5. RESULTS

The description of results is divided into five parts. I will start by presenting analyses on gender differences in the central constructs. In the second part I will focus on the relationship between time-related goal characteristics and the quality of interpersonal goal relations. The third part contains results on the relationship between conflict and convergence in interpersonal goal relations as well as access to grandparental childcare and daily measures of goal pursuit, affect and physiological arousal. In the fourth part I will focus on associations between interpersonal goal conflict and convergence, and long-term outcomes. And finally, follow up analyses will be presented in the fifth part. Table 12 displays the means and standard deviations for the study variables. The intercorrelations of these variables are depicted in Table 8 in Appendix A.

Table 12. *Means and Standard Deviations for Study Variables*

Variable	Mean (SD)
Predictors:	
Time-intensity of personal goals [a]	1.86 (.73)
Temporal flexibility of personal goals [b]	0.63 (.20)
Interpersonal goal conflict [b]	1.42 (.23)
Interpersonal goal convergence	2.53 (.64)
Micro-analytic criteria (aggregated measures):	
Daily goal pursuit	0.67 (.46)
Daily positive-negative mood	4.03 (.42)
Daily alertness-fatigue	3.61 (.50)
Daily ease-restlessness	3.65 (.49)
Cortisol levels	8.90 (1.92)
Area under the curve	6501.18 (1568.13)
Macro-analytic criteria:	
Overall goal progress	4.95 (.73)
Positive-negative mood	3.78 (.68)
Alertness-fatigue	3.30 (.75)
Ease-restlessness	3.15 (.78)
Psychological well-being	3.89 (.35)
Goal specific satisfaction	4.59 (.85)

[a] Logarithm transformed; [b] Square root transformed

5.1. Gender Differences in the Content of Personal Goals, Time-Related Goal Characteristics and Perceptions of Interpersonal Goal Conflict and Convergence

The focus of this study is on the management of work- and family-related goals in employed parents with preschool children. Because the assumption underlying the present approach is that differences in the successful pursuit of multiple goals might be better

explained by individual characteristics and social resources rather than gender per se, it is particularly important to consider potential gender differences in the central constructs. Hence, prior to an investigation of the specified hypotheses, I will now present analyses targeting gender differences in the content and structure of personal goals within the sample of this study. I will start by analyzing gender differences in the content of personal goals within the employed mothers and fathers of this study and then turn to an investigation of gender differences in goal characteristics, namely the time-intensity of personal goals and their temporal flexibility. Finally, analyses of gender differences in the perception of interpersonal goal conflict and convergence will be presented.

I will first turn to a description of the content of personal goals within the sample of employed parents. Figure 5 shows the 10 content categories that husbands' and wives' personal goals most often referred to. Because participants named different numbers of goals (range: 2 – 11), proportions of goals per content category are presented. Consistent with previous studies, work and family were the categories that have been most often represented in the personal goals of employed parents with preschool children.
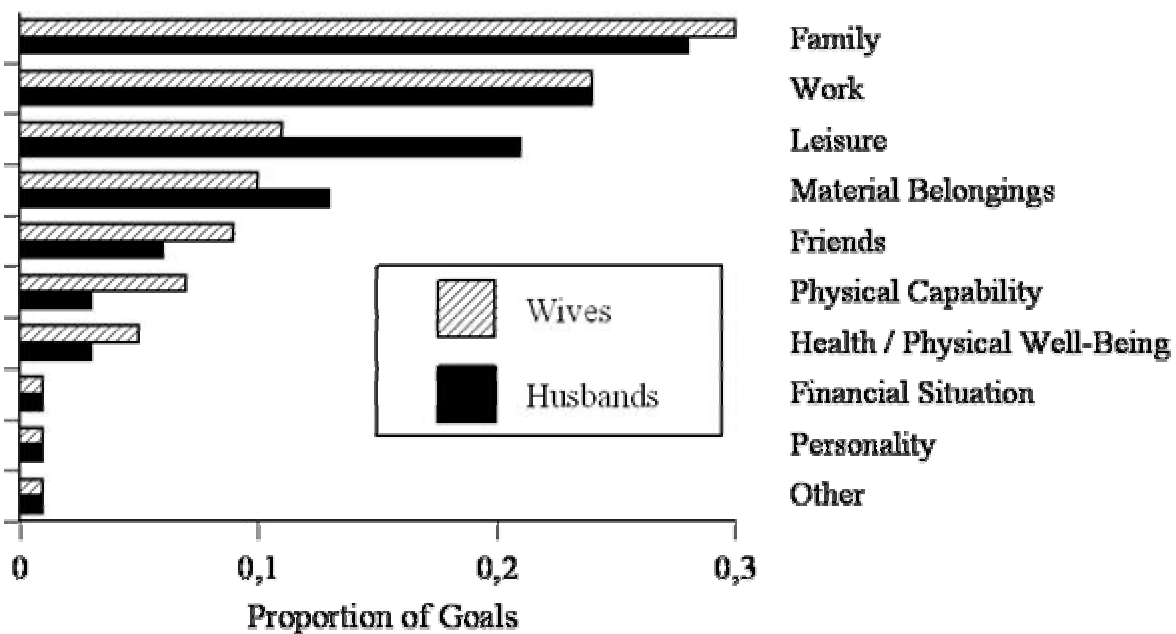

