
Managing Family Demands in Teams: The Role of Social Support at Work

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Abstract

A majority of today's workforce juggles work and family roles, whereby family life often interferes with work. Thus far, not much is known about work–family interference at the team level. This study explores how team members' family demands influence team processes (taskwork and teamwork) and consequently, team performance. In addition, we investigate whether social support at work helps to prevent possible disadvantageous effects of team members' family demands on team processes. Using a sample of 61 teams (520 employees), we found that team members' average family demands were negatively related to supervisor-ratings of team performance, through reduced taskwork. Supervisor and organizational social support attenuated this negative relationship. Family demands were positively related to teamwork when coworker and supervisor support were high. These findings specify that under conditions of adequate support at work, harmful effects of a team's family context on team performance are less likely, whereas teamwork is even enhanced.

Keywords

cooperation, family demands, social support, team performance, teamwork, work–family balance

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The widespread use of teams as a method of organizing work has led to a vast number of studies on the factors that contribute to team performance (for an overview, see Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008). Team members' competencies, group composition, and task characteristics are examples of commonly used predictors of team performance (see also, Guzzo & Dickson, 1996). One criticism of previous team studies is that they neglect the team's wider social context (Mathieu et al., 2008; Waldman, 1994). Specifically, it is possible that factors beyond the organizational context influence team processes due to the blurred boundaries between work and family life (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). As a majority of today's workforce has family responsibilities, work–family conflict has become a common phenomenon. Juggling dual roles may prevent employees from contributing optimally to the team because of time pressure and reduced energy for work (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

The effects of family demands on work outcomes have been studied extensively at the individual level (e.g., Demerouti, Bakker, & Voydanoff, 2010; Erickson, Nichols, & Ritter, 2000; Ten Brummelhuis, Van der Lippe, & Kluwer, 2010). These studies suggest that employees' contribution to their team—in terms of performance, presence, effort—and cooperation between team members may be diminished when they have heavy family demands. We extend this research by investigating the extent to which teams' family demands (mean of team members' family demands) influence team processes, including taskwork (i.e., the overall tasks performed by all team members) and teamwork (i.e., good interpersonal cooperation). In accordance with the Input–Process–Outcome (IPO) model (McGrath, 1984) we examine to what extent the team's family demands affect supervisor-rated team performance through team processes.

In addition, this study examines how organizations may deal with the possible disadvantageous impact of family demands on team processes. Previous research on work–life policies has shown that social support from the workplace helps employees to balance work and family roles (for an overview, see Glass & Finley, 2002). With regard to work outcomes, several studies have reported an advantageous effect of social support at work on employee performance and helping behavior (Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Ten Brummelhuis & Van der Lippe, 2010). Similarly, social support that is aimed at helping team members combine dual roles may facilitate team processes. Therefore, we explore whether social support provided by team members, the supervisor, and the organization, helps to reduce any negative effects of team members' family demands on taskwork and teamwork.

Theoretical Framework

Input–Process–Outcome Model

The dominant framework for explaining team performance is the IPO model (Mathieu et al., 2008; McGrath, 1984). Input refers to team member characteristics that enable and constrain interactions among team members, such as competencies, personalities, effort, and individual performance. Input also includes team, organizational, and environmental characteristics that form the setting in which the team operates. The team's task design, but also the team's aggregate family demands, can thus be considered as input. Culture, technology, uncertainty in the field, and environmental stability are other examples of input (for an overview, see Mathieu et al., 2008).

Processes form the linking mechanism between team input and team outcomes and describe how team input is transformed into outcomes. Roughly, team processes can be categorized into taskwork and teamwork. Taskwork refers to the functions that team members must perform to accomplish the team's task, whereas teamwork refers to the interaction among team members (Mathieu et al., 2008). In more concrete terms, taskwork can be considered as the team members' task performance, including their work effort, task efficiency, and work quality. Teamwork reflects the quality of cooperation among team members, including interemployee helping and knowledge sharing (Lin, 2010).

Output is the result of taskwork and teamwork; one that is valued by the organization, employees, or customers. Output includes both performance outcomes, such as customer satisfaction and production quality, and affective outcomes, such as team member satisfaction and commitment (Mathieu et al., 2008). The relationship between input, process, and output is assumed to be causal: Team input predicts team output through team processes (Cohen & Bailey, 1997). Two assumptions can be derived from the IPO model. First, high team performance is achieved when taskwork is high. Because team members are mutually dependent on each others' contributions, it is important that each member performs his or her share. Low contribution of one of the members not only lowers the average team member contribution but also may hinder others in doing their share of the work. Second, the IPO model assumes that good teamwork benefits team performance (Mathieu et al., 2008). Good interpersonal processes, such as low interpersonal conflict, providing feedback, and high interpersonal trust, have been positively related to team performance (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003; Geister, Konradt, & Hertel, 2006). In the following, we discuss how family demands may affect taskwork and teamwork, and thereby, indirectly team performance.

Family Demands

The effect of employees' family demands on individual work outcomes can be explained using Conservation of Resource (COR) Theory (Hobfoll, 1989). COR theory describes how people react to the stressors they encounter in their environment and how this influences their well-being and performance. The key assumption of COR theory is that stress occurs when people risk losing, or actually lose resources that they value (Hobfoll, 2002). When stressors (e.g., work demands) are either unusually high or chronic, one risks to end up in a downwards spiral whereby continuous resource loss results in feelings of burnout (Demerouti, Bakker, & Bulters, 2004), while the demands pile up because one is less effective in dealing with them (Ten Brummelhuis, Ter Hoeven, Bakker, & Peper, 2011). Likewise, high family demands, defined as aspects in the family domain that require sustained physical and/or mental effort, may cause stress because many personal resources are needed to successfully cope with those demands (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Peeters, Montgomery, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005) may cause stress because many personal resources are needed to successfully cope with those demands. Personal resources refer to assets that are inherent to a person, that are valued by the individual, and that serve as a mean to attain life goals (Hobfoll, 2002). Examples of personal resources are personal traits (e.g., self-efficacy, self-esteem) and energy (physical health, resilience). Family demands may drain the employee's personal resources, or at least place them at risk (Weer, Greenhaus, & Linnehan, 2010). When the employee is overburdened by family tasks and personal resources are depleted, he or she is likely to function suboptimally in the work role (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000).

