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Taking Ambition Home

The effect of Parental Status and Ambition on experienced Work-Home Conflict

Kim Verburgh

829926

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Tilburg University

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Supervisor: Dr. Y.M.J. van Osch

Second Assessor: Dr. B. G. Adams

Abstract

The literature on ambition gives no clear insight in the definition and role of ambition. In addition, the literature on parental status suggests that being a parent results in more conflicts at home caused by the work domain. In view of the growing number of dual-career families and therefore shared responsibilities of children, this study tries to identify if ambition of these employed parents could weaken or increase the conflicts at home. Two types of ambition were assessed and the interaction effects of horizontal ambition, vertical ambition and parental status on Work-Home Conflict (WHC) were studied and analyzed with a hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The data ($N = 293$) revealed (1) two main effects of horizontal and vertical ambition on WHC. Horizontal ambition leads to less conflicts at home caused by the work domain. In contrast, vertical ambition leads to more conflicts at home. (2) An interaction effect of horizontal ambition and parental status on WHC: employed parents who score high on horizontal ambition experience less conflicts at home compared with employed parents with a lower score on horizontal ambition. These results give insights in the different roles of combining parental status and ambition on WHC.

Keywords: Work-Home Conflict, parental status, vertical ambition, horizontal ambition

The effect of Parental Status and Ambition on experienced Work-Home Conflict

In the past decades there is an increasing inflow of women into the work field and consequently the growing number of dual-career families (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Den Dulk & Peper, 2006). This results in an increased number of employees who are responsible for the care of young children (Galinsky & Stein, 1990). The Netherlands could be seen as a prime example of those few countries that “have initiated policies to provide considerable support for working parents” (Mainiero & Sullivan, 2005, p.120). Working arrangements such as part-time work, working from home and flexible working hours, allow employees with children at home, to integrate their work and home lives (Plantenga, 1997). According to Dijkers, Van Engen and Vinkenburg (2010) flexible working hours and working from home give parents the opportunity to participate in more work activities than they would by working a 9-to-5 schedule. Employers provide work-home arrangements for parents to remain in the work field and to keep talent within the organization (Barnett & Hall, 2001). However, the increased participation of women in the work field and the change in family structure have been related to increased problems for balancing both work and home demands (Bianchi & Milkie, 2010). These problems seem to appear even more by employed parents who often fulfil multiple roles (e.g. employee, parent, and spouse) at the same time.

Individuals have a limited amount of energy and the more roles an individual participates in, the greater the probability of confronting conflicting obligations (Barnett & Baruch, 1985; Goode, 1960). The difficulties an individual can experience when performing home duties because of the demands from the work domain, can result in a form of interrole conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), referred to as Work-Home Conflict (hereafter WHC). WHC (also referred to as Work-Family Conflict (WFC) and Work-Life Conflict (WLC) (Bakker & Geurts,

2004; Bonebright, Clay, & Ankenmann, 2000; Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), is the inability to balance the demands from the work and home domain. Two types of conflicts can occur: Work Interference with Family and Family Interference with Work (Bakker & Geurts, 2004; Carlson et al., 2000). Interference from family to work occurs when family responsibilities (e.g. staying at home from work, because of a sick child) hinders the performance at work. In contrast, interference from work to family occurs when work activities and responsibilities (e.g. working overtime) hinders the performance of family responsibilities. (Byron, 2005; Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998). This is referred to as a time conflict, an impossibility to meet obligations in the home domain, because of the time devoted in the work domain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). In this study I was interested in assessing interference from work to family since the growing number of dual-career families in the Netherlands call for a renewed balance between work and home domains. Besides the distinction in time there is a distinction in strain and behavioural conflicts (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Strain based WHC is related to the hindrances in the home domain, because of the strain developed in the work domain. Lastly, behaviour based WHC is related to specific behaviours required for performing one role (e.g. emotional stability and objectivity at work), which increased difficulties to meet obligations of the other role (e.g. warmth and emotional at home) (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Participation in one role complicates the participation in another role when there is more effort expected in this role, leading to a potential conflict between work and home domains (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Previous research in the Netherlands showed that 40% of the working population is experiencing conflicts at home caused by the work domain (Geurts, Kompier, Roxburgh, & Houtman, 2003). In addition, having children requires an employee to spend large amounts of time in family activities. Previous literature suggests that adults with

children who are currently living at home report less happiness and satisfaction in their lives and this group tend to suffer from higher levels of distress than nonparents (McLanahan & Adams, 1987). Also, employed parents could have less attention for their children, diminished social contacts and their personal development could be placed second (Hill, 2005). According to Galinsky, Bond and Friedman (1993) the extent to which employees experience these conflicts is higher for employed parents, however this research was performed in the US only. Despite the presence of supporting work-home arrangements it is expected that being an employed parent, in comparison to a childless employee, in the Netherlands, results in experiencing more work-home conflicts. The following hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Parental status of an employee is related to WHC- Being a parent is related to a higher experience of WHC.

The extent to which employees spend time at work is in some organizational cultures seen as an indication of employees' investments and dedication to their career (Lewis & Taylor, 1996). Showing investments and dedication can be a way for employees to achieve certain goals. This future and goal-oriented perspective is a common aspect in the different definitions of ambition (Larimer, Hannagan, & Smith 2007; Reismann, 1953; Turner, 1964, Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). Ambition is perceived as an essential condition for participation in the work field in general and career success in particular (Dijkers et al., 2010). In this study ambition will be defined as: "the persistent and generalized striving for success, attainment and accomplishment" (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012, p. 759). Added with the aspiration to achieve a certain status or rank (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2012). This study focuses on the two-dimensional construct of horizontal and vertical ambition, in which horizontal ambition is defined as "a drive to successfully complete work-related goals in order to be rewarded in terms

of self-development, gaining expertise, and attaining communal goals”. Whereas, vertical ambition refers to “a drive to successfully complete work-related goals in order to be rewarded in terms of status, power, promotion and pay” (Kortekaas-Mertens, 2018). Employees with high levels of ambition will spend more hours at work and putting in extra effort to achieve professional success (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007), in which the roles at home could be hindered resulting in a time-based conflict. Boswell and Olson-Buchanan (2007) suggests that ambitious persons are more likely to use communication technologies after working hours, which are related with the employees’ work-home conflicts. The latter suggests that experiencing high levels of ambition could have negative effects on non-work domains and leads to conflicts at home. The expectations are similar for both dimension of ambition, however due to the two-dimensional character of this construct, the analyses will be performed with both horizontal-and vertical ambition. Based on these assumptions, the second hypothesis is formulated:

Hypothesis 2: Ambition is positively related to WHC

For employed parents, the combination of work and family is often related to stress and conflicts (Van Engen, Vinkenbunrg, & Dikkers, 2012). Being a parent and the consequently extra time devoted to the home domain does not blend well with the characteristics of ambitious employees. The actions of employees to successfully attain work-related goals create a culture within the organization in which certain behaviours and ways of thinking are stimulated (Clark, 2000). Both types of ambition stimulate the drive for success and attainment to achieve desired goals at work (Kortekaas-Mertens, 2018), while “loving” and “giving” are ranked as the most important means for parents to achieve desired goals at home (Clark, 2000). This contrast is expected to increase the difficulties to meet obligations of the other role, resulting in more WHC. In addition, Dikkers et al., (2010) suggested that ambitious parents worked more hours per week

as an expression of their aspirations, than those parents who are less ambitious. If parents develop and challenge themselves at work, aspects of horizontal ambition, they are likely to spend more time at work. On the other hand, striving for status, power, promotion and pay is a way for vertical ambitious employees to express their aspirations and therefore work more hours. Added with the positive relationship between long working hours and WHC (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007), it is expected that being a parent with high levels of ambition on both dimensions will result in even more conflicts at home compared to an unambitious parent. This leads to the third hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: The interaction between parental status and ambition is positively related to a higher experience of WHC- Being a parent with high levels of ambition results in experiencing more work-home conflicts.

The aforementioned leads to the following research question: “To what extent is Work-Home Conflict influenced by parental status and ambition and the interaction between parental status and ambition?”

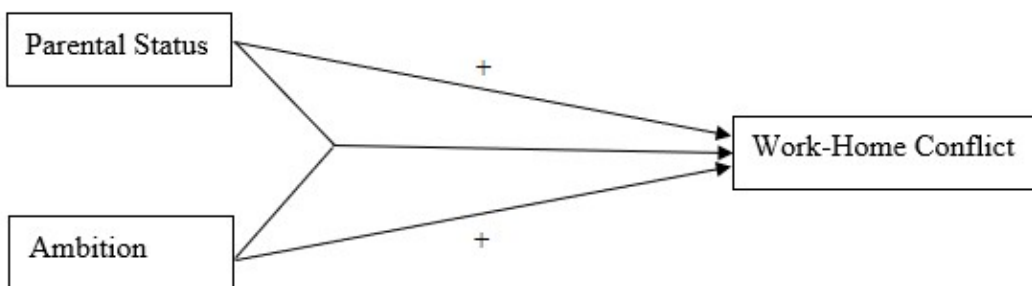


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

Method

Sample and Participant Selection

Dutch employees operating in different organizations and sectors, with a diverse range in functions were approached to participate in this study. Only employed participants were approached since the dependent variable in this study is WHC and the items in the questionnaire all reflect occupational matters. For this data collection companies, from our ¹ personal networks, were approached via email and were invited to participate in this study and fill out an online questionnaire. Additionally, a link for the online questionnaire was distributed among LinkedIn connections. A power analysis in G-power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) was performed to determine how many participants should be required to get a medium effect size (f^2) of .15 for a hierarchical multiple regression analysis, combined with an F-test. According to this analysis there should be at least 153 participants required in total to get a statistically significant power of .95 with an alpha level of .05 and including interaction effects. A total of 521 participants completed the questionnaire. After removing subjects with missing data ($N = 210$) and excluding interns ($N = 18$), the final sample set consisted of 293 participants, 189 females and 104 males ($M_{age} = 36.9$, $SD = 13.74$). From the total set of participants 96 were parents. The majority of the participants worked fulltime. An overview of sample characteristics of the final sample set is shown in Table 1.

¹ Data was collected together with three other master students.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics

Variable		Parents	Nonparents
		<i>N</i> (%)	<i>N</i> (%)
Gender	Male	37 (38.5)	67 (34)
	Female	59 (61.5)	130 (66)
Age (years)	25 or younger	1 (1)	96 (48.7)
	26-40	30 (31.3)	54 (27.4)
	41-50	28 (29.2)	11 (5.6)
	Older than 50	37 (38.5)	36 (18.3)
Marital Status	Single	2 (2.1)	48 (24.4)
	Relationship (not living together)	4 (4.2)	47 (23.9)
	Relationship (living together)	17 (17.7)	61 (31)
	Registered partnership	4 (4.2)	6 (3)
	Married	69 (71.9)	35 (17.8)
Job type	Full-time	47 (49)	123 (62.4)
	Part-time	49 (51)	74 (37.6)
Educational level	Elementary School	-	1 (.05)
	VMBO	5 (5.2)	3 (1.5)
	HAVO	9 (9.4)	7 (3.6)
	VWO	1 (1.0)	4 (2.0)
	MBO	28 (29.2)	35 (17.8)
	HBO	36 (37.5)	78 (39.6)
	University	17 (17.7)	69 (35)
WHA	Part-time	45 (46.9)	53 (26.9)
	Parental leave	13 (13.5)	4 (2.0)
	Flexitime	30 (31.3)	56 (28.4)
	Other	9 (9.2)	15 (7.6)

Procedure and Design

The online questionnaires were distributed along participants with informed consent (Appendix A), which explained the aim of the study and emphasized confidentiality. Participants were presented with 47 items regarding ambition (24 items of vertical ambition; 23 items of horizontal ambition), 9 items regarding WHC, 1 item regarding parental status and 7 control items (Appendix B). The questionnaire ended with items regarding the demographics of the participant and took about 15 minutes to complete. At the end of the questionnaire participants could fill in their email address, for a chance to win one of the two (Bol.com) gift cards. All items of the questionnaire were translated into Dutch, since only Dutch employees were approached for participation in this study. After participants completed the questionnaire they were thanked for participation and debriefed.