Figure 5. *Content categories of personal goals in husbands and wives*

Repeated measures analyses of variance on the presented categories showed a significant category-by-gender interaction (F $(9, 74)$ = 1.86, *p* = .05). To understand this interaction, univariate follow-up analyses were conducted in order to compare category means between husbands and wives. Analyses of variance with alpha adjustment for multiple

testing revealed that the only category where husbands and wives differed reliably was leisure (F (1, 82) = 9.83, p = .002).

I will now turn to an investigation of possible gender differences in the antecedents of interpersonal goal conflict and convergence. Repeated measures analyses of variance on time-intensity and temporal flexibility of personal goals revealed no goal characteristic-by-gender interaction (F (1, 79) = .64, p = .43). Figure 6 displays means and standard errors of these constructs in husbands and wives. Hence, women and men in the present sample of employed parents do not differ on these constructs. [1]
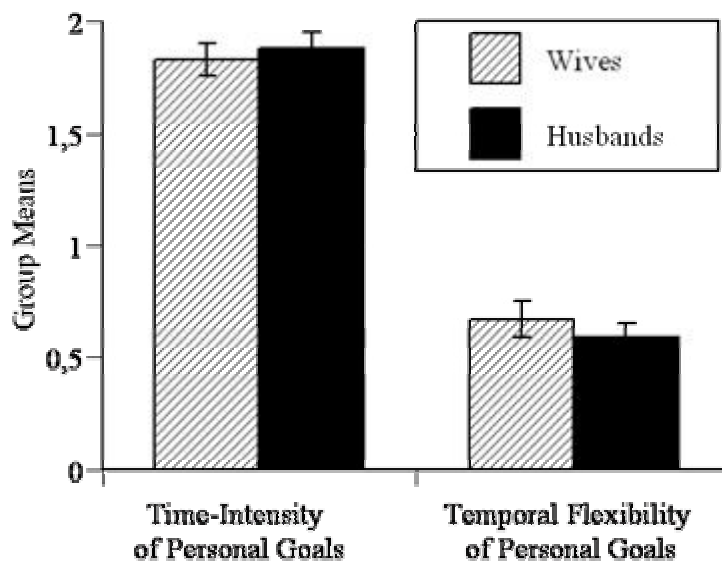

Figure 6 *Time-intensity and temporal flexibility of personal goals in husbands and wives (between group analyses)*

In a final step, gender differences in the perception of interpersonal goal conflict and convergence were investigated. Means and standard errors of the two scales in husbands and wives are displayed in Figure 7. Results from repeated measures analyses of variance showed no predictor-by-gender interaction (F (1, 82) = .38, p = .54) indicating that the employed mothers and fathers of the present sample do not differ in their interpersonal goal relations ratings. [2]

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[1] Repeated measures analyses of variances performed on two separate samples in which couples were split showed no goal characteristic-by-gender interactions either (Sample 1: F (1, 40) = .22, p = .64; Sample 2: F (1, 40) = 2.36, p = .13).

