

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Considering need satisfaction both at work and at home: What matters for employees' work–family enrichment and well-being?

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## Abstract

The current study examines complexities in relationships between need satisfaction at work, need satisfaction at home, work-to-family enrichment (WFE) and well-being (in terms of positive affect). Competing theoretical perspectives are offered regarding relationships between need satisfaction and WFE. The first perspective, based in a domain specificity approach focused on the directional nature of WFE, suggests that need satisfaction at work is what matters for employees' WFE, irrespective of their need satisfaction at home. Alternatively, a second perspective proposes that both need satisfaction at work and need satisfaction at home represent important factors in employees' experiences of WFE and that congruence (i.e. similarity) between these two constructs is what matters for WFE. Competing hypotheses are tested in a sample of 204 full-time employees who completed both a work and home survey and were rated on well-being at home by a significant other. Results support the first perspective for competence need satisfaction and relatedness need satisfaction, while the second perspective is supported for autonomy need satisfaction. For all three needs, indirect relationships are found with well-being, both at work and at home, via WFE. Relevant theoretical and practical implications are discussed as well as suggestions for future research.

## KEYWORDS

congruence, psychological need satisfaction, self-determination theory, well-being, work–family enrichment

### Practitioner points

- Organizations and managers can promote experiences of work-to-family enrichment for employees by increasing competence need satisfaction at work and relatedness need satisfaction at work.
- Because employees' experiences of work-to-family enrichment depend on both autonomy need satisfaction at work and autonomy need satisfaction at home, organizations might invite family members to attend work–family training programmes with employees.
- When workers experience increased work-to-family enrichment, this can have downstream well-being benefits in terms of positive affect at work and positive affect at home.

Aligned with a growing human capital trend in organizations that focuses on employees' well-being across life roles (e.g. work and family; Bevington et al., 2021), research has increasingly emphasized the positive side of the work–family interface, especially work–family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Lapierre et al., 2018). Employees experience work–family enrichment when participation in one role improves quality of life in a different role, and research finds that work–family enrichment is bi-directional (Carlson et al., 2006; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). That is, work may improve the quality of family life (i.e. work-to-family enrichment; WFE), and alternatively, family may improve the quality of work life (i.e. family-to-work enrichment; FWE). In the current research, we focus on WFE, which originates in the work role (Carlson et al., 2006; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), and therefore, may represent an important factor that organizations can influence to enhance employees' well-being.

To investigate the factors that may increase employees' WFE, we integrate the work–family enrichment literature with Basic Psychological Needs Theory (BPNT; Vansteenkiste et al., 2020, 2023), a sub-theory of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Self-determination theory is a theoretical framework that addresses human motivation, functioning and wellness (Ryan et al., 2022), which aligns closely with work–family enrichment's focus on positive experiences and outcomes, including well-being (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Zhang et al., 2018). According to self-determination theory, psychological need satisfaction is important for employees because it gives individuals a sense of volition and choice (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Further, as explained by BPNT, need satisfaction relates to optimal functioning and well-being (Vansteenkiste et al., 2023), suggesting need satisfaction may be relevant as an antecedent to WFE.

In organizational research, psychological need satisfaction in employees' work role has received considerable attention (see Deci et al., 2017, for a qualitative review and Van den Broeck et al., 2016, for a quantitative review); however, need satisfaction in employees' other life roles as well as the joint effects of need satisfaction across multiple roles has largely been ignored (Hewett et al., 2017, is a notable exception). This is problematic when examining outcomes related to employees' work–family interface, including WFE, because multiple roles are involved (i.e. both work and family; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Thus, only studying need satisfaction at work (while ignoring need satisfaction at home) paints an incomplete picture. The current research extends existing organizational studies focused exclusively on need satisfaction at work and presents a work–family enrichment model that includes both need satisfaction at work and need satisfaction at home.

For the first half of the model (see Figure 1), we offer competing hypotheses regarding relationships between need satisfaction at work, need satisfaction at home, and WFE, based in differing theoretical perspectives found through integrating work–family enrichment theory with propositions from BPNT. Perspective 1 highlights a directional, domain specificity approach to WFE antecedents, which is the prevalent theoretical perspective in the literature (Shockley & Singla, 2011). According to this approach, work-specific characteristics are more salient antecedents to WFE than family characteristics (Lapierre et al., 2018), and thus, Perspective 1 in the current study focuses on the benefits of need satisfaction at

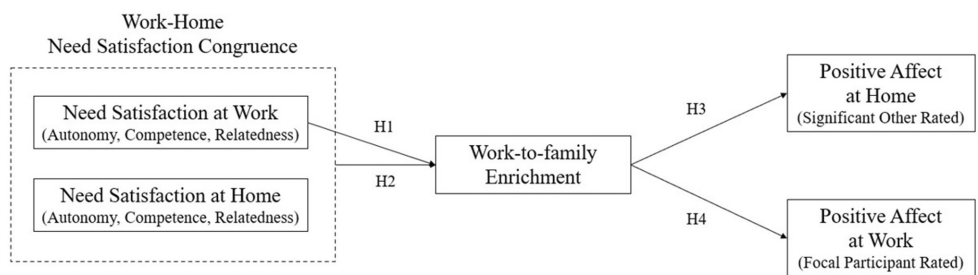


FIGURE 1 Conceptual model.

work for employees' experiences of WFE. Alternatively, Perspective 2 questions the fundamental principle that need satisfaction in the work role alone can benefit employees' WFE without also considering the interplay with need satisfaction at home in one's family role. That is, both need satisfaction at work and need satisfaction at home are important for employees' experiences of WFE following this perspective. This approach is supported by propositions from seminal work–family enrichment research specifying factors that influence the transfer of experiences across roles (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) as well as recent BPNT research that finds value in congruent, or equal, need satisfaction across life roles (Emery et al., 2015; Milyavskaya et al., 2009). Therefore, under Perspective 2, we propose that congruence between need satisfaction at work and need satisfaction at home is important for WFE. Finally, given our interest in well-being and the fact that it is a theoretically important outcome studied in both the work–family enrichment (Zhang et al., 2018) and BPNT (Ryan et al., 2022; Stanley et al., 2021) literatures, we test the intervening role of WFE in relationships between need satisfaction and well-being both at home (i.e. significant others' perceptions of employees' positive affect at home) and at work (i.e. employees' positive affect at work).

Altogether, the present study offers multiple contributions to the organizational psychology literature. First, by theoretically proposing and empirically testing a model of WFE that includes antecedents from both work (i.e. need satisfaction at work) and family (i.e. need satisfaction at home) roles, we provide a more comprehensive and complex view of antecedents to WFE than has typically been offered in the literature. Given the prominent domain specificity approach to WFE antecedents, focused on the directional nature of WFE (Carlson et al., 2006; Shockley & Singla, 2011), research has generally considered work constructs alone in predicting WFE. We extend this approach by considering the potential interplay between work and home constructs in predicting WFE. With competing hypotheses, we examine whether need satisfaction at work is what matters for employees' experiences of WFE, irrespective of their need satisfaction at home (Perspective 1) or whether need satisfaction at work only matters for WFE to the extent that it is congruent with, or equal to, need satisfaction at home (Perspective 2). Proposing and testing these competing hypotheses is valuable as it offers an alternative theoretical perspective (i.e. congruence) that future research on WFE antecedents can build upon. Further, following prior research that finds differences across individual need satisfactions (e.g. van Hooff & De Pater, 2019), we test and find support for different perspectives based on which need is examined (i.e. autonomy, competence and relatedness). Thus, our competing hypotheses highlight the importance of considering different perspectives for different needs, especially when studying need satisfaction across work and family roles. Such an approach offers new knowledge for organizations and managers looking to enhance employees' WFE and well-being.

Second and relatedly, we examine WFE as a potential intervening variable between need satisfaction and well-being outcomes (i.e. positive affect at home and at work). This is in-line with the assertion of BPNT that certain outcomes relate more proximally to need satisfaction, while others relate more distally 'through a sequence of intervening variables' (Vansteenkiste et al., 2023, p. 93). Positioning interrole constructs, such as WFE, as intervening variables helps explain why need satisfaction in one role (e.g. work) may benefit well-being in another role (e.g. positive affect at home).