Measures

The participants had to rate themselves in terms of vertical ambition, horizontal ambition, parental status and WHC. The measurement instruments were examined by exploratory factor analysis, in which Bartlett's test of sphericity should be significant ($p < .05$) and the minimum level of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin should be $.6$ ($KMO > .6$), for the factor analysis to be considered as suitable (Pallant, 2011). The scales internal consistency was checked by generating Cronbach's Alpha, with a minimum level of $.07$ ($\alpha > .7$) with a higher score indicating higher reliability (Pallant, 2011).

Ambition. Ambition was measured using 47 items of the HAVA Scale by Schaveling and Van Osch (in progress). Horizontal ambition was assessed with 23 items (example item: "My aim is to be able to educate other") and vertical ambition (example item: "My goal is to achieve the highest possible position") with 24 items. All items were answered on a 7-point

Likert scale (1= 'completely disagree', 7= 'completely agree'). The principal factor analysis of horizontal and vertical ambition revealed the presence of two components. The assumptions were satisfied, as the KMO measure was .92 ($> .6$) and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p = .000$). In addition, the scree plot suggested two factors which explain a sufficient amount of variance in WHC. These results revealed that ambition is a two-dimensional construct and both horizontal-and vertical ambition were taken into account in the analyses. The internal consistency for both the horizontal ($\alpha = .91$) and vertical ($\alpha = .93$) ambition scale proved reliable.

Parental Status. The literature does not give a clear answer on how to measure parental status. It is often related to different outcome variables, but the authors do not explicitly mention how they measure parental status (Fuegen, Biernat, Haines, & Deaux, 2004; Henretta, 1984). According to McLanahan and Adams (1987) adults with children at home report less satisfaction and more conflicts at home. The presence of children instead of number, spacing or gender of the child seems to be the most important predictor of affecting well-being. Therefore, the item was based on children currently living at home. The item used in this study was: "How many children do you currently have living at home?" (0= nonparents, 1= parents).

Work-Home Conflict. This construct was measured using 9 items of the multidimensional scale by Carlson et al., (2000) which were distributed equally over three subdomains: time, strain and behavior. Example items of the three subdomains of WHC were: "My work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like" (time), "Due to all the pressures at work, sometimes when I come home I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy" (strain) and "The behaviors I perform that make me effective at work do not help me to be a better parent and spouse" (behavior). All items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale (1= 'completely disagree', 5= 'completely agree'). The principal factor analysis revealed the

presence of one component ($KMO = .88, p = .000$). Therefore, the three subdomains were calculated into 1 scale, where a higher score means a higher experience of WHC. The internal consistency for the overall scale of WHC proved reliable $\alpha = .87$.

Demographic and control variables. At the end of the questionnaire, participants were asked about their gender (0= male, 1= female), as it may influence the amount of WHC employees experience. Women may experience more WHC in comparison to men because of the higher value they assign to home roles and care responsibilities (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Age (years) was included as it may seem that when people age, individuals are less willing to tolerate WHC for the interest of their career (Gordon & Whelan, 1998). The marital status of employees was included (0= single 1= married/relationship), as employees being married are associated with more WHC (Byron, 2005). Educational level (1= no education, 2= elementary school, 3= VMBO, 4= HAVO, 5= VWO, 6= MBO, 7= HBO, 8= University) was included since a higher educational level may be associated with jobs which require working overtime (Jansen, Kant, Kristensen, & Nijhuis, 2003). Participants rated their place in the hierarchy of their organization, to allow for comparison between organizations, by using one item of the scale by Van der Meij, Schaveling and Van Vught (2016). This item was: "Suppose your organization consists of 7 scales ("Scale 7" represents the highest function within your company), which scale best represents your situation?" (1= lowest level, 4= intermediate level, 7= highest level). The use of Work-home arrangements was included since making use of these arrangements may lessen the level of experienced WHC (Jansen et al., 2003). Participants were first shortly introduced (writing in the questionnaire) about the available arrangements within the Dutch legal context. The current study included two arrangements provided by the government: (1) part-time work (2) parental leave; and (3) flextime (working flexible hours) was asked since this

arrangement is most frequently offered by employers in the Netherlands (Dijkers et al., 2007). Participants were asked to indicate for each arrangement if they used or had used it (0= no, 1= yes). Contractual hours were asked for determining the job type of participants. Participants who worked 36 hours or more per week, were coded as working fulltime (1); all other responses were coded as working part-time (0).

Statistical Analysis

The effects of parental status, horizontal and vertical ambition, and their interaction with Work-Home Conflict were investigated by a hierarchical multiple regression analysis. The first step of the regression analysis assessed the effects of the control variables on WHC. In the second step the main effects of parental status (0= nonparents, 1= parents), horizontal and vertical ambition were included. This allowed me to investigate whether there are main effects of parental status, vertical and horizontal ambition on WHC above and beyond differences in those outcomes caused by differences in the control variables. In the third step, the interaction effects between vertical ambition and parental status, horizontal ambition and parental status and horizontal and vertical ambition were included. In a fourth and final step, a three-way interaction effect between parental status, horizontal and vertical ambition was introduced, which allowed me to test whether there are differences in how employees with children and childless employees experience WHC for both dimensions of ambition. In case of a significant effect, simple slope analyses were performed to study the direction of the interaction effect.

Results

Correlations

Table 2 consists of an overview of all means, standard deviations and correlations between all variables. WHC was found to be positively related to vertical ambition (r (291)

= .19, $p = .001$). In contrast, WHC was negatively related to horizontal ambition ($r(291) = -.14$, $p = .015$), in which a higher score on horizontal ambition results in less experience of WHC.