[2] Repeated measures analyses of variances performed on two separate samples in which couples are split showed no predictor-by-gender interactions either (Sample 1: F (1, 40) = .04, p = .85; Sample 2: F (1, 40) = 1.41, p = .24).
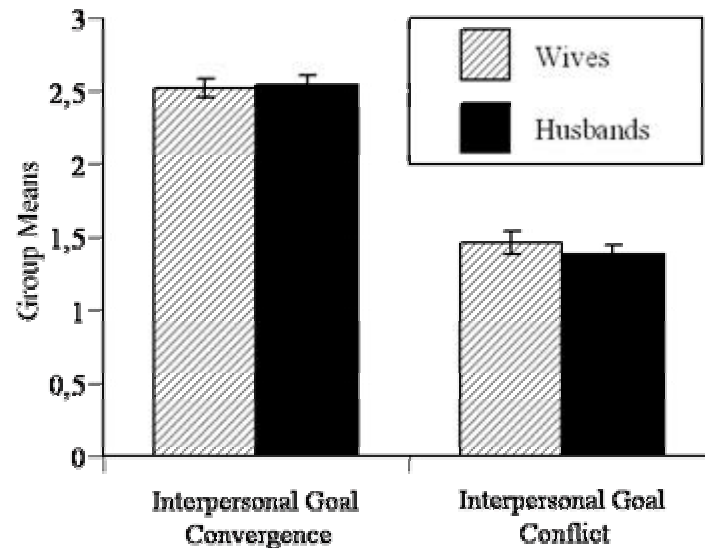
Figure 7. *Perceptions of interpersonal goal conflict and convergence in husbands and wives (between group analyses)*

Overall, the above-presented analyses provide evidence that no a priori gender differences exist on the central constructs within the present study.

5.2. Time-Related Goal Characteristics and the Quality of Interpersonal Goal Relations

Are the time-related characteristics of both partners' personal goals associated with perceptions of the quality of interpersonal goal relations? I had hypothesized (a) time-intensity and (b) temporal flexibility of personal goals to be related to the extent to which employed parents report conflict and convergence between their own goals and those of the respective partner. Table 13 shows Pearson's correlations between the proposed antecedents and differences in the quality of interpersonal goal relations.

Table 13. *Associations between Time-Related Goal Characteristics and Conflict as well as Convergence of Partners' Goals: Pearson's Correlations at C1*

	Conflict	Convergence
Goal characteristics:		
Time-intensity of personal goals	.28[*]	-.10
Temporal flexibility of personal goals	.25[*]	.03

[**] p<.01; [*] p<.05

In line with my hypotheses, correlational results revealed the considered goal characteristics to be significantly related to perceptions of interpersonal goal conflict. Hence, individuals with time-intensive goals and little flexibility in goal pursuit reported more

conflict between their own and partner's goals than individuals whose goals require little time and can be pursued on many occasions (note that high values indicate little temporal flexibility). However, contrary to my assumption, convergence was independent of both time-intensity and temporal flexibility of personal goals.

Because I further predicted that perceptions of the quality of interpersonal goal relations depend not only on the time-related goal characteristics of a specific individual himself but also on respective partners, I next investigated whether interpersonal goal conflict and convergence ratings depend not only on an individual's own goal characteristics but also on those of the respective partner. Hence, both partners' goal characteristics, namely time-intensity and temporal flexibility of personal goals, were examined for their association with perceptions of interpersonal goal conflict and convergence. It was assumed that individuals who hold very time-intensive goals that can only be pursued at fixed time-points and who also have partners holding time-intensive goals that can only be pursued at fixed points in time report high interpersonal goal conflict. Individuals whose goals are not very time-consuming and could be pursued on various occasions and who have partners with goals low in time-intensity and high in temporal flexibility were expected to report high levels of interpersonal goal convergence.

In order to test the relationship between goal characteristics and the quality of interpersonal goal relations, a two-level model was employed. At the first level the relationship between interpersonal goal relations and goal characteristics of both individual and respective partners was estimated. This person-level relationship is represented in the following level 1 model with the interpersonal goal relations rating of person i in couple j as outcome and both partners' goal characteristics plus gender as within couple predictors:

Interpersonal goal relations$_{ij}$ = β_{0j} + β_{1j} (gender, actor) + β_{2j} (time-intensity of personal goals, actor) + β_{3j} (temporal flexibility of personal goals, actor) + β_{4j} (time-intensity of personal goals, partner) + β_{5j} (temporal flexibility of personal goals, partner) + r_{ij}.

Individual intercepts were expected to vary across couples as a function of the combination of goal characteristics within the couple leading to the following level 2 Model:

β_{0j} = γ_{00} + γ_{01} (time-intensity of personal goals, actor X time-intensity of personal goals, partner) + γ_{02} (temporal flexibility of personal goals, actor X temporal flexibility of personal goals, partner) + u_{0j}.

$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10}$ $\quad\quad$ $\beta_{2j} = \gamma_{20}$ $\quad\quad$ $\beta_{3j} = \gamma_{30}$ $\quad\quad$ $\beta_{4j} = \gamma_{40}$ $\quad\quad$ $\beta_{5j} = \gamma_{50}$

Note that level 1 slopes were treated as fixed for reasons of parsimony (Campbell & Kashy, 2002).