Third and finally, we incorporate significant other perceptions of employees' well-being at home in the model, which extends the small handful of studies that have included partner perceptions of WFE outcomes. This contributes to the work–family enrichment literature as partner perceptions of employees' enrichment experiences are important for understanding the full benefits of WFE (Carlson et al., 2019; Wayne et al., 2013). That is, when organizations create opportunities for WFE, significant others perceive greater well-being in employees, which is practically important for family members' commitment to the organization (Wayne et al., 2013) and theoretically important as it may represent a mechanism through which additional positive outcomes from WFE can occur.

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESES

### An overview of self-determination theory and basic psychological needs theory

Self-determination theory is a macro motivational theory that discusses the benefits of autonomous motivation, or a sense of volition, willingness, and choice at work (Deci et al., 2017). Self-determination theory encompasses six sub-theories, one being BPNT (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020, 2023). BPNT explains that autonomous motivation is fostered through psychological need satisfaction, including satisfaction of the needs for autonomy (i.e. experiencing a sense of choice and feeling free from external pressure), competence (i.e. feeling efficacious with respect to tasks and activities) and relatedness (i.e. feeling that one belongs and is connected to others; Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Need satisfaction fuels employees' natural inclination to grow and develop, promoting optimal functioning and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Van den Broeck et al., 2016).

BPNT outlines propositions pertaining to characteristics of the three needs and outcomes of need satisfaction, with two of these propositions having particular relevance for the current study. The first proposition identifies the three basic psychological needs as autonomy, competence and relatedness, and notes that satisfaction of these needs promotes optimal development and well-being (Ryan et al., 2022). Self-determination theory assumes that humans are naturally inclined towards growth and development, and need satisfaction acts as a fundamental nutriment that fuels such development (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Need satisfaction is also described as a 'catalyst of well-being' that promotes optimal functioning in individuals (Vansteenkiste et al., 2023, p. 89). As Vansteenkiste et al. (2023) explain, this optimal functioning invokes awareness, a sense of meaning and subjective vitality in terms of vigour and energy. BPNT asserts that need satisfaction should replenish energy, in turn, fostering vitality (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Support for this notion has been found repeatedly in multiple different life domains (e.g. work, parenting; Vansteenkiste et al., 2023).

This final point about multiple different life domains introduces a second relevant proposition from BPNT, which states that need satisfaction can vary within persons, across contexts (Ryan et al., 2022). Applying this to the current research, an employee's need satisfaction may vary across work and family. An element of this proposition is that variations in need satisfaction across contexts should result in parallel variations in functioning and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Self-determination theory research has found this to be true across different life domains, with domain-specific experiences of need satisfaction corresponding to functioning and well-being within the specified domain (Milyavskaya & Koestner, 2011).

### Integrating basic psychological needs theory and work–family enrichment

An integration of these BPNT propositions with the work–family enrichment literature highlights the value of need satisfaction for understanding employees' experiences of work–family enrichment. In particular, need satisfaction within a specific context, or role, promotes optimal functioning and growth within that role, including the development of skills and replenishment of energy (Vansteenkiste

et al., 2023). This optimal functioning and growth is relevant for understanding WFE as it gets at a fundamental principal of enrichment. Specifically, seminal work–family enrichment research explains that individuals' participation in a role can result in skills and perspectives being developed as well as energy being gained that can be used to improve experiences in another role (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Marks, 1977). Following a directional, domain specificity approach to WFE (Lapierre et al., 2018; Shockley & Singla, 2011), employees' participation in the work role should enhance their family role when they experience need satisfaction at work, a phenomenon we investigate in the current study.

However, because WFE is an interrole construct that involves multiple roles (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), considering employees' need satisfaction in the work role alone (while ignoring need satisfaction in the family role) does not paint the full picture. This notion is supported by the BPNT proposition that states—need satisfaction is relevant across all facets of human functioning (including both work and family roles) and that a person's need satisfaction can vary across contexts (Ryan et al., 2022). Applying this to WFE, an individual may experience need satisfaction in one role (e.g. work), but not the other (e.g. family), which raises the question of how variance in need satisfaction across roles influences employees' experiences of WFE. A small handful of studies have investigated individuals' need satisfaction across multiple life roles (e.g. Emery et al., 2015; Hewett et al., 2017; Milyavskaya et al., 2009). This empirical research supports the notion that individuals vary in the degree to which they possess similar, versus different, levels of need satisfaction across life roles (i.e. some individuals have similarly high or similarly low need satisfaction across life roles while others have high need satisfaction in one role and low need satisfaction in another; Emery et al., 2015; Milyavskaya et al., 2009). Additionally, one daily diary study focused on the work and family roles, specifically, found that the interplay between need satisfaction at work and need satisfaction at home was important for understanding positive home outcomes in the evening (Hewett et al., 2017). Building on this research and the associated BPNT propositions, the current study considers both need satisfaction at work and need satisfaction at home, as well as the interplay between these two constructs, when examining employees' experiences of WFE and downstream well-being outcomes (i.e. positive affect at home and positive affect at work).

Our integration of BPNT with the work–family enrichment literature uncovered two differing theoretical arguments pertaining to relationships between need satisfaction at work, need satisfaction at home, and WFE, which lead us to propose competing hypotheses for the first half of our model. On the one hand, research on the directional nature of WFE, founded in a domain specificity theoretical perspective, suggests that antecedents in the work role will be the dominant factor in employees' WFE experiences (Lapierre et al., 2018; Shockley & Singla, 2011). Following this reasoning, Perspective 1, detailed below, proposes a directional relationship such that employees' level of need satisfaction at work is what matters for WFE, irrespective of their level of need satisfaction at home. On the other hand, propositions from seminal work–family enrichment research specifying factors that can influence the transfer of experiences across roles (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) as well as recent self-determination theory research that finds value in congruent, or equal, levels of need satisfaction across life roles (Emery et al., 2015; Milyavskaya et al., 2009) suggests that both need satisfaction at work and need satisfaction at home represent important factors in employees' experiences of WFE. Therefore, we present a competing Perspective 2 that suggests congruence (i.e. similarity) in need satisfaction across work and home roles is what matters for WFE. The competing hypotheses associated with these perspectives reference each of the three needs (i.e. autonomy, competence and relatedness) individually, given recent recommendations from self-determination theory research to model the needs separately, rather than as one overall need satisfaction construct (Van den Broeck et al., 2016).

## Perspective 1: Need satisfaction at work is what matters for employees' WFE

Seminal research on work–family enrichment highlights its directional nature (Carlson et al., 2006; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). For WFE, work is the originating role and family is the receiving role, which differs from FWE where family is the originating role and work is the receiving role



(Carlson et al., 2006). Following a domain specificity approach under Perspective 1, antecedents to enrichment should stem from the originating role (Lapierre et al., 2018; Shockley & Singla, 2011). The current research focuses on WFE, which originates in the work domain as outlined above, and thus, need satisfaction at work represents a salient domain-specific antecedent to WFE. Research on psychological need satisfaction suggests that need satisfaction at work enables optimal functioning in the work role via enhanced energy (Vansteenkiste et al., 2023) as well as growth and development (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Van den Broeck et al., 2016). When employees gain increased energy at work and develop new skills and perspectives, this provides more opportunities to transfer work experiences home to improve family life (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Marks, 1977). Thus, we argue for positive linear relationships between autonomy, competence and relatedness need satisfaction at work and WFE (under Perspective 1).

Need satisfaction at work prompts optimal functioning at work for self-determined individuals through healthy psychological and constructive social development (Ryan & Deci, 2000). These developmental experiences bring about psychological resources, skills, perspectives, and social capital at work, all of which may be transferred home, resulting in WFE (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). For example, an employee who has their need for relatedness at work satisfied should have more people at work that they can reach out to for advice when they face challenging situations on the job (Gagne & Deci, 2005). The information and perspectives they receive from co-workers at work may be transferred home as part of WFE (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Satisfaction of autonomy, competence and relatedness needs, and associated feelings of self-determination, are also characterized by volition and choice, which may translate to flexibility, another valuable experience relevant for WFE (Deci et al., 2017; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Thus, need satisfaction at work should produce optimal functioning at work that not only enhances work outcomes, but also extends to positive outcomes outside of work. This is consistent with meta-analytic evidence from Van den Broeck et al. (2016) that finds positive relationships between satisfaction of the needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness at work and overall life satisfaction and general well-being. We expand on this research to consider the positive implications of need satisfaction at work for one's family role in terms of WFE.