Parental status and vertical ambition were negatively related ($r(291) = -.13$, $p = .025$). In addition to the factor analysis, horizontal and vertical ambition were not significantly correlated ($r(291) = .06$, $p = .30$). Regarding the control variables, all control variables were not significantly correlated with WHC. However, all control variables (except gender) correlated with parental status and therefore included as control variables in the remaining analyses. Gender was significantly related to horizontal and vertical ambition and as a result also included as control variable. See table 2 for all correlations.

Regression Analysis

The control variables entered in step 1 explained 1.1% of the variance in WHC, this effect was not significant ($R^2 = .01$; $F(7, 258) = .43$, $p = .881$). In step 2, it was found that entering the main effects of vertical ambition, horizontal ambition and parental status accounted for an additional 6.3% of the variance in WHC ($\Delta R^2 = .06$; $\Delta F(3, 282) = 6.44$, $p = .000$). Entering the three main effects explained 7.4% of the total variance in WHC ($R^2 = .07$; $F(10, 282) = 2.25$, $p = .015$). This was caused by entering horizontal ($\beta = -.18$, $p = .004$) and vertical ambition ($\beta = .18$, $p = .006$) to the model, not by adding parental status to the model ($\beta = .10$, $p = .135$). The interaction terms added in step 3 accounted for 9% of the total variance in WHC ($R^2 = .09$; $F(13, 279) = 2.05$, $p = .017$). In this step, the interaction effect between vertical and horizontal ambition had no effect on WHC ($\beta = .04$, $p = .931$), even as the interaction effect between vertical ambition and parental status on WHC ($\beta = -.14$, $p = .596$). However, the interaction effect between horizontal ambition and parental status had a strong significantly negative effect on WHC ($\beta = -.88$, $p = .049$). By Cohen's (1998) conventions, the effect size for

this step can be considered “small” ($f^2 = .10$). In step 4, a three-way interaction effect between horizontal, vertical ambition and parental status was added. The interaction effect between horizontal ambition, vertical ambition and parental status did not account for any significant variance in WHC ($\Delta R^2 = .00$, $\Delta F(1, 278) = .00$, $p = .985$). Although not all interaction effects were significant, a simple slope analysis by Jeremy Dawson was run to inspect the direction of the interaction effect between horizontal ambition and parental status. The analysis revealed that a higher level of horizontal ambition results in less WHC for employed parents compared to employed parents with a low level of horizontal ambition. Surprisingly, this effect was not found for childless employees. The effect of being an employed parent with low levels of horizontal ambition on WHC in this sample was buffered by high levels of horizontal ambition (see Figure 2).

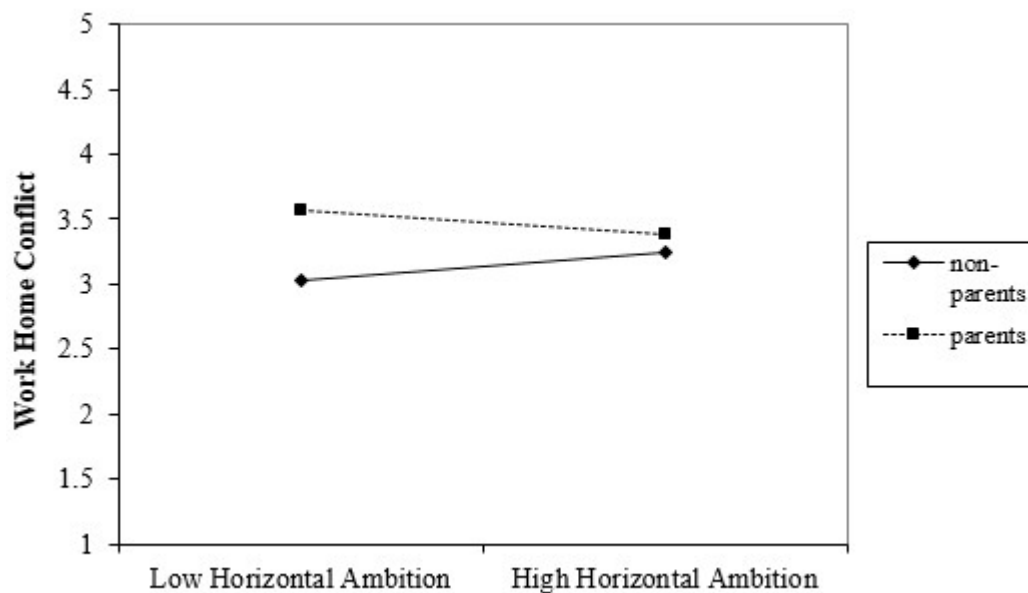


Figure 2. Interaction effect of parental status and horizontal ambition on WHC

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations among Study Variables

<i>Measures</i>	<i>M/SD</i>	<i>M/SD</i> <i>Parents</i>	<i>M/SD</i> <i>Non- Parents</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Gender	.65 (.48)	.61 (.49)	.66 (.48)	-										
2. Age	36.9 (13.87)	45.9 (9.5)	32.5 (13.4)	-.04	-									
3. Education	6.75 (1.24)	6.38 (1.35)	6.94 (1.14)	.00	-.31**	-								
4. Marital Status	.83 (.38)	.98 (.14)	.76 (.43)	.01	.26**	-.05	-							
5. Job type	.58 (.49)	1.49 (1.50)	.62 (.49)	-.36**	.01	.13*	-.09	-						
6. Org. level	4.22 (1.36)	3.9 (1.24)	4.38 (1.39)	.13*	-.29**	-.01	-.10	-.06	-					
7. WHA	.78 (.91)	1.01 (.92)	.65 (.85)	.11	.04	.04	.11	-.40**	-.12*	-				
8. Parental Status ^a	.33 (.47)	-	-	-.04	.44**	-.22**	.28**	-.12*	-.17**	.20**	-			
9. Horizontal Ambition	5.42 (.73)	5.35 (.76)	5.45 (.71)	.01	-.18**	.22**	-.01	.08	-.13*	.00	-.07	(.91)		
10. Vertical Ambition	3.51 (.98)	3.31 (.82)	3.60 (1.03)	-.16**	-.38**	.18**	-.12*	.18**	.02	-.06	-.13*	.06	(.93)	
11. WHC	2.25 (.81)	2.30 (.81)	2.22 (.81)	-0.01	-.10	.04	.04	.01	.00	.02	.06	-.14*	.19**	(.87)