I will now turn to the relationship between partners' goal characteristics and perceptions of interpersonal goal conflict. The fully unconditional model (the model without any explanatory variables) revealed 18 percent of the variance in interpersonal goal conflict to originate between couples (intraclass correlation= .18). Because the conditional model including all person-level and couple-level characteristics showed no significant effects for the predicted couple-level interactions, a more parsimonious model was chosen. Table 14 displays the results of this analysis.

In line with my assumptions, individuals with very time-intensive goals did report more interpersonal goal conflict. Contrary to the previously reported correlational results, an individual's temporal flexibility did not prove to be significantly related to his or her own perception of interpersonal goal conflict. A partner's time-intensity and temporal flexibility of personal goals was independent of interpersonal goal conflict perceptions. The absence of a significant main effect for gender supports the assumption that similar factors contribute to the experience of interpersonal goal conflict in women and men. The question of whether the underlying processes operate similarly in women and men will be addressed later on. The intercept for men with average time-intensive and flexible work and family goals on side of both actor and partner was close to the sample mean of interpersonal goal conflict.

Table 14. *Interpersonal Goal Conflict: Point Estimates and Robust Standard Errors of the Fixed Effects and Variance Components of the Random Effects*

Fixed effects	Coefficients	SE
Intercept	1.390 **	0.033
Gender (actor)	0.060	0.043
Time-intensity of personal goals (actor)	0.073 *	0.037
Temporal flexibility of personal goals (actor)	0.107	0.143
Time-intensity of personal goals (partner)	0.025	0.034
Temporal flexibility of personal goals (partner)	0.030	0.142
Random effects	Variance	
Intercept	0.008	
Residual	0.044	

** $p<.01$; * $p<.05$; Note that coefficients are not standardized

The presented model explained 11.4 percent of the variance in interpersonal goal conflict. Contrasting the conditional model to the fully unconditional model revealed a

reduction in deviance, which is a measure of model fit, by 10.91. This reduction in deviance is marginally significant.

Results on the relationship between both partners' goal characteristics and interpersonal goal convergence parallel the results obtained from correlational analyses. As can be seen in Table 15, interpersonal goal convergence was independent of actor's and partner's time-intensity as well as temporal flexibility of personal goals. The intercept for men with average time-intensive and flexible work and family goals on side of both actor and partner was very close to the sample mean of interpersonal goal convergence.

Table 15. *Interpersonal Goal Convergence: Point Estimates and Robust Standard Errors of the Fixed Effects and Variance Components of the Random Effects*

Fixed effects	Coefficients	SE
Intercept	2.576 **	0.098
Gender (actor)	-0.043	0.139
Time-intensity of personal goals (actor)	-0.099	0.105
Temporal flexibility of personal goals (actor)	0.212	0.433
Time-intensity of personal goals (partner)	0.161	0.105
Temporal flexibility of personal goals (partner)	-0.657	0.834
Random effects	Variance	
Intercept	0.012	
Residual	0.413	

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$; Note that coefficients are not standardized

5.2.1. Comparing the Relationship between Goal Characteristics and Interpersonal Goal Conflict Ratings in Husbands and Wives

So far, both members of the dyad have been treated as if they were non-distinguishable. Despite the fact that I investigated a sample of heterosexual partners that can be distinguished by their gender, the chosen approach is based on the assumption that differences in interpersonal goal relations are not rooted in gender per se but in interindividual difference variables such as personal goal characteristics. Support for this notion comes from the fact that no main effects for gender emerged in the above-described results. However, it still needs to be demonstrated that the underlying processes are similar enough to be treated as being equal in husbands and wives.

In order to test for gender differences in the associations between goal characteristics and interpersonal goal conflict in women and men, structural equation modeling was used (Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1993). This data analytic technique allows for a comparison of competing models with different restrictions along their fit indices (Margrett & Marsiske, 2002; Murray, Griffin, Rose, & Bellavia, 2003).

I started by estimating a model that assumes common coefficients for actor- and partner-effects in women and men. Three different modifications to this initial model were tested, allowing for a nested models comparison. In model 2, only partner-effects were constrained to equality for women and men. The third model constrained only actor-effects to equality for women and men. And in the fourth model both, actor- and partner-effects were allowed to vary freely. The fit indices for each of the four models are displayed in Table 16. Because all the goodness of fit statistics are in the desired range (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996), a chi-square difference test was conducted to examine whether any of the less restrictive models provided a significantly better fit to the data than the most restrictive initial model. As can be seen in Table 16, models 2 to 4 did not provide a significantly better fit than the most restrictive initial model 1.