Empirical studies support this depletion hypothesis (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Hobfoll, 1989), reporting increased levels of stress, burnout, time pressure, and absence from work, and reduced levels of work performance and loyalty among parents who have onerous family responsibilities (Bekker, Croon, & Bressers, 2005; Erickson et al., 2000; Keene & Reynolds, 2005; Peeters et al., 2005). These studies indicate that the individual input, in terms of energy, time, effort, and performance, is reduced when employees have high family demands. At the team level, the effects of employees' family demands may be double harmful. First, when more team members have heavy family demands, they may all contribute suboptimally. The overall work completed (taskwork) is then reduced. Second, impaired task performance of one team member may impede other team members from doing their job, because

task performance in teams is interdependent (Mathieu et al., 2008). For instance, team members may be impeded from doing their share because they need the advice of a coworker who is absent due to family issues.

Family demands may also affect the interactions among team members (teamwork). Employees with heavy family demands have less time and energy to invest in coworker relationships (Knoester & Eggebeen, 2006). Also, family demands have been associated with higher absence rates (Erickson et al., 2000), reducing the opportunities for team members to interact and to build fruitful cooperative relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Erickson et al., 2000). Previous studies showed that family demands, such as household chores and care for young children, were negatively related to the exchange of collegial gestures, helping behavior, and loyalty to work (Keene & Reynolds, 2005; Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2010). At the team level, it is therefore conceivable that the sum of team members' family demands impedes teamwork. Again, in comparison with the individual level, any harmful effects from family demands may be multiplied at the team level. First, due to heavy family demands, team members lack the time and energy to invest in interpersonal relationships with coworkers (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2010). In teams, these effects add up: The overall helping behavior in a team will be reduced when more members have a high family load. Second, when no one starts helping others, team members are less likely to reciprocate helping gestures. Due to the lack of social exchanges between team members, the development of a cooperative team climate is less likely (Hodson, 2001). In summary, we expect that, at the team level, family demands (input) are negatively related to taskwork and teamwork (process), thereby resulting in poorer team performance (output).

Hypothesis 1: The mean of team members' family demands is negatively related to team performance through lower levels of (a) taskwork and (b) teamwork.

Social Support

One of the most important factors helping employees with combining work and family roles is social support (Carlson & Perrewé, 1999). When providing social support, one aims to help the person who receives the support by increasing the person's personal resource supply (Van Daalen, Willemsen, & Sanders, 2006). Social support can involve providing empathy, care, love, and trust (emotional support); time, money, and energy (instrumental support);

information that is relevant for self-evaluation (appraisal support); and advice, information, and suggestions (informational support; House, 1981). COR theory (Hobfoll, 2002) suggests that support intervenes in the depleting effects of stressors on outcomes by adding or replenishing personal resources. When employees have heavy family demands, a shortage in time and energy threatens their performance at work. Social support is thought to help employees balance work and family roles because it gives them additional time, energy, and fulfillment (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2010). Employees then have enough personal resources to deal with their family demands, thereby preventing those demands from hindering performance at work. Ample studies on social support have confirmed that social support attenuates the harmful effects of demands on work outcomes (Van Daalen et al., 2006). For instance, Bakker and his colleagues (Bakker, Demerouti, & Euwema, 2005; Bakker et al., 2004) reported that the disadvantageous effect of job demands—increased feelings of burnout and impaired work-performance—was less pronounced when employees received coworker support.

From a team-level perspective, social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Tsui, Pearce, Porter, & Tripoli, 1997) offers an additional explanation of why social support may attenuate the harmful effects of stressors. Social support can be seen as a benefit that is exchanged between the sender and the receiver. In a social exchange, the actors trust that their input will be returned at some point in the future (Blau, 1964). The continuing exchange of favors results in rewarding and long-term relationships (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Social exchange theory helps to understand employee–employer relationships (Tsui et al., 1997), supervisor–subordinate relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995), and coworker relationships (Hodson, 2001). Employees reciprocate received support by expending more effort at work and by investing in the relationship with the support provider. Such social exchange relationships are even more likely to develop when the social support is needed (Cook, 2009; Muse, Harris, Giles, & Feild, 2008). In accordance with the arguments of the COR theory and social exchange theory, we expect that social support at work attenuates the harmful effects of family demands on taskwork and teamwork. We differentiate three types of social support that can be found at work.

First, coworkers may provide instrumental help when a team member is occasionally unable to perform his or her part of the teamwork due to family responsibilities. By standing in for each other, coworkers prevent the multiplicative harmful effect for the team process. When coworkers do the work that would otherwise be left unfinished, they prevent that other team members who are dependent on this work are hindered in doing their work. We acknowledge that the coworkers who stand in may temporarily have an

additional workload. We note, however, that high work demands do not necessarily lead to stress or reduced performance immediately, and can even be seen as a challenge (Crawford, LePine, & Rich, 2010). Stress and reduced performance occur when work overload is structural, or excessively exceeds normal work demands (Demerouti et al., 2004; Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2011). Moreover, the team members who are at work can share the additional workload. Thus, although coworkers who help out may temporarily experience higher work pressure, they ensure that the overall team's tasks are completed. In addition, knowing that coworkers will help when one is absent due to family reasons may motivate team members and give them more resilience to successfully accomplish work tasks even when they have a high family load (Bakker et al., 2005). Helping each other will also start a social exchange relationship between team members (Hodson, 2001). The continuing exchange of social support makes team members more committed to the team, whereby they put more effort into their tasks, and are more willing to build cooperative relationships with team members. We expect that team members who have a heavy family load, but who help each other with their work, prevent team tasks from being left unfinished, while developing cooperative relationships.

