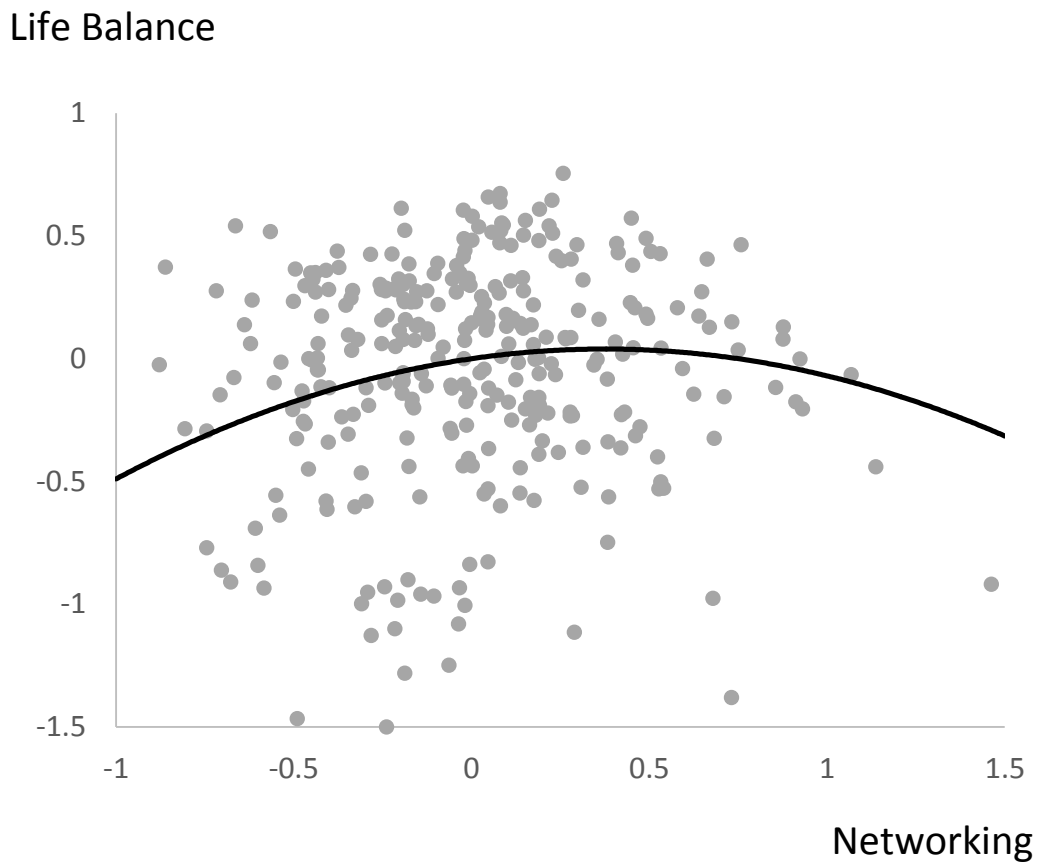

Figure 2. Inverted u-shaped effect of networking on life balance: Individual factor scores (grey dots) and predicted values (black line).