In addition to this theoretical and empirical BPNT research, the work–family literature holds empirical support for Perspective 1 and a positive relationship between need satisfaction at work and WFE. For instance, a meta-analysis by Lapierre et al. (2018) finds a positive relationship between work autonomy and WFE. Work autonomy is distinct from autonomy need satisfaction at work; however, it is a related construct that represents an antecedent to autonomy, competence and relatedness need satisfaction at work (Van den Broeck et al., 2016). Moreover, work antecedents that represent the optimal functioning described by BPNT (e.g. work engagement and work involvement) demonstrate positive relationships with WFE (Lapierre et al., 2018). This evidence suggests that need satisfaction at work is important for WFE; however, the importance of need satisfaction at home for WFE is less clear as relationships between family antecedents and WFE are often inconsistent. For instance, WFE scale validation research demonstrates consistent significant relationships across work role antecedents (e.g. work involvement) and WFE, whereas certain family role antecedents (e.g. family involvement) did not demonstrate significant relationships with WFE (Kacmar et al., 2014). Furthermore, meta-analytic research shows that work antecedents demonstrate stronger relationships with WFE than antecedents in the family role (Lapierre et al., 2018). This aligns with a domain specificity, or directional, approach where family antecedents are depicted as having limited relevance for WFE, especially when compared to work role antecedents.<sup>1</sup> Altogether then, our first competing hypothesis proposes that need satisfaction at work is what matters for employees' WFE.

<sup>1</sup>While our primary focus in Perspective 1 is the relationship between need satisfaction at work and WFE, we also include need satisfaction at home in the model and report on relationships between need satisfaction at home and WFE (which we would not expect to be significant). This provides consistency between the analyses used to test Perspective 1 and Perspective 2, enabling a comparison of the two perspectives.

**Hypothesis 1.** (Directional Perspective): There is a linear relationship between need satisfaction and WFE such that employees with higher levels of (a) autonomy, (b) competence, and (c) relatedness need satisfaction at work experience more WFE.

## Perspective 2: Work-home need satisfaction congruence is what matters for employees' WFE

The notion that need satisfaction can vary across contexts (Ryan et al., 2022), including work and family roles, introduces the question of whether this variance is a factor in employees' experiences of WFE. Said another way, are there differences in WFE for employees who possess similarly high or similarly low need satisfaction across work and family compared to those who experience high need satisfaction in one role and low need satisfaction in the other? Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) seminal work–family enrichment research speaks to this issue and offers propositions specifying factors that ‘explain the likelihood that an individual will transfer skills and perspectives, social-capital resources, flexibility, and material resources across roles’ (p. 84). For WFE, these factors include the perceived relevance of resources gained at work (e.g. skills, perspectives and flexibility) for one's family role as well as consistency with requirements and norms in the family role. As Greenhaus and Powell (2006) describe, inconsistency between roles can be prohibitive for WFE, for instance, ‘a directive decision-making style developed in an autocratic work environment could dampen performance in a family that values nurturance and self-direction’ (p. 85). Under Perspective 2, we consider whether inconsistency in need satisfaction across work and home (e.g. high need satisfaction at work yet low need satisfaction at home), which would represent dissimilarity in need satisfaction across roles, might be prohibitive for employees' experiences of WFE.

Greenhaus and Powell (2006) present theoretical arguments explaining why dissimilarity between roles may be prohibitive for WFE. Their reasoning is based in the defining aspect of enrichment that says improved quality of life in the receiving role is required for enrichment to occur. For WFE, this entails improved quality of family life due to participation in the work role (Carlson et al., 2006). When dissimilarity, or incongruence, between roles is present, this makes it less likely that skills, perspectives, and other resources gained at work will be consistent with and applicable to one's family (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). For instance, Greenhaus and Powell (2006) describe examples where collaborative and directive skills developed in one role may not necessarily result in WFE if they are incompatible with norms and task requirements in the other role. In another example, these authors explain that even flexibility gained in a role, with its many advantages, may have no impact on the other role if it is ‘resisted by others within the role set or is not necessary to fulfill the requirements of the role’ (p. 85). Integrating these points with the BPNT propositions described earlier, an employee who experiences incongruent need satisfaction across work and home may not take advantage of the optimal functioning, development and growth resulting from high need satisfaction in their work role to enhance their family role when need satisfaction is inconsistent across these two roles. Even though they may gain skills, perspectives, and flexibility at work, these experiences may not transfer home to produce WFE because they are inconsistent with expectations at home and do not actually improve the quality of family life (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

On the other hand, congruent need satisfaction, which represents consistency across roles (Emery et al., 2015; Milyavskaya et al., 2009), should facilitate WFE. When individuals have high need satisfaction at work, they feel volition and choice at work (Deci et al., 2017), and when they experience similarly high need satisfaction at home (including feelings of volition and choice), they should see connections between their work and family roles (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Even in situations where need satisfaction is lower in both roles, work–home need satisfaction congruence could still be valuable for WFE. In particular, self-determination theory research explains that when individuals' needs are unmet, they develop ‘rigid behavior patterns that may be temporarily functional because they provide a sense of stability, predictability, and security’ (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020, p. 11). If this form of functioning is

applicable to both work and family, due to lower need satisfaction in both roles, it may increase WFE because the individual sees connections between their functioning at work and how it might be similarly applied at home. Consider a factory employee who works on a rigid schedule and experiences low autonomy need satisfaction at work. This employee may develop skills and perspectives to cope with their work schedule (e.g. pre-packing meals on weekends to arrive to work on-time) that may be transferred home if they experience similarly low autonomy need satisfaction in their family role (e.g. pre-packaging meals to meet a strict schedule of running children to activities). In support of this, Greenhaus and Powell (2006) explicitly discuss coping skills as a resource that may be generated in one role and then transferred to another role as part of work–family enrichment. While we expect that work-home need satisfaction congruence at higher levels is more beneficial for WFE than work-home need satisfaction congruence at lower levels, the congruence arguments presented under Perspective 2 suggest that congruence in need satisfaction is preferable to incongruence in need satisfaction.

In addition to these theoretical arguments, support for Perspective 2 can be found in recent advances in empirical self-determination theory research. To date, this research has been conducted in samples of children and adolescents and tests the premise that balanced, or similar, need satisfaction across contexts is an important factor to consider, in addition to the level of need satisfaction within each context. Milyavskaya et al. (2009) show that similar need satisfaction across contexts (e.g. school, home and friends) predicts adolescents' school adjustment and well-being. Related research by Emery et al. (2015) finds well-being effects for both children and adolescents and notes that, 'the individual who experiences equal satisfaction of their needs across contexts should experience higher well-being than the individual whose need fulfillment fluctuates across contexts' (p. 756). Milyavskaya et al. (2009) call for research that tests this phenomenon in additional populations, including adults, and we answer this call by examining congruence between need satisfaction at work and need satisfaction at home (i.e. work–home need satisfaction congruence) for employees' WFE. Altogether then, our second competing hypothesis proposes that employees with congruent need satisfaction across work and home will experience more WFE than employees with incongruent need satisfaction across work and home.

**Hypothesis 2.** (Congruence Perspective): There is a congruence relationship between need satisfaction and WFE such that employees with greater congruence between their level of (a) autonomy, (b) competence, and (c) relatedness need satisfaction at work and their level of (a) autonomy, (b) competence, and (c) relatedness need satisfaction at home experience more WFE.

## Need satisfaction, WFE and downstream well-being outcomes

According to BPNT, 'some outcomes are more proximally related to need-based experiences; others have a more distal relationship that may be predicted through a sequence of intervening variables' (Vansteenkiste et al., 2023, p. 93). Thus, our next two hypotheses consider how need satisfaction may relate to downstream well-being outcomes through the intervening variable of WFE. This is consistent with the process model of need satisfaction that purports basic psychological need experiences relate to affective outcomes via differing levels of functioning (Vansteenkiste et al., 2023). We propose that WFE represents an indicator of such functioning, and thus, an explanatory variable between need satisfaction and affective well-being.