Second, supervisor support may help team members manage dual roles. A supportive supervisor may contribute to an employee's energy level by discussing family-related problems, giving advice on balancing dual roles, reinforcing the employee's positive self-image, and reducing stress by showing understanding for the employee's family life (Glass & Finley, 2002). By providing adequate support, supervisors may prevent team members with heavy family demands from failing to perform their share of the team's work. The harmful effects on other team members' taskwork are, therefore, also limited. In addition, team members may reciprocate their supervisor's social support by expending more effort at work and investing in teamwork. Empirical studies have reported higher task performance, job commitment, and helping behavior when employees had better relationships with their supervisors (Cook, 2009; Ten Brummelhuis & Van der Lippe, 2010). Furthermore, supervisors who show understanding and coach their team members are likely to create a cooperative work atmosphere in which all employees feel appreciated and show high organizational commitment (Cook, 2009; Ryan & Kossek, 2008).

As the third type of social support, we address the organization's culture toward combining work and family roles. A supportive work environment provides the employee with personal resources, such as understanding, advice, and recognition (Van Daalen et al., 2006). These resources may help team members complete their taskwork, even if they have high family

demands. In addition, when employers offer work–life support, employees are likely to reciprocate these benefits by expending more effort and dedication (Tsui et al., 1997). Furthermore, social support offered at the company level may be an exemplary model for supervisors and employees (Major, Fletcher, Davis, & Germano, 2008). Indeed, Muse et al. (2008) found that employees who perceived the organizational climate as more family-supportive not only showed higher organizational commitment, were more dedicated to their job, and had higher work performance, but also invested more in coworker relationships.

Hypothesis 2: Coworker support moderates the relationship between team members' family demands and team processes. The negative relationships between family demands and (a) taskwork and (b) teamwork are attenuated when social support is high in comparison to low.

Hypothesis 3: Supervisor support moderates the relationship between team members' family demands and team processes. The negative relationships between family demands and (a) taskwork and (b) teamwork are attenuated when social support is high in comparison to low.

Hypothesis 4: Organizational support moderates the relationship between team members' family demands and team processes. The negative relationships between family demands and (a) taskwork and (b) teamwork are attenuated when social support is high in comparison to low.

Method

Sample and Procedure

The data were collected in 2007 from team members of 97 teams at 24 Dutch organizations using team-based work practices. The 24 organizations included the industrial sectors of health care (e.g., nursing home), facility and support (e.g., logistics center), commercial service (e.g., IT company), and consultancy (e.g., organizational consultancy). The types of industries were representative of the Netherlands, although agriculture was underrepresented.

Organizations were recruited from a professional network of organizations taking part in the students' internship program of a university department. Of the 42 organizations involved in this program, 24 were interested in participating in the study. Organizations could choose from among several

data collection options, selecting the one that best suited their work process. Most organizations (12) chose a written survey, which was distributed by their team supervisors among the team members and accompanied by an introductory letter from the research coordinator. Employees and supervisors could fill in the questionnaire at their discretion and return it by mail to the research coordinator. Eight organizations chose to schedule a meeting with the team members, during which the study coordinator explained the study's aim and procedure to them in person. Afterward, employees and supervisors completed the questionnaire at their convenience. Finally, four organizations used the online version of the same questionnaire, accompanied by an introductory email. To increase the response rates, respondents were reminded twice to complete the survey, either by their supervisors or by email (online questionnaire).

The employee questionnaire contained questions about the employee's family life, including family demands, and individual task performance. The supervisor questionnaire contained questions about team processes (cooperation) and team performance. Team members and supervisors provided their team name or number, thereby enabling the linkage of team members and supervisors from the same team.

Of the 1,527 questionnaires distributed, 520 were returned (34%). This response rate is reasonable for samples in the Netherlands (varying from 25% to 45%), although rather low as compared with international response (average response rate = 50%; $SD = 21\%$; Baruch & Holtom, 2008; Kalmijn, Bernasco, & Weesie, 1999). The response rate differed depending on the chosen strategy. The written surveys distributed by team supervisors resulted in a response rate of 29%, whereas the response rate was 56% when the study coordinator introduced the survey. The online survey had a response rate of 47%. The samples resulting from the different data collection strategies did not differ significantly in background characteristics (gender, age, and education), dependent variables (teamwork, taskwork, and team performance), or other variables, including personal information, such as family demands. The employees represented 97 teams. The mean response rate of team members per team was 60%. The response rate of supervisors was 61%, with 66 of the 109 supervisors contacted returning the questionnaire.

The sample included more female (61%) than male employees due to the substantial number of respondents working in the health care sector, with only 4% male personnel. This distribution for health care is in accordance with national figures (The Netherlands Institute for Social Research [SCP], 2008). Also, the percentages of male (58%) and female (42%) respondents in this sample that were found for the other sectors are comparable with national

statistics (54% male; 46% female; Dutch Organization for Applied Scientific Research [TNO], 2009). The distribution of the respondents' ages was normal in comparison with national statistics for the labor force (SCP, 2008), with a mean of 39 years ranging from 17 to 63 years ($M = 38.87$, $SD = 11.06$). Lower educated employees (no education, primary school, or lower vocational education) were underrepresented (11%) compared with employees with a secondary (43%) or tertiary (46%) education. National statistics of the Dutch labor force show that those percentages are 25, 45, and 29, respectively (TNO, 2009). The mean weekly work hours in this sample of 520 employees was 34.0 hr, which is somewhat higher than the national mean (30.9 hr), possibly because this study only included employees working a minimum threshold of 4 hr weekly. Cohen and Bailey's (1997) definition of a team was used: A collection of individuals who are interdependent, share responsibility for outcomes, and are viewed as an intact social entity (Cohen & Bailey, 1997). Therefore, teams were selected that indicated that a minimum of 25% of their tasks required cooperation, resulting in a sample of 61 teams. In addition, teams were only included if at least two members of the team completed the questionnaire, as well as their supervisor. The average number of respondents per team was five members ($SD = 2.89$; range = 2 to 19).