Note. N = 293. Cronbach's α on the diagonal in parentheses, excluding the control variables. Small $r < .3$, Medium $.3 < r > .5$, High $r > .5$ (Field, 2013). * $p < .05$ two-tailed ** $p < .01$ two-tailed. ^a Parental Status was coded 0 (nonparents) and 1 (parents)

Table 3

Results of Regression Analysis on Work Home Conflict

Variables	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
	β	β	β	β
Gender	-.02	.02	.02	.02
Age	-.10	-.09	-.09	-.09
Marital Status	.06	.05	.05	.05
WHA	-.01	-.02	-.01	-.01
Job type	-.01	-.01	-.01	-.01
Education	.02	.04	.05	.05
Org.level	-.02	-.03	-.04	-.04
Ver. Ambition		.18***	.21	.24
Hor. Ambition		-.18***	.13	.14
Par. Status		.10	1.05**	1.08
Ver. Amb x Hor. Amb			.04	.02
Ver. Amb x Par. Status			-.14	-.18
Hor. Amb x Par. Status			-.88**	-.91
Ver. Amb x Hor. Amb x Par. Status				.04
Model fit				
<i>F</i>	.43	2.25**	2.05**	1.90**
ΔF	.43	6.44***	1.35	.00
<i>R</i> ² (Adj. <i>R</i> ²)	.01 (-.01)	.07 (.04)	.09 (.05)	.09 (.04)

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

Discussion

The goal of this study was to contribute to a better understanding of the influence of parental status and ambition on Work Home Conflict (WHC). Based on previous literature I predicted that being a parent is related to a higher experience of conflicts at home caused by the work domain (Galinsky et al., 1993; Geurts et al., 2003; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Surprisingly, I did not find this effect in this study, therefore hypothesis 1 is not supported. This result shed a different light on the assumed positive relationship between parental status and WHC. In this sample at least, employees with children, compared to childless employees, do not experience more WHC. It might be that parents have more positive perceptions of children in comparison with nonparents (McLanahan & Adams, 1987) and therefore children might be perceived as a source of relaxation after work. The reason why my data is not in line with the predictions might also be due to the relatively small sample of employed parents ($N = 96$) in this study. Additionally, a large group of these parents (68%) are in the age category of 41 and older. The age of the children of these employees is probably higher, compared with employees younger than 41. The age of children might play a role in the experience of WHC, since preschool children require much more devoted time from employees to the home domain (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998) in comparison to older children. There might also be a role for the employment status of the employee's partner. Having a partner at home who helps with childcare and housework might influence the level of experienced WHC for the employee (Kessler, Price, & Wortman, 1985; Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998). It would be useful for future research to widen the domain of work-home-related antecedents by taking the age of children and the employment status of the partner into account.

The data reveals a main effect of vertical ambition on WHC, such that employees with

the drive to strive for more status, power, promotion and pay as rewards for work-related goals experience more conflicts at home caused by the work domain. In contrast, the second main effect shows that horizontal ambition results in less experience of WHC. Striving for self-development and communal goals at work results in less conflicts at home. Hypothesis 2, which suggests that being ambitious (horizontal and vertical) at work is related to a higher experience of WHC, is therefore partially supported (supported for vertical ambition). These results for vertical ambition are in line with the expectations of this study. The possible time, strain and behavior conflicts, caused by the long working hours and the difficulties to meet the obligations of multiple roles (Clark, 2000; Van Dikkers et al., 2010) experienced by ambitious employees increase the level of conflicts at home

The opposite was found for horizontal ambition in this study. Employees who want to be rewarded in terms of self-development, gaining expertise and attaining communal goals experience less conflicts at home caused by the work domain. These results are in contrast to the time and strain conflicts these horizontal ambitious employees were expected to experience. The value on self-development and gaining expertise at work might result in an increase in skills and satisfaction that ease the performance not only in the work domain, but also at the home domain (Ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012), which results in less WHC. The core aspects of horizontal ambition could be seen as a resource for well-being (Ryff & Keyes, 1995), decreasing the level of distress, resulting in less WHC for horizontal ambitious employees.

These main effects were qualified by the interaction between horizontal ambition and parental status. Simple slope analysis (see Figure 2) revealed that employees who want to be rewarded in terms of self-development, gaining expertise and attaining communal goals in their work experience less WHC when they have children at home. For childless employees WHC

was slightly higher when they strived for the aspects of horizontal ambition. Hypothesis 3, which suggests that being a parent with high levels of ambition results in experiencing more work-home conflicts is therefore not supported and interestingly the opposite is found for horizontal ambition. These findings answer my research question: According to this study, there is an interaction effect of parental status and horizontal ambition, that is to say working parents who want to be rewarded in terms of gaining expertise, attaining communal goals and self-development experience less conflicts at home caused by the work domain than working parents with a lower score on horizontal ambition. This effect was not found for childless employees and for the interaction between vertical ambition and parental status.

Employed parents who place low value on self-development, gaining expertise and attaining communal goals in their work experience more conflicts at home caused by the work domain, compared to employed parents who place high value on these aspects. If there is a low drive for personal growth, having children might be seen as source of distress resulting in more WHC (McLanahan & Adams, 1987). If this low value of horizontal ambition is replaced with a high value of horizontal ambition by employed parents the experienced WHC decreased, explaining a possible buffer role for high horizontal ambition. The combination of striving for personal growth and having a child at home might result in a sort of coping mechanism to deal with multiple responsibilities. Having children could have taught employees how to deal with time conflicts and choosing priorities. Childless employees might not experience this coping mechanism and experience more difficulties when dealing with time and strain conflicts, resulting in more WHC.