When considering well-being as an outcome, BPNT research acknowledges both hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives (Ryan & Deci, 2017; Van den Broeck et al., 2016). Under the hedonic perspective, well-being is generally equated with happiness and is 'primarily defined as the presence of positive affect and the absence of negative affect' (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 239). This approach is referred to as subjective well-being (Diener, 2000), and it is utilized often in self-determination theory research. For instance, a recent BPNT meta-analysis finds significant relationships between satisfaction of the three needs (i.e. autonomy, competence and relatedness) and positive affect (Stanley et al., 2021), highlighting



the relevance of positive affect as a key well-being outcome resulting from need satisfaction. Given that the current research focuses on employees' interrole experiences and recognizes the importance of considering both work and family roles, we include both positive affect at work and positive affect at home as outcomes in our model.

In terms of wellness outcomes, BPNT research expands past the hedonic perspective to also consider a eudaemonic perspective on well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2017). A eudaemonic approach views wellness in terms of optimal, or full, functioning (Vansteenkiste et al., 2023). Optimal functioning is characterized by growth, awareness, vitality and energy (Ryan & Deci, 2017). According to BPNT, subjective well-being (i.e. positive affect) accrues through such functioning, or said another way, 'when people are functioning in a healthy way, they will also tend to report more happiness' (Ryan & Deci, 2017, p. 241). We suggest WFE represents an indicator of optimal functioning as it entails growth, transfer of energy, and increased quality of life (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), which is consistent with descriptions of full functioning offered by BPNT (e.g. vitality, energy, growth; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Thus, WFE should demonstrate positive relationships with subjective well-being outcomes and may act an intervening mechanism between need satisfaction and affective well-being (i.e. positive affect).

Support for WFE as an intervening mechanism between need satisfaction and positive affect is also found in the work-family enrichment literature. Central to the experience of work-family enrichment is the notion that the receiving role of enrichment will benefit through improved quality of life, including increased positive affect (Carlson et al., 2006; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). For WFE, this would entail increased positive affect at home in the family role. Building on recent research that suggests partner perceptions of employees' work-family experiences are important for understanding the full benefits of WFE (Carlson et al., 2019; Wayne et al., 2013), we are specifically interested in significant other perceptions of employees' positive affect at home. Employees with increased positive affect in a role are more likely to be in a pleasurable and engaged mood while participating in that role (Watson & Clark, 1999; Watson & Tellegen, 1985). Work-family enrichment theory states that positive affect in the receiving role occurs because employees feel good when they function well in that role as part of work-family enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), and we propose that significant others will observe these positive feelings emitted by employees. This follows prior research that argues romantic partners can perceive and are influenced by their significant others' WFE (Wayne et al., 2013). Partner perceptions have been found to mediate relationships between WFE and positive family outcomes, highlighting their importance in models of WFE (Carlson et al., 2019). Thus, we expect a positive relationship between employees' WFE and significant others' perceptions of employees' positive affect at home and hypothesize that need satisfaction will relate indirectly to significant others' perceptions of positive affect through WFE.

**Hypothesis 3.** There is an indirect relationship between (a) autonomy, (b) competence, and (c) relatedness need satisfaction and employees' positive affect at home (as perceived by significant others) through WFE.

In addition to more effective functioning in the receiving role, research applying a source attribution perspective to the work-family interface finds strong evidence that affective outcomes of enrichment occur in the originating role as well (Shockley & Singla, 2011). Shockley and Singla (2011) explain that positive outcomes at work result from WFE because employees attribute benefits they receive in the family role back to their work role. These authors conclude that 'there is substantial evidence that affective reactions to WFE occur mostly in the originating, rather than receiving, domain' (p. 875). Additional support for this argument is found in the meta-analysis by Zhang et al. (2018) where WFE demonstrates positive relationships with positive affective outcomes at work (i.e. job satisfaction) in addition to positive outcomes at home (i.e. family satisfaction). Applied to the current research, this suggests a relationship with positive affect in the originating role of WFE, which is consistent with our BPNT arguments above suggesting that WFE is representative

of optimal functioning and is associated with positive affective outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Therefore, we hypothesize that need satisfaction will relate indirectly to employees' positive affect at work through WFE.

**Hypothesis 4.** There is an indirect relationship between (a) autonomy, (b) competence, and (c) relatedness need satisfaction and employees' positive affect at work through WFE.

## METHOD

### Participants and procedure

Participants in this study were full-time employees in the United States who were married or cohabitating with a significant other. Respondents were recruited through LinkedIn and Facebook group pages affiliated with the first author's previous universities and places of work, following receipt of Internal Review Board approval. Focal participants who registered for the study were asked to provide informed consent and then complete two surveys administered in English, one at work and one at home. The work survey assessed need satisfaction at work, positive affect at work, and demographic information, while the home survey assessed need satisfaction at home and WFE. This design follows recommendations from prior work–family research to measure each construct in the role that it is experienced (e.g. need satisfaction at work is measured at work while need satisfaction at home is measured at home; Wilson & Baumann, 2015). Participants who completed both the work and home surveys were entered into a drawing for a number of \$20 Amazon.com gift cards. Additionally, each focal participant received an email containing a significant other survey link, along with clear instructions to forward the email to their significant other.<sup>2</sup> Significant others rated focal participants' positive affect at home. Because focal participants were eligible for the gift card drawing after completing their own two surveys, there was no incentive for them to fill out the significant other survey, rather than passing it on to a significant other. As an additional check, during the significant other survey, we collected email addresses from these individuals and subsequently sent a follow-up thanking them for their time and informing them that they should respond if they had any questions or were unfamiliar with the research. No email responses were received. Altogether, the design of the current study incorporated multiple surveys, multiple sources, and multiple time points so that separation in one of these forms was present for each relationship tested in the model (e.g. need satisfaction at work was measured in the focal participant work survey while WFE was measured in the focal participant home survey, WFE was measured in the focal participant home survey while positive affect at home was measured in the significant other survey).

A total of 262 participants completed the work survey. Out of these respondents, 204 also completed the home survey and were retained for the final sample (including 117 participants who were rated on positive affect at home by a significant other). In terms of gender, 59.31 percent of focal participants were female (40.20 percent male and .49 percent unspecified). Average age was 38.29 years ( $SD=11.91$ ). In the final sample, 58.33 percent of participants had children (39.22 percent did not have children and 2.45 percent did not report on this variable). Average job tenure was 5.82 years ( $SD=7.03$ ), and average relationship tenure was 14.07 years ( $SD=11.14$ ). Participants worked in a variety of jobs, including engineer, accountant, banker, attorney, financial advisor, counsellor and nurse.

<sup>2</sup>A research design where focal participants forwarded on the significant other survey link, as opposed to the researchers directly emailing significant others, was utilized in response to an IRB review comment limiting focal participants from providing third party information (i.e., significant other email addresses) to the researchers.

## Measures

### Need satisfaction

The Basic Need Satisfaction at Work scale (Deci et al., 2001; Deci & Ryan, 2013) was used to assess need satisfaction at work, and the Basic Need Satisfaction in Life Scale (Deci & Ryan, 2013; Gagne, 2003) was used to assess need satisfaction at home, with ‘home’ or ‘family’ used as the referent of the items. In order to construct commensurate measures, which are required for testing congruence hypotheses (Edwards, 2002), six items were used to measure satisfaction of the need for autonomy (e.g. I am free to express my ideas and opinions on the job [work], I am free to express my ideas and opinions when I am with my family [home]), six items were used to measure satisfaction of the need for competence (e.g. Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from working [work], Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from what I do at home [home]), and five items were used to measure satisfaction of the need for relatedness (e.g. I get along with people at work [work], I get along with people in my family [home]). For both need satisfaction measures, participants responded on a 1 = *Not at all true* to 5 = *Very true* scale.

### Work-to-family enrichment

WFE was assessed with the three-item measure developed by Kacmar et al.'s (2014), which is a shortened version of Carlson et al.'s (2006) enrichment scale. The instructions described by Carlson et al. (2006) were displayed, concluding with, ‘My involvement in my work \_\_\_\_\_’. The items (e.g. Helps me to understand different viewpoints and this helps me be a better family member) were rated on a 1 = *Strongly disagree* to 5 = *Strongly agree* scale.

### Positive affect

Significant others rated focal participants' generalized positive affect at home. Similar to prior research (Gabriel et al., 2020; Mackinnon et al., 1999), five items (e.g. Enthusiastic and Inspired) from the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson & Clark, 1999) were assessed on a 1 = *Never* to 5 = *Always* scale. Focal participants rated their own generalized positive affect at work using the same five items.