Measures

Team performance. Work performance of the team was operationalized as the extent to which the team's productive output (product or service) met standards of quantity, quality, and timeliness (Cohen & Bailey, 1997) compared with organizational targets and the performance of other teams. Supervisors rated their team's performance on an 8-item Likert-type scale from Costa (2000), developed by Ten Horn, Zinovieva, Roe, and Dienes (1996). The scale included items on output quality and efficiency with answer categories ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). Examples of items were "This team is known to work efficiently" and "This team usually meets its targets" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$).

Teamwork. Teamwork was operationalized as the commitment, loyalty, and cooperative attitude of the team as a whole, assessed by the supervisor. The 4-item scale was designed by De Vries (1997) to measure the quality of cooperation in the team. Example items include "The people of this team work closely together" and "These team members can count on each other" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .92$). Answer categories ranged from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*).

Taskwork. Taskwork was measured as the mean of the team members' own contributions to the team, assessed by each individual team member. Team member contribution was conceptualized as the degree to which an employee's productive output (product or service) met the standard of quantity, quality, and timeliness determined by organizational targets and in comparison with coworkers' performance. The benchmark strategy whereby employees rate their own contribution as compared with peers and targets has been validated by others (Ashford, Rothbard, Piderit, & Dutton, 1998). We used the 8-item Likert-type scale from Costa (2000), with items on output quantity, quality, and efficiency. Sample items were "I usually need more time to perform my job compared to colleagues" (reverse coded), "I think I put in enough effort in my work," and "I usually meet my job targets" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .74$). Answer categories ranged from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*).

Family demands. Respondents reported three types of family demands on a scale developed by Ten Brummelhuis et al. (2010). This family demands scale includes two items measuring physical family demands (e.g., "The tasks I perform at home are physically demanding"), two items measuring emotional family demands (e.g., "I often feel emotionally exhausted due to conflicts at home"), and two items measuring mental demands (e.g., "In comparison to other households my family duties are mentally more demanding"). Answer categories ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The reliability of the family demands scale was adequate (Cronbach's $\alpha = .70$). An aggregate measure was used as the team's average of family demands (mean score).

Coworker support. Support from coworkers was measured as the instrumental help provided by team members when one of the team members could not complete his or her tasks due to family responsibilities. Supervisors were asked what was done with tasks of team members being absent in the following scenarios: "ill child or partner at home," "child stayed home due to cancellation of school hours," "care for family member," and "visiting health care institution." The answer categories were 1 (*team member performs work at a later point in time*), 2 (*work is done partially by colleagues and partially by team member*), 3 (*colleagues take over tasks*). The four items formed a reliable scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$). A Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) showed a perfect fit of the scale, with all items loading significantly on the latent factor (loadings: .59; .87; .95; .74)

Supervisor support. Social support given by the supervisor was measured using a 4-item scale designed by Van Veldhoven, De Jonge, Broersen,

Kompier, and Meijman (2002). Respondents responded to several statements concerning their supervisor's sympathy, attention, and appreciation with regard to their workload and family responsibilities (Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$). Answer categories ranged from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). Sample items were "I feel appreciated by my supervisor" and "My supervisor shows understanding for combining work and family tasks." The aggregate measure (mean score) was used as the team's supervisor support.

Organizational support. Social support from the organization was operationalized as the organization's positive attitude toward combining work and family life, based on the scale of Thompson, Beauvais, and Lyness (1999). Respondents indicated whether they perceived their organization as open and tolerant toward combining family responsibilities and work tasks. Sample items were "This organization is supportive of employees who want to switch to less demanding jobs for family reasons" and "Employees are regularly expected to put their jobs before their families" (reverse coded; Cronbach's $\alpha = .80$) with answer categories ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). The mean score of the team members was used as the team's organizational support.

Controls. We included several commonly used predictors for team outcomes (Cohen & Bailey, 1997; Mathieu et al., 2008). Team size was measured as a continuous variable. Supervisors rated the task dependency of the team on a 6-item scale including items such as "To finish the work team members are dependent on each others' input" and "Team members need each others' information to get the work done" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .82$). Answer categories ranged from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). Each individual employee reported his or her work demands on a 7-item scale developed by Van Veldhoven et al. (2002), including work overload, emotional job demands, and cognitive demands with answer categories ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 5 (*totally agree*). Example items were "I work under pressure" and "My work needs a lot of concentration" (Cronbach's $\alpha = .72$). Work hours were measured as the absolute number of work hours per week, including overtime. Family tasks were measured as the absolute number of hours per week spent on household chores and care tasks. Finally, team members' ages, education, and gender were considered. Age of the employee was measured as a continuous variable, and for education an 8-point scale was used, ranging from 1 (*primary school or less*) to 8 (*university degree*). Supervisors indicated the percentage of male and female team members. Work demands, work hours, family tasks, age, and education were calculated as aggregate measures of the individual team members.