Table 16. *Nested Comparison of Actor/Partner Model Fit for Interpersonal Goal Conflict Examining Gender and Influence*

						Comparison to initial model		
Model step	Chi^2	df	CFI	NFI	NNFI	Chi^2	df	p
Model 1: Initial model; Actor and partner influences are constrained to equality for women and men	5.05	4	0.99	0.96	0.95			
Model 2: Only partner influences are constrained to equality	0.72	2	1.00	0.99	1.11	4.33	2	n.s.
Model 3: Only actor influences are constrained to equality	4.94	2	0.97	0.96	0.74	0.11	2	n.s.
Model 4: Both actor and partner influences are allowed to vary	0	0	-	-	-	5.05	4	n.s.

According to the initial model, individual time-intensity was significantly related to interpersonal goal conflict in both women and men (see Figure 8). Hence, results from structural equation modeling replicate results obtained from hierarchical linear modeling, but refine them by demonstrating a similarity in the structure of the relationships between goal characteristics and perceptions of interpersonal goal conflict in women and men.

Figure 8. *Differences in time-related goal characteristics: Actor-and partner- effects in husbands and wives using structural equation modeling*
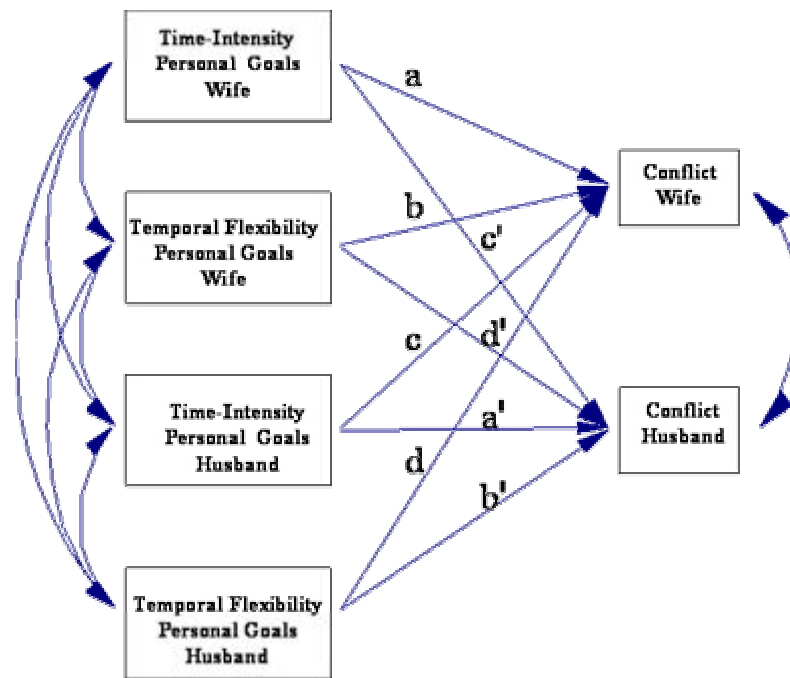
a, a': Own time-intensity of personal goals = .12 **; b, b': Own temporal flexibility of personal goals = -.11;
c, c': Partner's time-intensity of personal goals = .00; d, d': Partner's temporal flexibility of personal goals = .25

5.3. Micro-Analytic Processes in Daily Life: Effects of the Quality of Interpersonal Goal Relations and Access to Grandparental Childcare on Everyday Goal Pursuit and how it is Associated with Subjective Mood and Physiological Arousal

In the next sections the focus is on the hypotheses addressing everyday processes in the sample of employed parents. I will start by presenting results on the relationship between perceptions of interpersonal goal conflict as well as convergence and everyday goal pursuit. Afterwards, I will proceed by investigating the proposed beneficial effect of grandparental participation in childcare, followed by an examination of the associations between goal pursuit and subjective affect ratings as well as current physiological arousal.

5.3.1. Interpersonal Goal Relations and Goal Pursuit in Daily Life

Did participants with varying perceptions of interpersonal goal conflict and convergence differ in the goal relevance of their daily activities? I had hypothesized the quality of interpersonal goal relations to be related to (a) the engagement in goal-relevant activities and (b) the variability in goal pursuit.