## Analytical strategy

We tested competing hypotheses for the three individual needs by examining  $R^2$  change between a linear regression model (Hypothesis 1) and a polynomial regression model (Hypothesis 2; Barranti et al., 2017; Edwards, 2002). The linear regression model was estimated using the following equation:

$$E = b_0 + b_1W + b_2H + e$$

$E$  represents WFE,  $W$  stands for need satisfaction at work and  $H$  refers to need satisfaction at home. The polynomial regression model was estimated using the following equation, which included three additional higher-order terms (i.e. the interaction between need satisfaction at work and need satisfaction at home [ $WH$ ], a quadratic term for need satisfaction at work [ $W^2$ ] and a quadratic term for need satisfaction at home [ $H^2$ ]):

$$E = b_0 + b_1W + b_2H + b_3W^2 + b_4(WH) + b_5H^2 + e$$

A significant  $R^2$  change, indicating additional variance explained in WFE by the three higher-order terms, provides initial support for the congruence model proposed in Hypothesis 2 (Barranti et al., 2017; Edwards, 2002). In this case, parameter estimates from the above equation were used to plot a three-dimensional response surface with need satisfaction at work ( $W$ ) on the  $x$ -axis, need satisfaction at home ( $H$ ) on the perpendicular  $y$ -axis and WFE ( $E$ ) on the vertical  $z$ -axis. Features of the response surface, including the slope of the incongruence line and the location of the first principal axis, were examined to determine support for Hypothesis 2 (Edwards, 2002; Humberg et al., 2019). As described by Humberg et al. (2019), support for a congruence hypothesis depends on the incongruence line curvature being significant and the first principal axis not differing significantly from the congruence line; thus, we tested for both of these conditions in our congruence analyses. However, if the change in  $R^2$  between the linear regression model and the polynomial regression model is not significant, this indicates support for the linear model proposed in Hypothesis 1, rather than a congruence model.

In the case that competing Hypothesis 1 (linear model) is supported for a particular need satisfaction, Hypotheses 3 and 4 were tested by examining the significance of the indirect relationship between need satisfaction at work and positive affect at home (Hypothesis 3) and positive affect at work (Hypothesis 4). This involves simultaneously estimating the linear regression equation displayed above along with the following equation:

$$P = b_0 + b_1W + b_2H + b_6E + e$$

$P$  represents positive affect,  $W$  stands for need satisfaction at work,  $H$  refers to need satisfaction at home and  $E$  represents WFE. This is consistent with traditional methods for testing mediation and indirect effects in linear regression models (MacKinnon et al., 2002) and is representative of partial mediation as positive affect is regressed on need satisfaction at work and need satisfaction at home in addition to WFE. Because the indirect effect represents a product of coefficients, we conducted statistical tests with bias-corrected bootstrapped confidence intervals (CIs; MacKinnon et al., 2004). In the case that competing Hypothesis 2 (congruence model) is supported for a particular need satisfaction, Hypotheses 3 and 4 were tested with mediated polynomial regression. This involves simultaneously estimating the polynomial regression equation displayed above along with the following equation:

$$P = b_0 + b_1W + b_2H + b_3W^2 + b_4(WH) + b_5H^2 + b_6E + e$$

The indirect effect is derived by substituting the polynomial regression equation shown earlier for the mediator  $E$  into the equation above for the outcome  $P$  and then collecting like terms to yield five polynomial compound coefficients that can be analysed jointly to test the curvature of the incongruence line for the indirect effect (Edwards, n.d., 2002; Edwards & Parry, 1993). The indirect effect terms are products of coefficients; thus, statistical tests were conducted with bias-corrected bootstrapped CIs (Edwards & Cable, 2009; MacKinnon et al., 2004).

## RESULTS

### Preliminary results and measurement model testing

Table 1 displays descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and coefficient alphas. Before proceeding to test our hypotheses, we conducted confirmatory factor analysis to test for discriminant validity between study variables. We specified a nine-factor model including autonomy need satisfaction at work, autonomy need satisfaction at home, competence need satisfaction at work, competence need satisfaction at home, relatedness need satisfaction at work, relatedness need satisfaction at home, WFE, positive affect at work and positive affect at home. Due to the large number of parameters in the measurement model relative to our sample size, we used item parcels for variables measured with more than five items, following the item-to-construct balance approach (Little et al., 2002; White et al., 2024). For all other

TABLE 1 Descriptive statistics and correlations among study variables.

| Variable                | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | 1     | 2     | 3     | 4     | 5     | 6     | 7     | 8     | 9     |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Autonomy sat—work    | 3.34     | .65       | (.75) |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| 2. Autonomy sat—home    | 4.00     | .56       | .14*  | (.70) |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| 3. Competence sat—work  | 3.98     | .58       | .56** | .16*  | (.73) |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| 4. Competence sat—home  | 3.86     | .59       | .16*  | .55** | .16*  | (.77) |       |       |       |       |       |
| 5. Relatedness sat—work | 3.87     | .63       | .45** | .10   | .43** | .06   | (.82) |       |       |       |       |
| 6. Relatedness sat—home | 4.39     | .59       | .16*  | .61** | .16*  | .42** | .17*  | (.86) |       |       |       |
| 7. WFE                  | 3.42     | .75       | .54** | .13   | .52** | .13   | .38** | .18*  | (.72) |       |       |
| 8. Positive affect—work | 3.54     | .70       | .52** | .21** | .63** | .26** | .42** | .18*  | .60** | (.85) |       |
| 9. Positive affect—home | 3.40     | .59       | .37** | .09   | .31** | .20*  | .10   | .19*  | .39** | .35** | (.80) |

*Note:* *N* = 204 for focal participant-rated variables. *N* = 117 for significant other-rated variables. Positive affect—home is the focal participant's positive affect at home, rated by their significant other.  
Abbreviations: Sat, need satisfaction; WFE, work-to-family enrichment.  
\**p* < .05, two-tailed; \*\**p* < .01, two tailed.

variables, we specified individual items as indicators. The nine-factor model demonstrated acceptable fit to the data ( $\chi^2 = 791.367$ , *df* = 524, *p* < .001, RMSEA = .050, CFI = .911, SRMR = .064) and all items had significant loadings on their assigned factor (*p* < .001). We compared this model to a six-factor model that combined each individual need satisfaction (e.g. a single factor for autonomy need satisfaction at work and at home;  $\chi^2 = 1703.479$ , *df* = 545, *p* < .001, RMSEA = .102, CFI = .616, SRMR = .130) as well as a five-factor model that combined needs within each role (e.g. a single factor for autonomy, competence and relatedness need satisfaction at work;  $\chi^2 = 1191.814$ , *df* = 550, *p* < .001, RMSEA = .076, CFI = .787, SRMR = .083). However, neither of these alternative models provided acceptable fit to the data. Thus, we concluded support for the proposed nine-factor measurement model.

Hypothesis testing: Autonomy need satisfaction

Competing Hypothesis 1a proposes a linear relationship such that employees with higher levels of autonomy need satisfaction at work experience more WFE. Alternatively, competing Hypothesis 2a proposes a congruence relationship such that employees with greater congruence between autonomy need satisfaction at work and autonomy need satisfaction at home experience more WFE. An examination of *R*<sup>2</sup> change between a linear regression model (*R*<sup>2</sup> = .289; Hypothesis 1a) and a polynomial regression model (*R*<sup>2</sup> = .334; Hypothesis 2a) showed that the polynomial model with the three higher-order terms included explained additional variance in WFE (*R*<sup>2</sup> Change = .045, *F* Change = 4.47, *p* = .005). This demonstrates initial support for the congruence model proposed in Hypothesis 2a. For illustrative purposes, both of these models are depicted in Figure 2.