Analysis

To test the hypothesized relationships, structural equation modeling (SEM) was performed using the AMOS software package (Arbuckle, 2006). SEM modeling is particularly suitable for testing mediated relationships and models including latent variables. The fit of the model to the data was examined with the comparative fit index (CFI), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI). In general, models with fit indices $>.90$ and an RMSEA $< .08$ indicate a close fit between the model and the data (Browne & Cudeck, 1989). Using the strategy described by Kim (2005), the sample size ($N = 61$) was analyzed to determine whether it was large enough to detect a difference between a model with perfect fit (e.g., CFI = 1.00 and RMSEA = 0.00) and models with a less than perfect fit (CFI = .90 and RMSEA = .80). This study's model ($df = 82$) just meets the minimum required sample size ($N = 60$) for a power of .80.

Parceling was used to optimize our measurement model including the variables of family demands, team member contribution, team cooperation, and team performance. A parcel is an aggregate-level indicator composed of the average of two or more items. The psychometric advantage of parceling is that parcels result in more reliable measurement models (Little, Cunningham, & Shahar, 2002). The item-to-construct balance procedure as described by Little et al. (2002) was followed, creating latent constructs that were indicated by three parcels. We refer to Little et al. (2002) for details on the rules for composing parcels.

We tested whether significant pathways between the predictors and team performance represented indirect relationships by means of bootstrapping. The bootstrap is a statistical resampling method that estimates the parameters of a model and their standard errors strictly from the sample (Preacher & Hayes, 2008). Two thousand times a sample was drawn (with replacement) from our sample and confidence intervals were calculated for all total, direct, and indirect effects of the hypothesized model. The null hypothesis that x has no indirect effect on y via m is rejected when the entire confidence interval lies above or below zero. Note that for the estimation of specific indirect effects (e.g., $x \rightarrow m \rightarrow y$), the direct pathway from the predictor to the outcome variable was included in the model (i.e., family demands to team performance).

To test moderation with latent variables, we conducted moderated structural equation modeling (MSEM) analyses. MSEM allows for assessing and correcting for measurement error, and it simultaneously provides

measures of fit of the model under study. We followed the procedure for testing interaction effects as described by Cortina, Chen, and Dunlap (2001). We refer to Cortina et al. (2001) for the calculation of the pathway constraints.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents means, standard deviations, and correlations among all study variables. Teamwork and taskwork were significantly positively related to team performance. In addition, family demands correlated negatively with taskwork. Supervisor support showed positive significant correlations with team performance and taskwork. Coworker support and organizational support had no significant correlations with the other model variables. To test the factorial validity of the scale variables of family demands, team member contribution, team cooperation, and team performance, a measurement model was tested with the parcels tapping these latent variables. This measurement model showed an adequate fit to the data, $\chi^2(48) = 69.78$, RMSEA = .068, CFI = .97, TLI = .96. All parcels had significant loadings on the intended factors ($p < .001$).

Test of Hypotheses

In Table 2, the pathway estimates of the structural model, including controls, are given. Because a structural model including all controls did not result in a good model fit, $\chi^2(162) = 253.98$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .093, CFI = .86, TLI = .81, a model was tested without the demographic control variables (team members' gender, age, and education). The relationships under study did not change, and this model showed an adequate fit, $\chi^2(88) = 113.78$, $p < .05$, RMSEA = .067, CFI = .94, TLI = .92.

Family demands were significantly negatively related to taskwork. The indirect pathway from family demands on task performance, through a decrease in taskwork, was significant as indicated by the bootstrap results, bootstrap estimate = $-.294$, $SE = .056$, CI $[-1.279, -.009]$, $p < .05$. Hypothesis 1a was, thus, supported. No support was found for Hypothesis 1b because the relationship between family demands and teamwork was not significant.

Table 2 also shows the path coefficients of the MSEM analyses. The interaction term of coworker support and family demands was not significantly related to taskwork. Therefore, Hypothesis 2a was not supported. Coworker

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations of Model Variables

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
1. Team performance	3.50	0.57														
2. Teamwork	3.68	0.71	.42**													
3. Taskwork	3.75	0.34	.28*	.05												
4. Family demands	2.20	0.44	.01	.13	-.49**											
5. Coworker support	2.55	0.41	-.07	-.17	.01	.03										
6. Supervisor support	3.73	0.39	.29*	.14	.28*	-.24	-.02									
7. Organizational support	3.26	0.32	.07	.14	.07	-.02	.21	.20								
8. Task dependency	3.52	0.81	.06	.30*	-.24*	.10	.17	.10	-.13							
9. % female team members	42.49	38.98	-.11	-.22	.09	-.09	.32**	-.15	.08	.05						
10. Team size	11.75	7.52	-.04	.04	-.03	.07	.21	.05	-.15	.28*	-.18					
11. Work demands	3.10	0.41	-.28*	.05	-.02	-.03	.04	-.41**	-.36**	-.02	.11	.11				
12. Work hours	35.22	9.32	.28*	.17	.09	-.05	-.48**	.25*	.04	-.10	-.33**	-.10	-.13			
13. Hours family tasks	16.52	6.72	-.03	.05	-.07	.29*	.12	-.15	-.13	-.13	.18	-.05	.17	-.19		
14. Age	39.88	8.02	-.04	-.05	.19	.08	.23	-.18	-.06	-.14	.12	.06	.28*	-.01	.27*	
15. Education	5.74	1.50	.18	.26*	-.12	-.20	-.54**	.13	.22	.06	-.10	-.34**	-.12	.32**	-.27*	-.57**

Note: Entries represent correlation coefficients. $N = 61$ teams.