Additionally, the participation of working parents in multiple roles might also provide a basis for alternative sources of esteem (McLanahan & Adams, 1987). If things are going badly in

one domain, there is another domain for the employee to draw on for support, resulting in less conflicts at home. Therefore, this effect in this sample might only be found by employees with children. However, in the light of this perspective the same effect should be found for the interaction between vertical ambition and parental status. Surprisingly, I did not find this effect. This could be due to the fact that parents might be softer and try to maintain meaningful relationships, these aspects do not align with striving for power, status, promotion and material wealth.

The reason why my data might diverge from the expectations might be due to the fact that there was no role for the possible positive effects of the work-home interface in this study. The participation in multiple roles (employee and parent) could contribute to an increase in opportunities and resources for personal growth (Barnett, 1998; Grzywacz & Marks, 1999). This personal growth is a one of the core aspects in horizontal ambition and therefore the combination of horizontal ambition and parental status might influence WHC. The description of WHC in this study, where only the consequences of combining dual roles were assessed, limits the understanding in the work-home interface. It would be interesting to include also the possible positive effects of the work-home interface in future research.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

This study was subject to several limitations, starting with the design of the questionnaire. A considerable number of participants indicated that the questionnaire took too long, which made it easier to lose concentration and which has led to a high amount of unfilled questions. As a consequence, the number of participants that could be used for this study was significantly lower than the total amount of participants that participated. Therefore, it might be helpful to shorten the questionnaire with only the most important indicators for this study. Also,

it is recommended to place the item of parental status before the demographic items, because a considerable number of participants ended the questionnaire before answering the demographic items.

In addition, previous literature suggests a link between personality characteristics and WHC, in which personality characteristics (especially neuroticism) are important predictors of WHC (Michel, Clark, & Jamillo, 2011). Power and status motives are part of the core aspects in the definition of vertical ambition. Olson and Weber (2004) found that power and status motives are related with extraversion and agreeableness and status is also related to neuroticism. The employees who score high on status and power in this sample might experience more WHC, which is influenced by their personality characteristics rather than their level of ambition. In future research, the role of personality should also be taken into account as personality might influence WHC.

The observed negative effects of horizontal ambition and the positive effects of vertical ambition on WHC are based on high levels of ambition. In this study I was interested in high levels of ambition, but there might be consequences for having too much ambition? Ambition might have a context specific inflection point in which employees experience the effects of both dimensions of ambition till a certain point and beyond this point these effects might be neutral or reverse (Pierce & Aguinis, 2013). It would be useful for future research to broaden the domain of ambition.

The results for horizontal ambitious parents are interesting, but they are based on a small sample and no equal division between parents and nonparents. Future studies investigating the effect of horizontal and vertical ambition on WHC and controlling for parental status effects should attempt to obtain an equal division between employees with children and childless

employees.

Finally, it is recommended to replicate this study to validate the results. Even though this study did not find a direct effect of parental status on WHC, it is important to repeatedly test this effect as different studies show diverse results (Galinsky, et al., 1993; Geurts et al., 2003).

Practical Implications

This study gives insight in the relationship between parental status, ambition and WHC in the Netherlands. The observed effects of horizontal and vertical ambition on WHC give evidence to be careful with defining ambition as one construct. Self-development, gaining expertise and attaining communal goals are related to less WHC. Whereas, status, power, promotion and pay are related to more WHC. Given that WHC is associated with diminished organizational commitment, increased turnover intentions and health problems (e.g. burnout) (Allen et al., 2000) identifying factors that can strengthen (vertical ambition) or weaken (horizontal ambition) WHC can be an important attempt for organizations to respond to and prevent the development of WHC among employees. From a human resource perspective, it is important for organizations to understand how encouraging self-development, expertise and attaining communal goals among parents affects the experience of WHC. Encouraging personal growth among parents, for example by offering work-home arrangements which give parents the possibility to express their aspirations, could reduce the level of experienced WHC and the associated negative effects for organizations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study revealed that employees who want to be rewarded in terms of self-development, gaining expertise and personal growth experience less conflicts at

home. On the other hand employees who want to be rewarded in terms of status, power, promotion and pay experience more conflicts at home. These results give evidence for the two-dimensional character of ambition. In contrast with the expectation that combining parenthood and ambition results in more conflicts at home, I found that horizontal ambitious parents experience less WHC compared to parents with a lower score on horizontal ambition, suggesting a buffer role for high levels of horizontal ambition for employees with children. When measured in terms of vertical ambition, no effects were found. The continuing grow of dual career families and therefore shared responsibilities for children calls for a renewed perspective of balancing both home and work domains.

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Appendix A
Informed consent

Introduction. Beste respondent,

Allereerst willen wij u hartelijk bedanken voor uw deelname aan dit onderzoek. Namens Tilburg University doen wij onderzoek naar het belang dat mensen hechten aan verschillende aspecten en karakteristieken van werk.

In dit onderzoek verzoeken wij u een vragenlijst in te vullen die bestaat uit 6 onderdelen met verschillende stellingen die gaan over uw perceptie van verschillende aspecten van uw werk en enkele demografische gegevens. Het invullen van de vragenlijst duurt ongeveer 10-15 minuten. Nogmaals hartelijk dank voor uw deelname aan dit onderzoek.

Met vriendelijke groet,

Robin Veenstra, Pieter Koemans, Kaja Sepec & Kim Verburgh

Consent. Voordat u aan de vragenlijst begint, is het van belang dat u de onderstaande informatie gelezen heeft en hiermee akkoord gaat:

- Ik geef toestemming voor het statistisch analyseren van mijn anonieme antwoorden.
- Ik begrijp dat mijn anonieme antwoorden alleen voor onderzoeksdoeleinden gebruikt zullen worden en dat mijn gegevens door niemand anders dan de onderzoekers gelezen zullen worden.
- Ik begrijp dat de verzamelde data voor maximaal 10 jaar bewaard zal worden in een database van Tilburg University.
- Ik begrijp dat alle informatie volledig anoniem verwerkt zal worden.
- Ik ben me ervan bewust dat ik op elk moment tijdens de vragenlijst het recht heb om te stoppen zonder dat dit ook maar enige gevolgen heeft.