Next, we examined the curvature of the incongruence line and found additional support for Hypothesis 2a in that the curvature was negative and significant ( $[b_3 - b_4 + b_5] = -.53$ , *SE* = .17, *p* = .001; See Table 2). This inverted U-shaped curvature along the incongruence line (*W* = −*H*) signifies that ratings of WFE decrease as ratings of autonomy need satisfaction at work (*W*) and autonomy need



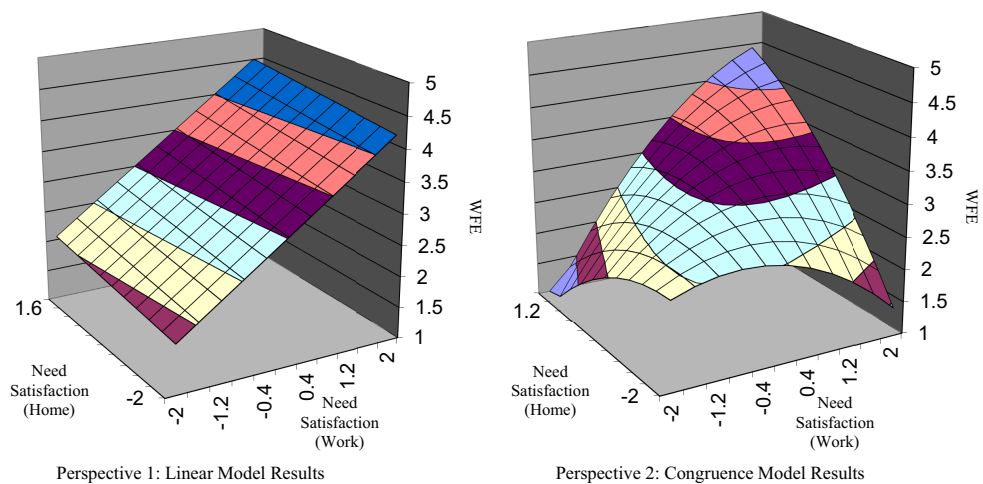


FIGURE 2 Relationship between autonomy need satisfaction at work, autonomy need satisfaction at home and WFE. Perspective 1: Linear model results. Perspective 2: Congruence model results.

TABLE 2 Relationships between need satisfaction at work, need satisfaction at home and WFE.

| Variable   | Autonomy |           |          |           | Competence |           |          |           | Relatedness |           |          |           |
|--|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
|  | Model 1  |           | Model 2  |           | Model 1    |           | Model 2  |           | Model 1     |           | Model 2  |           |
|  | <i>b</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>b</i>   | <i>SE</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>SE</i> | <i>b</i>    | <i>SE</i> | <i>b</i> | <i>SE</i> |
| Constant   | 3.15**   | (.09)     | 3.22**   | (.09)     | 2.72**     | (.10)     | 2.71**   | (.18)     | 2.83**      | (.13)     | 2.99**   | (.23)     |
| Polynomial terms   |          |           |          |           |            |           |          |           |             |           |          |           |
| <i>b</i> <sub>1</sub> Need sat—<br>work ( <i>W</i> )                                   | .61**    | (.07)     | .35*     | (.14)     | .66**      | (.08)     | .73**    | (.23)     | .44**       | (.08)     | .17      | (.27)     |
| <i>b</i> <sub>2</sub> Need sat—<br>home ( <i>H</i> )                                   | .07      | (.08)     | .17      | (.15)     | .06        | (.08)     | .12      | (.19)     | .15         | (.08)     | .03      | (.20)     |
| <i>b</i> <sub>3</sub> <i>W</i> <sup>2</sup>  |          |           | −.15*    | (.07)     |            |           | −.05     | (.09)     |             |           | .06      | (.10)     |
| <i>b</i> <sub>4</sub> <i>W</i> × <i>H</i>  |          |           | .29**    | (.11)     |            |           | .02      | (.15)     |             |           | .11      | (.15)     |
| <i>b</i> <sub>5</sub> <i>H</i> <sup>2</sup>  |          |           | −.10     | (.09)     |            |           | −.05     | (.09)     |             |           | .01      | (.07)     |
| Congruence line  |          |           |          |           |            |           |          |           |             |           |          |           |
| Slope<br>( <i>b</i> <sub>1</sub> + <i>b</i> <sub>2</sub> )                             |          |           | .52**    | (.17)     |            |           | .84*     | (.36)     |             |           | .21      | (.42)     |
| Curvature<br>( <i>b</i> <sub>3</sub> + <i>b</i> <sub>4</sub> + <i>b</i> <sub>5</sub> ) |          |           | .05      | (.13)     |            |           | −.08     | (.19)     |             |           | .19      | (.19)     |
| Incongruence line  |          |           |          |           |            |           |          |           |             |           |          |           |
| Slope<br>( <i>b</i> <sub>1</sub> − <i>b</i> <sub>2</sub> )                             |          |           | .17      | (.23)     |            |           | .61**    | (.21)     |             |           | .14      | (.23)     |
| Curvature<br>( <i>b</i> <sub>3</sub> − <i>b</i> <sub>4</sub> + <i>b</i> <sub>5</sub> ) |          |           | −.53**   | (.17)     |            |           | −.12     | (.19)     |             |           | −.04     | (.19)     |

Note: *N* = 204.  
Abbreviation: Sat, satisfaction.  
\**p* < .05, two-tailed; \*\**p* < .01, two tailed.

satisfaction at home (*H*) diverge from each other in either direction (see congruence model results in Figure 2). To provide further support for a congruence effect, we tested whether the ridge of the response surface ran along the congruence line (*W* = *H*), such that ratings of WFE are maximized

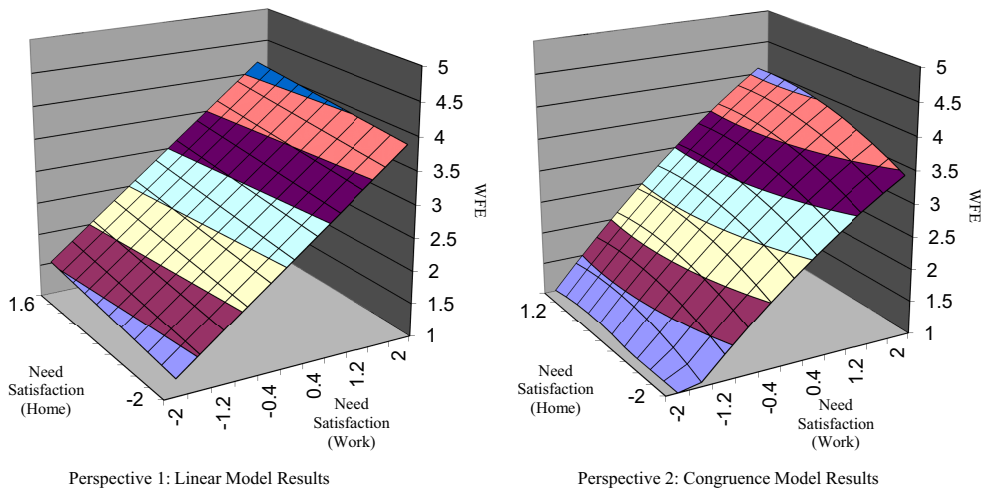
when ratings of autonomy need satisfaction at work and autonomy need satisfaction at home are congruent (Humberg et al., 2019). An empirical assessment of the slope ( $p_{11}$ ) and intercept ( $p_{10}$ ) of the first principal axis involves a nonlinear combination of regression coefficients; thus, we generated 20,000 bootstrapped samples to estimate 95% bias-corrected CIs for  $p_{10}$  and  $p_{11}$  (Edwards, 2002; Edwards & Parry, 1993). The slope of the first principal axis ( $p_{11}$ ) did not differ significantly from 1 (95% CI [.482, 5.480]) and the intercept of the first principal axis ( $p_{10}$ ) did not differ significantly from 0 (95% CI [-8.578, .517]), indicating that WFE is maximized at each point of congruence between autonomy need satisfaction at work and autonomy need satisfaction at home. Altogether, these results provide support for competing Hypothesis 2a and the notion that work-home autonomy need satisfaction congruence is important for employees' WFE.

Due to the congruence relationship supported in competing Hypothesis 2a, we utilized mediated polynomial regression (Edwards & Cable, 2009; Vogel et al., 2016, 2020) to test indirect relationships between work-home autonomy need satisfaction congruence and positive affect at home (Hypothesis 3a) and positive affect at work (Hypothesis 4a) through WFE. In the mediated model, we find initial support for these hypotheses in that WFE relates positively to positive affect at home ( $b_6 = .21$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $p = .007$ ) as well as positive affect at work ( $b_6 = .43$ ,  $SE = .06$ ,  $p < .001$ ) above and beyond the five polynomial terms. Further supporting Hypothesis 3a, the curvature of the incongruence line for the indirect relationship between work-home autonomy need satisfaction congruence and positive affect at home through WFE is negative and significant ( $[b_3 - b_4 + b_5] = -.11$ , 95% CI [-.262, -.023]). Similarly, the curvature of the incongruence line for the indirect relationship between work-home autonomy need satisfaction congruence and positive affect at work through WFE is negative and significant ( $[b_3 - b_4 + b_5] = -.23$ , 95% CI [-.409, -.082]). Thus, Hypothesis 3a and 4a received supported.