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

Table 2. SEM Analysis of the Main Model and Interaction Models

	Taskwork		Teamwork		Team performance	
	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE	Estimate	SE
Hypothesis 1						
% women in team	.00	.00	-.01*	.00	.00	.00
Age	.03	.03	.03	.03	.00	.03
Education	-.14	.14	.30*	.12	.15	.15
Work demands	-.25	.36	.22	.32	-.89*	.37
Work hours	.01	.02	.03	.02	.03	.02
Task dependency	-.36*	.19	.48**	.17	.11	.20
Hours family tasks	.01	.02	.01	.02	.01	.02
Family demands	-.67***	.20	.11	.14	.21	.21
Taskwork					.42*	.18
Teamwork					.64***	.18
Hypothesis 2						
Family demands	-.58***	.15	.27*	.13		
Coworker support	.03	.14	-.17	.13		
Interaction term	.01	.16	.43*	.18		
Hypothesis 3						
Family demands	-.54**	.21	.52**	.18		
Supervisor support	.20	.15	.24	.14		
Interaction term	.12*	.06	.16**	.06		
Hypothesis 4						
Family demands	-.89**	.30	.16	.15		
Organizational support	.26	.17	.16	.12		
Interaction term	.66*	.32	.08	.16		

Note: *N* = 61 teams. Unstandardized estimates. SEM = structural equation modeling.
 p* < .05. *p* < .01. ****p* < .001.

support was a significant moderator of the relationship between family demands and teamwork. Figure 1 shows that the relationship between family demands and teamwork is stronger and more positive in teams with high coworker support than in teams in which coworker support is low. A simple slope analysis

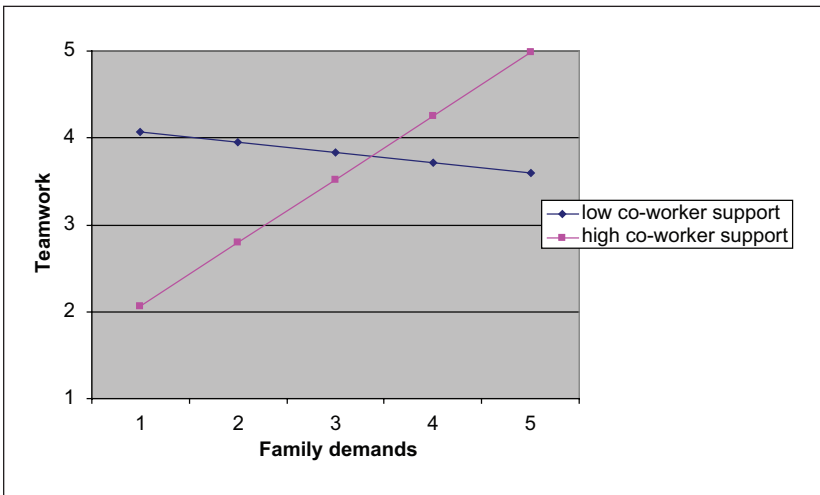


Figure 1. Interaction effect of coworker support on the relationship between family demands and teamwork

revealed that, unlike the slope of low coworker support, the slope of high coworker support was significant ($\beta = .73, p < .01$). This interaction term had a significant indirect effect on team performance, bootstrap estimate = .274, $SE = .226$, CI [.004, .887], $p < .05$. Although the interaction effect was significant, it did not support Hypothesis 2b because we had expected a negative relationship between family demands and teamwork.

Supervisor support was a significant moderator of the relationship between family demands and taskwork (Table 2). In accordance with Hypothesis 3a, a negative relationship between family demands and taskwork was found in teams receiving low supervisor support, whereas this was not true for teams with high supervisor support (Figure 2). The depicted slope for low supervisor support was significant (simple slope: $\beta = -.33, p < .001$), whereas this was not the case for the high supervisor support slope. Supervisor support was also a significant moderator of the relationship between family demands and teamwork. As shown in Figure 3, family demands were more strongly positively related (simple slope: $\beta = .35, p < .10$) to teamwork when supervisor support was high. The simple slope for low supervisor support was non-significant. The interaction effect did not support Hypothesis 3b. Instead, supervisor support was found to strengthen a positive relationship between

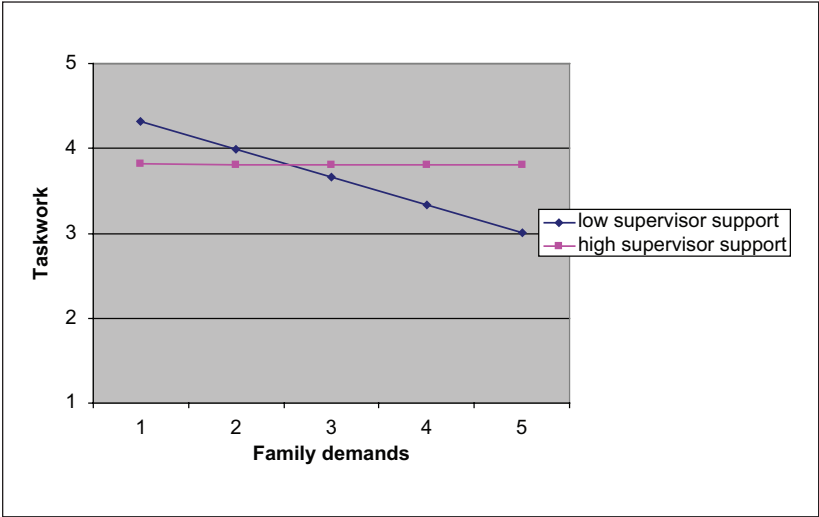


Figure 2. Interaction effect of supervisor support on the relationship between family demands and taskwork