- Hierbij verklaar ik dat ik akkoord ga met bovenstaande informatie en mee doe aan dit onderzoek
- Hierbij verklaar ik dat ik niet akkoord ga met bovenstaande informatie

Debrief. U bent nu aan het einde gekomen van de vragenlijst.

Het doel van deze studie is om twee types ambitie te onderzoeken. Daarbij maken wij onderscheid tussen verticale ambitie waarbij mensen gedreven zijn door status, promotie en geld en horizontale ambitie waarbij mensen gedreven zijn door innerlijke groei, anderen helpen en expertise verwerven. Tot dusver heeft onderzoek zich alleen gericht op verticale ambitie. We kijken hoe deze twee types ambitie samenhangen met ervaren werkuitkomsten (e.g., carrièresucces, werknemerstevredenheid).

Dank voor uw deelname!

Klikt u alstublieft op het blauwe pijltje rechtsonder om de vragenlijst af te ronden en uw respons op te slaan.

** U wordt daarna automatisch doorgestuurd naar een losstaande webpagina waar u uw e-mailadres achter kunt laten om deel te nemen aan de loting. Daarmee maakt u kans op één van de twee Bol.com cadeaubonnen ter waarde van €20. (Meedoen is geheel vrijblijvend, bij deelname wordt uw e-mailadres dus apart verwerkt van de door u gegeven antwoorden om de anonimiteit te waarborgen). **

Indien u vragen heeft betreffende dit onderzoek, staat u vrij een e-mail sturen naar:

----- of laat uw opmerking achter in onderstaand tekst vak.

Appendix B

Questionnaire items

Horizontal Ambition (23 items)- Schaveling & Van Osch (in progress)*7 point- Likert scale*

<i>Helemaal niet mee eens</i>	<i>Niet mee eens</i>	<i>Grotendeels niet mee eens</i>	<i>Neutraal</i>	<i>Grotendeels mee eens</i>	<i>Mee eens</i>	<i>Helemaal mee eens</i>
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1. Ik werk graag met anderen aan het behalen van doelen
2. Ik kies graag taken waarin ik iets nieuws leer
3. Ik streef naar het slagen van projecten, ongeacht of daar een promotie aan vast zit
4. Ik streef ernaar om mijn collega's zo goed mogelijk te helpen met hun taken
5. Ik streef naar innerlijke groei
6. Ik investeer in het telkens verder verdiepen van mijn kennis
7. De bijdrage die ik aan een organisatie kan leveren is voor mij een belangrijke motivator
8. Wanneer ik een mogelijkheid zie om nieuwe vaardigheden te leren, grijp ik deze met beide handen aan
9. Ik zoek in mijn werk naar bezieling
10. Ik wil graag dat mijn succes bijdraagt aan het succes van iedereen in de organisatie
11. Mijn doel is om de organisatie verder te helpen ontwikkelen
12. Ik streef ernaar om mezelf te ontwikkelen
13. Ik ben veelal gefocust op het ontwikkelen van mezelf
14. Ik streef ernaar om anderen te kunnen opleiden
15. Ik wil graag via mijn werk een bijdrage leveren aan een betere wereld
16. Het liefst houd ik me bezig met taken waarin ik nieuwe kennis op doe
17. Ik kies graag uitdagende projecten waarin ik iets nieuws leer

18. Ik wil graag mijn kennis delen en overdragen aan de volgende generatie
19. Als een project slaagt ben ik daar heel blij mee, ongeacht of daar een promotie aan vast hangt
20. Mijn doel is om bij te dragen aan de ontwikkeling van anderen
21. Mijn doel is mijzelf te verbeteren
22. Als ik een taak heb volbracht voel ik me voldaan, of ik er nou voor betaald word of niet
23. Tijdens een project is het proces voor mij belangrijker dan het einddoel

Vertical Ambition (24 items)- Schaveling & Van Osch (in progress)

7 point- Likert scale

<i>Helemaal niet mee eens</i>	<i>Niet mee eens</i>	<i>Grotendeels niet mee eens</i>	<i>Neutraal</i>	<i>Grotendeels mee eens</i>	<i>Mee eens</i>	<i>Helemaal mee eens</i>
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1. Ik spendeer veel energie aan het verkrijgen van een promotie
2. Ik streef ernaar mijn inkomen te vergroten
3. Ik waak ervoor om mijn status niet te verliezen
4. Mijn doel is om beter te presteren dan mijn collega's
5. Ik verdien liever meer met minder leuk werk, dan minder met leuker werk
6. Ik heb de wens om telkens meer te verdienen
7. Ik wil hogerop om gezien te worden
8. In het aannemen van taken geef ik prioriteit aan taken die kans op promotie verhogen
9. Mijn doel is om een hogere beloning te ontvangen dan mijn collega's
10. Ik vind het belangrijk om een hogere positie te bekleden dan anderen
11. Mijn doel is om de hoogst mogelijke positie te behalen
12. Ik word graag gerespecteerd om mijn status op het werk
13. Ik streef naar een hogere positie

14. Ik zou minder hard mijn best doen als er een lager salaris tegenover zou staan
15. Ik streef ernaar om in een goed boekje te komen te staan bij mijn baas
16. Ik verwacht dat anderen mij erkenning geven voor dat wat ik heb gedaan
17. De hoogte van het salaris is voor mij een belangrijke mate van waardering
18. Ik hecht veel waarde aan het verkrijgen van een zo hoog mogelijke status
19. Als ik mijn doelen behaal vind ik dat ik daarvoor beloond moet worden
20. Ik vind het belangrijk dat anderen kunnen zien wat ik bereikt heb
21. Ik zorg er altijd voor dat mijn naam duidelijk gekoppeld is aan een succesvol project
22. Indien ik beter presteer dan anderen wil ik dat dit publiekelijk bekend is
23. Ik vind dat goed werk moet worden beloond met een hoger salaris
24. Ik werk hard zodat ik elk jaar meer salaris kan vragen