## Hypothesis testing: Competence need satisfaction

Competing Hypothesis 1b proposes a linear relationship such that employees with higher levels of competence need satisfaction at work experience more WFE. On the other hand, competing Hypothesis 2b proposes a congruence relationship such that employees with greater congruence between competence need satisfaction at work and competence need satisfaction at home experience more WFE. An examination of  $R^2$  change between a linear regression model ( $R^2 = .269$ ; Hypothesis 1b) and a polynomial regression model ( $R^2 = .272$ ; Hypothesis 2b) failed to demonstrate additional variance explained in WFE by the addition of the three higher-order terms ( $R^2$  Change = .002,  $F$  Change = .224,  $p = .879$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 1b was supported. This linear model shows a significant positive relationship between competence need satisfaction at work and WFE ( $b_1 = .66$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 2), but did not demonstrate a significant relationship between competence need satisfaction at home and WFE ( $b_2 = .06$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $p = .403$ ; see Table 2). Both models are presented in Figure 3. Notably, for competence need satisfaction, the plots appear similar, as the congruence model did not explain additional variance in WFE, whereas the plots for autonomy need satisfaction presented in Figure 2 appear quite different from one another.

Following support for the linear model proposed in Hypothesis 1b, we tested Hypotheses 3b and 4b by examining the significance of the indirect effects between competence need satisfaction at work and positive affect at home (Hypothesis 3b) and positive affect at work (Hypothesis 3b) via WFE. WFE demonstrated significant relationships with positive affect at home ( $b_6 = .27$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and positive affect at work ( $b_6 = .34$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .001$ ) above and beyond the effects of competence need satisfaction at work and competence need satisfaction at home. Further, the indirect relationship between competence need satisfaction at work and positive affect at home via WFE was positive and significant ( $IE = .18$ , 95% CI [.074, .318]), providing support for Hypothesis 3b. Hypothesis 4b also received support in that the indirect relationship between competence need satisfaction at work and positive affect at work via WFE was positive and significant ( $IE = .22$ , 95% CI [.135, .335]).



**FIGURE 3** Relationship between competence need satisfaction at work, competence need satisfaction at home and WFE. Perspective 1: Linear model results. Perspective 2: Congruence model results.

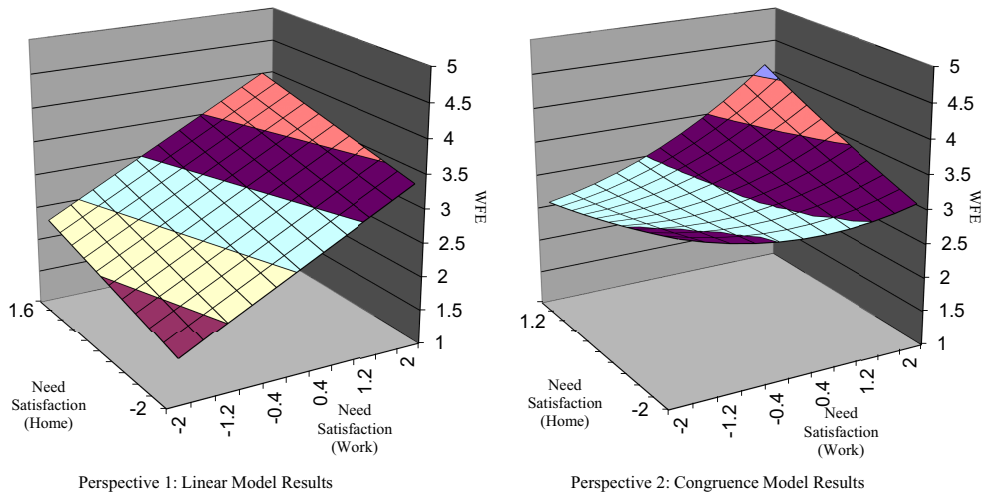
## Hypothesis testing: Relatedness need satisfaction

Competing Hypothesis 1c proposes a linear relationship such that employees with higher levels of relatedness need satisfaction at work experience more WFE. In contrast, competing Hypothesis 2c proposes a congruence relationship such that employees with greater congruence between relatedness need satisfaction at work and relatedness need satisfaction at home experience more WFE. An examination of  $R^2$  change between a linear regression model ( $R^2 = .159$ ; Hypothesis 1c) and a polynomial regression model ( $R^2 = .164$ ; Hypothesis 2c) did not show additional variance explained in WFE by the addition of the three higher-order terms ( $R^2$  Change = .004,  $F$  Change = .351,  $p = .789$ ). Therefore, we concluded support for competing Hypothesis 1c. This linear model showed a significant positive relationship between relatedness need satisfaction at work and WFE ( $b_1 = .44$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 2), but did not find a significant relationship between relatedness need satisfaction at home and WFE ( $b_2 = .15$ ,  $SE = .08$ ,  $p = .068$ ; see Table 2). Figure 4 presents these two models.

Following support for the linear model proposed in Hypothesis 1c, we tested Hypotheses 3c and 4c by examining the significance of the indirect effects between relatedness need satisfaction at work and positive affect at home (Hypothesis 3c) and positive affect at work (Hypothesis 3c) via WFE. WFE demonstrated significant relationships with positive affect at home ( $b_6 = .32$ ,  $SE = .07$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and positive affect at work ( $b_6 = .47$ ,  $SE = .05$ ,  $p < .001$ ) above and beyond the effects of relatedness need satisfaction at work and relatedness need satisfaction at home. Further, the indirect relationship between relatedness need satisfaction at work and positive affect at home via WFE was positive and significant ( $IE = .14$ , 95% CI [.071, .238]), providing support for Hypothesis 3c. Hypothesis 4c also received support in that the indirect relationship between relatedness need satisfaction at work and positive affect at work via WFE was positive and significant ( $IE = .20$ , 95% CI [.120, .319]).

## Supplemental results: Autonomy need satisfaction

Our hypothesis testing results support a congruence perspective (Perspective 2) for autonomy need satisfaction, highlighting the importance of work-home autonomy need satisfaction congruence for employees' WFE. This indicates that congruent, or similar, need satisfaction across work and family is preferable to incongruent, or dissimilar, need satisfaction when considering the relationship between autonomy need satisfaction and WFE. These findings instigate an additional question of whether work-home autonomy



**FIGURE 4** Relationship between relatedness need satisfaction at work, relatedness need satisfaction at home and WFE. Perspective 1: Linear model results. Perspective 2: Congruence model results.

need satisfaction congruence at higher levels is preferable to congruence at lower levels of need satisfaction. As described by Humberg et al. (2019), this would indicate a congruence effect combined with a positive main effect, or what these authors term a broad (rather than strict) version of a congruence hypothesis. This condition is tested by examining the slope of the congruence line (Humberg et al., 2019). An examination of the slope of the congruence line for autonomy need satisfaction showed that it was positive and significant ( $[b_1 + b_2] = .52, SE = .17, p = .003$ ; See Table 2), indicating that congruence at higher levels of autonomy need satisfaction is preferable for WFE compared to congruence at lower levels. This is in line with theorizing from BPNT, a point we elaborate upon in the Discussion section.

**DISCUSSION**

Enhancing employees' well-being, including helping employees manage their work and family lives, has recently emerged as an important topic for managers and organizations (Bevington et al., 2021). Work–family enrichment research (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) as well as BPNT from self-determination theory (Vansteenkiste et al., 2020, 2023) both speak to the issue of employee well-being. Therefore, the present study integrates these two literatures in order to uncover complexities in relationships between need satisfaction, WFE, and well-being.

**Summary of results and theoretical implications**

The current research tested competing hypotheses regarding relationships between individual need satisfaction (i.e. autonomy, competence and relatedness) and WFE to determine support for Perspective 1 (need satisfaction at work is what matters for employees' experiences of WFE) versus Perspective 2 (work-home need satisfaction congruence is what matters for employees' experiences of WFE). Interestingly, results differed across individual needs. For autonomy need satisfaction, support was found for Perspective 2 and the notion that congruence between autonomy need satisfaction at work and autonomy need satisfaction at home is important for WFE. This means that employees with similar levels of autonomy need satisfaction at work and at home reported higher levels of WFE than employees with dissimilar levels (i.e. those with high autonomy need satisfaction at work and low autonomy

need satisfaction at home, or vice-versa). Based on Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) seminal enrichment research, we theorize that this occurs because dissimilarity between roles makes it less likely that skills, perspectives, or other experiences at work will be consistent with and applicable to one's family role, and thus, less likely to improve quality of family life. This may be the case for autonomy, specifically, because incongruence is represented by an individual who experiences choice and freedom in one role, yet pressure to act a certain way in the other role (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000), which has potential to diminish the perceived relevance of many different types of work experiences (e.g. skills, perspectives, flexibility) for one's family role (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006).