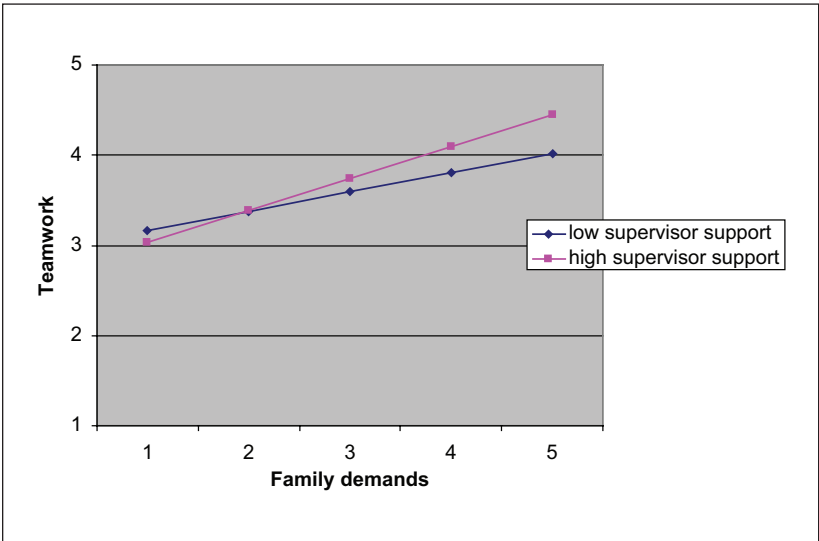


Figure 3. Interaction effect of supervisor support on the relationship between family demands and teamwork

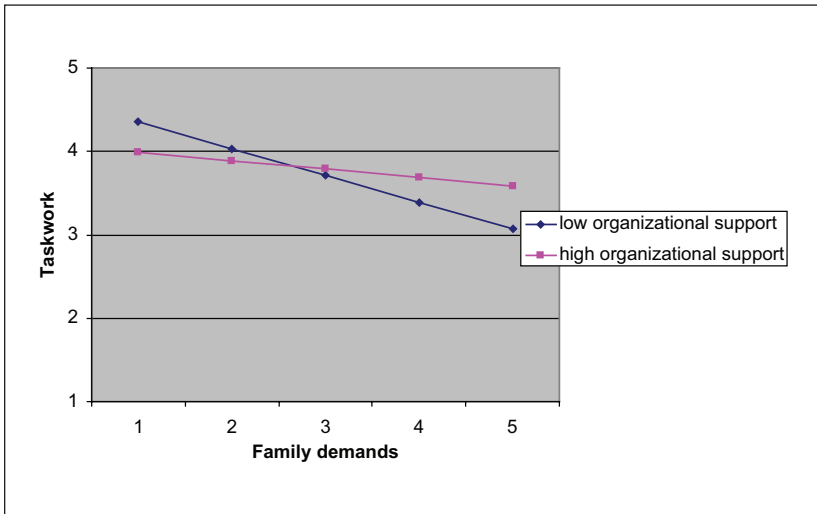


Figure 4. Interaction effect of organizational support on the relationship between family demands and taskwork

family demands and teamwork. The bootstrap analysis indicated that the interactions term including supervisor support had no significant indirect effect on team performance via taskwork and teamwork.

Organizational support was a significant moderator of the relationship between family demands and taskwork (Table 2). Figure 4 depicts this interaction effect. The negative relationship between family demands and taskwork was only significant for teams receiving low organizational support (simple slope: $\beta = -.32, p < .001$). This supports Hypothesis 4a that organizational support attenuates the negative effect of family demands on taskwork. Moreover, the interaction term had a significant indirect effect on team performance through taskwork, bootstrap estimate = .148, $SE = .143$, $CI [.015, .611], p < .05$. Hypothesis 4b was not supported because the interaction effect of organizational support on the relationship between family demands and teamwork was not significant.

Finally, the hypothesized model was tested on a sample including only teams with at least three respondents because information on teams provided by only two team members was deemed to be less reliable. The results for this sample ($n = 56$ teams, $M = 5.5$ members, $SD = 2.83$) were similar to the sample including all teams.

Discussion

The work–family literature has convincingly shown that the work and family domains are interrelated (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). Therefore, employees' work outcomes are not only the result of work factors but also the result of family factors (Demerouti et al., 2010). This study aimed to test the family-to-work relationship at the team level. The central question was whether employees' family demands had an impact on team processes and eventually on the team's overall performance. We found that the overall task performance of the team members was reduced when team members experienced their family life as more burdensome. As a result, supervisors rated team performance as being of lower quality and less efficient. This finding is consistent with the depletion hypothesis derived from COR theory (Hobfoll, 1989), suggesting that heavy family demands drain employee's personal resources, resulting in suboptimal functioning at work. The present study thus suggests that team members with higher family demands are less able to expend full work effort to the team (Bekker et al., 2005). Impaired input of a team member may be particularly harmful in a team-based setting because the input of each member is needed to complete the team job. Other team members may be hindered in doing their share of the taskwork when one or more of the team members' contributions are suboptimal.

Unexpectedly, the team's aggregate family demands did not decrease teamwork. Instead, interpersonal team relationships were found to be better in teams with a heavy family burden, provided that team members supported each other or that supervisor support was high. These results shed new light on the work–family interface at the team level. The depletion argument that employees who have heavy demands at home lack the personal resources, for participating in helping behavior at work (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2010) seems not to hold at the team level. Apparently, teams in which members have, on average, high family demands, use this as an opportunity to develop cooperative exchange relationships. In such a context, team members stand in for each other when they have onerous family demands, and supervisors show understanding for team members' dual roles. The combination of heavy family demands and helping each other results in a cooperative climate in which teamwork thrives. Consequently, supervisors rated the performance of these teams higher. Note that coworker support did not negate the negative impact of family demands on taskwork. Taking over tasks of an overburdened team member may prevent that other team members, who depend on this member's input, are hindered in doing their tasks. However, in contrast to our expectation, the extra workload for team

members who stand in may hinder them in doing their own tasks, even when additional work is temporarily. A net effect on the team's overall taskwork is then equaled out.