Work Home Conflict (9 items) – Carlson, Kacmar and Williams (2000)

5 point- Likert scale

<i>Helemaal niet mee eens</i>	<i>Grotendeels niet mee eens</i>	<i>Neutraal</i>	<i>Grotendeels mee eens</i>	<i>Helemaal mee eens</i>
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Time

1. Mijn werk weerhoudt me van mijn familieactiviteiten meer dan ik zou willen
My work keeps me from my family activities more than I would like
2. De tijd die ik aan mijn werk moet besteden weerhoudt mij ervan om even veel deel te nemen aan huishoudelijke activiteiten en verantwoordelijkheden
The time I must devote to my job keeps me from participating equally in household responsibilities and activities
3. Ik mis familieactiviteiten door de hoeveelheid tijd die ik aan verantwoordelijkheden op het werk moet spenderen

I have to miss family activities due to the amount of time I must spend on work responsibilities

Strain

4. Als ik thuiskom van werk, ben ik vaak te uitgeput om deel te nemen aan familieactiviteiten/verantwoordelijkheden

When I get home from work, I am often too frazzled to participate in family activities/responsibilities

5. Als ik thuiskom van werk, ben ik vaak emotioneel helemaal op dat het me ervan weerhoudt om bij te dragen aan mijn familie

I am often so emotionally drained when I get home from work that it prevents me from contributing to my family

6. Soms als ik thuiskom van werk, vanwege alle druk op het werk, ben ik te gestrest om de dingen te doen waar ik plezier aan beleef

Due to all the pressures at work, sometimes when I come home, I am too stressed to do the things I enjoy

Behavior

7. De oplossingen die ik in mijn werk gebruik om problemen op te lossen, zijn niet effectief in het oplossen van problemen thuis

The problem-solving behaviors I use in my job are not effective in resolving problems at home

8. Gedrag dat effectief en noodzakelijk voor mijn werk is, werkt averechts thuis

Behavior that is effective and necessary for me at work would be counterproductive at home

9. De gedragen die mij effectief maken op het werk helpen niet om een betere ouder of echtgenoot te zijn

The behaviors I perform that make me effective at work do not help me to be a better parent and spouse

Parental Status (1 item)

1. Hoeveel kinderen heeft u momenteel thuis wonen?

How many children do you currently have living at home?

- Geen kinderen (*no children*)
- 1 of meer kinderen (*1 or more than 1 child*)

Control Variables (10 items)

1. Wat is uw geslacht?

What is your gender?

- Man
- Vrouw
- Anders

2. Wat is uw leeftijd (in jaren)?

What is your age (in years)?

3. Wat is uw burgerlijke staat?

What is your marital status?

- Single (*Single*)
- Relatie (niet samenwonend) (*Relationship- not living together*)
- Relatie (samenwonend) (*Relationship- living together*)
- Geregistreerd partnerschap (*Registered partnership*)

- Getrouwd (*Married*)
- Weduwe/Weduwnaar (*Widow/Widower*)

4. Wat is uw hoogst behaalde opleidingsniveau?

What is your highest level of education?

- Geen opleiding (*No education*)
- Basisschool (*Primary school*)
- VMBO (*Secondary school-VMBO*)
- HAVO (*Secondary school-HAVO*)
- VWO (*Secondary school-VWO*)
- MBO
- HBO
- Universiteit (*WO*)

5. Heeft u een baan?

Do you have a job?

- Ja (*Yes*)
- Nee (*No*)

6. Hoe zou u uw werk omschrijven? In het geval van meerdere banen, kies het antwoord dat het grootste deel van uw inkomen omvat.

How would you characterize your job? In case you have multiple jobs, choose the answer that provides the bulk of your income.

- Full-time baan (*Full-time job*)
- Part-time baan (*Part-time job*)

- Bijbaan (bijvoorbeeld: naast het student zijn, verdient u wat geld) (*Side job, for example: besides being a student, you work to earn some money*)
- Anders, namelijk...(*Other, namely...*)

7. Bent u in loondienst bij een werkgever, ondernemer, zzp-er of...?

Do you work as an employee, are you entrepreneur, freelancer or...?

- Ik ben in loondienst bij een werkgever (*I work as an employee*)
- Ik ben een ondernemer (*I am an entrepreneur*)
- Ik ben een zzp-er (*I am a freelancer*)
- Anders, namelijk (*Other, namely...*)

8. Stel uw organisatie bestaat uit 7 niveaus (Niveau 7 geeft het hoogste niveau binnen de organisatie weer). Welk niveau geeft uw functie het beste weer?

Suppose your organization consists of 7 scales ("Scale 7" represents the highest function within your organization). Which scale best represents your situation?

- Niveau 7 Hoogste niveau (*Scale 7 Highest function*)
- Niveau 6 (*Scale 6*)
- Niveau 5 (*Scale 5*)
- Niveau 4 (*Scale 4*)
- Niveau 3 (*Scale 3*)
- Niveau 2 (*Scale 2*)
- Niveau 1 Laagste niveau (*Scale 1 Lowest function*)

9. Nederland staat bekend om de regelingen die zowel de overheid als werkgevers aanbieden aan werknemers. Maakt u gebruik van één of meerdere van deze onderstaande opties?

The Netherlands is known for the arrangements both the government and employers offer to employees. Do you use one or more than one of the arrangement mentioned below?

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| ▪ Parttime werk | Ja (Yes) | Nee (No) |
| ▪ Ouderschapsverlof | Ja (Yes) | Nee (No) |
| ▪ Flextime (flexibele uren werken) | Ja (Yes) | Nee (No) |
| ▪ Andere regeling | Ja (Yes) | Nee (No) |

10. Hoeveel uur werkt u per week volgens uw contract?

How many hours a week do you work according to your contract?