Our findings advance work–family enrichment theory by introducing the notion of congruence across work and home constructs as a more comprehensive and complex approach to understanding antecedents to WFE. To date, given a prominent domain specificity perspective focused on the directional nature of WFE (Carlson et al., 2006), work constructs tend to be the focus when testing antecedents to WFE. However, results in the current study point to the value of considering the interplay or congruence, versus incongruence, between work *and* family in future research focused on WFE antecedents.

Results from supplemental analyses provide more nuanced findings regarding the congruence effect supported for autonomy need satisfaction. In particular, we demonstrate that work–home autonomy need satisfaction congruence at higher levels of need satisfaction is more beneficial for WFE than work–home autonomy need satisfaction congruence at lower levels. This is consistent with BPNT research that shows positive outcomes resulting from high need satisfaction (Vansteenkiste et al., 2023). In this scenario, individuals' WFE benefits from both high autonomy need satisfaction and congruent autonomy need satisfaction. For example, if an engineer experiences high autonomy need satisfaction at work due to discretion in decision-making, a flexible schedule, and opportunities to try out new ideas, they should develop perspectives, grow skills, and gain energy that may transfer to and improve quality of family life, due to similar opportunities at home to try out new ideas, make decisions and approach tasks in a flexible manner. This form of congruence is commonly found in organizational psychology research examining positively valenced predictors (Matta & Frank, 2024), and it is described as a congruence effect combined with a positive main effect (Humberg et al., 2019). Our supplemental results highlight the need for future WFE research taking a congruence approach to consider the specific form of the congruence relationship and whether level effects are present.

For competence need satisfaction and relatedness need satisfaction, we found support for Perspective 1 where need satisfaction in the work role is what matters for employees' experiences of WFE, irrespective of their need satisfaction at home. These results emerged even when need satisfaction at work was measured in a separate survey (i.e. the work survey) while need satisfaction at home and WFE were measured in the same survey (i.e. the home survey). This lends support for theoretical arguments emphasizing the directional nature of WFE (according to the domain specificity approach), with work being the originating role. For competence need satisfaction, it may be the case that work is expected to be the primary role in which this need is fulfilled, making it less likely that congruent need satisfaction at home will facilitate or hinder WFE. For relatedness need satisfaction, it is possible that because relationships formed at work and home are quite different (e.g. family relationships are often more intimate than work relationships), congruence in relatedness need satisfaction is less likely to be an important factor for WFE. Overall, our differing results across the three needs support prior recommendations to model the needs separately, rather than as one overall need satisfaction construct (Van den Broeck et al., 2016).

We also tested indirect relationships between need satisfaction and downstream well-being outcomes via WFE, following BPNT's assertion that certain constructs relate more proximally to need satisfaction and represent intervening variables between need satisfaction and more distal outcomes (Vansteenkiste et al., 2023). Work–home autonomy need satisfaction congruence demonstrated positive indirect relationships with both positive affect at work and positive affect at home through WFE. Further, both competence need satisfaction at work and relatedness need satisfaction at work showed indirect relationships with these well-being outcomes via WFE. Significant others rated employees' positive affect at home, which indicates that the benefits of need satisfaction for well-being at home through WFE can be observed by others. This is in-line with recent research that contends partners'



perceptions are influenced by employees' WFE (Carlson et al., 2019; Wayne et al., 2013). Measuring well-being with multiple sources and across multiple roles in the current study recognizes the importance of both work and family roles for employees' well-being and points to the value of organizations focusing on employees' WFE as a factor for enhancing well-being across life roles.

## Practical implications

Practically, our results suggest that managers and organizations might enhance employee well-being through WFE by increasing need satisfaction at work. Research shows that managers play a pivotal role in employees' need satisfaction at work and can increase satisfaction of all three needs (i.e. autonomy, competence and relatedness) by being autonomy supportive (Deci et al., 2017). Deci et al. (2017) provide examples of autonomy supportive behaviours, such as offering choices to employees, acknowledging employees' perspectives, and providing meaningful feedback. Research has found a direct link between managers' autonomy supportive behaviours and need satisfaction at work (Baard et al., 2004). Thus, we recommend that managers start by engaging in these autonomy supportive behaviours with employees.

However, for autonomy need satisfaction, our research suggests that attention must also be paid to increasing employees' need satisfaction at home. Because the family context includes employees' significant others, children, and other important family members that can influence need satisfaction at home, organizations should invite family members to attend work–family training programmes with employees. Employees could work with their family members on work–family action plans during training, and the training could involve ideas for how to increase autonomy supportive behaviours at home. Recent research highlights the value of training focused on WFE specifically (Heskiau & McCarthy, 2021), and both in-person and on-line offerings might be shared with employees' family members in addition to employees themselves.

## Limitations and future research

Despite the contributions of the current research, we also recognize limitations as well as opportunities for future research. For one, our research examined the positive side of the work–family interface, and this was driven by work–family enrichment theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). However, we did not address the negative side of the work–family interface, specifically work–family conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Prior research has demonstrated a negative relationship between need satisfaction at work and work–family conflict (Van den Broeck et al., 2016), which aligns more closely with Perspective 1. However, research has not yet tested the relationship between work–home need satisfaction congruence and work–family conflict (Perspective 2). Work–family conflict entails interference between work and family roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), and such interference might be heightened when employees experience incongruence in need satisfaction across work and home.

Employees engage in multiple life roles, some beyond work and family (e.g. a personal role involving friends, exercise, community volunteering, and other non-work and non-family activities; Wilson & Baumann, 2015). While the current research examined need satisfaction across work and family roles, this could be extended to also consider need satisfaction across other life roles. For instance, one's personal role may provide an opportunity to satisfy needs by serving on a community board. Future empirical research might test congruence between need satisfaction in one's personal role with need satisfaction in either the work or family role and the implications for employees' work-life interface and well-being.

While our field study design has strengths, including multiple sources of data, multiple surveys taken in different locations (work and home), and data collected across different occupations and organizations (increasing the generalizability of our findings), the design does not allow for conclusions regarding causality between study variables. We recommend that future research in this area

consider training interventions that teach employees methods for increasing need satisfaction at work (and for autonomy, also need satisfaction at home). Then, results from the current study could be tested and replicated with a design that enables stronger discussion of causality between need satisfaction and WFE.

Another methodological limitation of the current study is that the proposed mediation hypotheses were not tested with a fully longitudinal design. This is an important next step for future research to take in order to replicate the supported indirect effects in a true longitudinal model. This would involve time separation between the need satisfaction antecedent variables and WFE as well as between WFE and well-being outcomes. A longitudinal design would take into account the stability of the variables in the model. Further, each variable could be measured at multiple different time points, allowing change in WFE and well-being over time to be assessed.

## CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to examine complexities in relationships between need satisfaction, WFE and well-being outcomes via a test of competing perspectives and hypotheses. Based on a theoretical integration of BPNT with work–family enrichment theory, we offer two perspectives on relationships between need satisfaction and WFE. Interestingly, while results support the more dominant domain specificity perspective for competence need satisfaction and relatedness need satisfaction, highlighting the importance of need satisfaction at work for WFE, a congruence perspective is supported for autonomy need satisfaction. Thus, for autonomy need satisfaction, both need satisfaction at work and need satisfaction at home, as well as the interplay between them, are important for WFE. Our findings highlight the value of considering an alternative perspective (i.e. congruence) when studying antecedents to WFE, which offers new knowledge to managers and organizations looking to enhance employees' WFE and well-being.

## AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

**Heidi M. Baumann:** Conceptualization; data curation; formal analysis; investigation; methodology; project administration; validation; writing – original draft; writing – review and editing. **Kelly Schwind Wilson:** Conceptualization; methodology; project administration; writing – original draft; writing – review and editing.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

## DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

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