Social support from the organization appeared to be another condition explaining when family-to-work depletion at the team level was most likely. Social support from the supervisor cancelled out the harmful effect of family demands on taskwork. In addition, the teams' aggregate family demands related negatively to taskwork and team performance, but only when the organizational culture was perceived as family-unfriendly. These findings advance our understanding of the work-family interface (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000) indicating that depletion between work and family is particularly likely when organizational support is low. As suggested by COR theory (Hobfoll, 2002), social support seems to replenish employees' personal resources, thereby enabling them to accomplish their work tasks. Furthermore, this study suggests that, at the team level, family-to-work depletion can be prevented when the supervisor and the organization are tolerant toward combining work and family roles.

Overall, the results indicate that social support at work has two functions. On the one hand, social support from the supervisor and the organization provides employees with additional personal resources (e.g., energy, motivation), whereby depleting effects of family demands on their task performance are prevented. On the other hand, social support that comes from the team, either from the supervisor or from coworkers, stimulates the development of cooperative team member relationships. In both cases, social support helped team members to combine their family and work roles.

Finally, this study provides further support for the social exchange theory that employees reciprocate received benefits to the sender (Blau, 1964; Tsui et al., 1997). As shown by these results, team members reciprocated support from the team (coworkers or the supervisor) with increased investments in cooperative team member relationships. In response to organizational support (supervisor or organization), teams with heavy family demands expended more effort to maintain their task performance. Thus, while team support fostered intrateam relationships, organizational support strengthened the employee-employer relationship.

Limitations, Future Directions, and Implications

Certain limitations of this study should be noted. First, the data were collected at a single point in time, meaning that no firm conclusions can be drawn regarding the causality of the relationships between the family context variables

and team performance. However, a clear theoretical model was used to establish the order of the variables. Second, the use of self-reports for taskwork may have led to bias due to common method variance as team members rated their own task performance. Future studies could improve measures of team members' individual taskwork by including coworker or supervisor assessments. Third, information was lacking on the time that team members had been working together. As time has been suggested as an important factor in influencing team processes (Mathieu et al., 2008), future studies should take this into account. A fourth potential shortcoming of this study is the relatively low response rate of employees, as well as the use of information from incomplete teams. However, a comparison with national statistics on several background characteristics indicated that the present sample was representative of the Dutch workforce. Moreover, it should be noted that it is relatively difficult to gather team data involving multiple team members and their team supervisor. Therefore, we argue that, despite the low response rate, this study has significantly added value by studying the relationship between team member characteristics and supervisor-rated team outcomes.

Future research could explore more specific mediators through which team members' family demands affect team performance, such as interruptions during the work day or being absent due to family issues. Moreover, coworker dyads could be used to study in more detail how family demands affect interaction processes, such as sharing information and taking over tasks. Future research could further unravel the shape of the relationship between aggregate team family demands and team outcomes. To begin with, curvilinear effects could be examined. It is possible that cooperative relationships between team members mainly develop when several members have moderate family demands. Helping each other may be less likely when none of the members has high family demands, as there is no reason for helping in the first place, or when all members have a heavy family load, as this makes it more difficult to stand in for each other. In addition, it would be interesting to investigate whether variance of family demands among team members affects team outcomes. For example, studies could examine whether the team outcomes of heterogeneous teams (e.g., all team members differ in their family demands) differ from those of more homogeneous teams (e.g., all team members have high or low family demands). Finally, future research could evaluate wider options of work-life balance support policies at the team level, such as flexible work hours and telecommuting.

The findings of this study have important implications for organizations considering adequate support of teams of which several members combine work and family demands. As underlined by previous research, perceived

organizational support (e.g., a family-friendly culture), as opposed to actual organizational work–life policies (e.g., onsite nursery), is most effective in reducing employee stress and improving employee work outcomes (Behson, 2005). Likewise, we found that the organization’s family friendly culture, showing understanding for employees who combine work with nonwork responsibilities, helps to further team performance. A family-friendly culture is likely to motivate team members with high family demands to expend more effort at work, ensuring adequate levels of team performance. It seems therefore advisable for organizations to create a family-friendly culture, for instance, by not disregarding employees for promotion when they cannot work overtime due to family responsibilities, and by supporting them when they occasionally need to leave work for family responsibilities (Thompson et al., 1999). It might be particularly profitable to create such a culture given the finding that employees are most likely to blame the organization when they experience work–family conflict (Poposki, 2011). By providing family supportive support, organizations may prevent negative attributions from employees, keeping employees motivated and committed to the organization (Cook, 2009). At the same time, organizations may build a family-friendly image that attracts new employees.

In addition, as previous individual level studies have shown, supervisors can make the difference when supporting employees who juggle dual roles (Li & Bagger, 2011). By coaching and showing understanding for combining dual roles, supervisors may provide team members with personal resources (e.g., resilience, self-esteem), whereby their input to the team is maintained. Others have suggested that supervisors may provide family-supportive support by taking the initiative to build relationships with their employees by scheduling regular meetings with their employees and encourage them to voice their family concerns (Li & Bagger, 2011). We add to this that, at the team level, supervisors could also focus on the team atmosphere, promoting a cooperative work environment. A cooperative environment in which team members stand in for each other when they occasionally fail to do their share seems to improve the overall team performance.

Conclusion

This study provides support for the contention that employees’ family lives affect work outcomes, even at the team level. Elaborating on the IPO model of team performance (McGrath, 1984), we showed that the team’s family context is part of the team’s input, which, in turn, influences team processes and team performance. Moreover, it was shown that the depletion argument

of the work–home interface may not be fully applicable at the team level. Although family demands impaired the team’s taskwork in teams with low social support at work, in teams with high coworker and supervisor support, the overall family demands of team members were positively related to teamwork. In conclusion, team members’ family demands need not necessarily reduce team performance, provided that teams receive adequate support.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

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