

Between Home and Work: Commuting as an Opportunity for Role Transitions

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Abstract

Across the globe, people commute an average of 38 minutes each way. Several large-scale surveys indicate that lengthy commutes decrease job satisfaction and increase turnover. Despite the prominence of commuting in everyday life, little is known about *why* commuting is so aversive, *who* is most affected by the commuting experience, *when* people are particularly affected, and *how* people could better cope with lengthy commutes. Integrating theories of boundary work, self-control, and work-family conflict, we propose that commutes serve as transitions between home and work roles. Because employees hold no defined role during their commute, lengthy commutes keep employees in limbo between their home and work roles for longer, which gives rise to aversively experienced role ambiguity. Across three studies, including a field study and a four-week-long intervention study, we find that lengthy morning commutes are more aversive for employees with lower trait self-control and greater work-family conflict, leading to decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover. In addition, we find that employees who engage in *role-clarifying prospection*—role-related thoughts about their upcoming (work) role—are less likely to be negatively affected by lengthy commutes to work. Employees with higher levels of trait self-control are more likely to engage in role-clarifying prospection, and employees who experience higher levels of work-family conflict are more likely to benefit from role-clarifying prospection. Therefore, although commuting is typically seen as an undesirable part of the workday, our theory and results point to the benefits of using it as an opportunity for transitioning into a different role.

Keywords: Commuting, Boundary Work, Self-Control, Work-Family Conflict, Prospection

Commuting is part of everyday life. Because employees' home and workplace are often in separate locations, most face a commute every workday. Globally, the mean commuting time is about 38 minutes each way (Rampell, 2011). Thus, an average commuter spends almost 300 hours traveling between home and work over the course of a year, equivalent to more than 10% of her total working time (OECD, 2014). In addition, commutes are getting longer: one recent study found that the distance between employees' home and their workplace in the United States grew by about 5% from 2000 to 2012 (Kneebone & Holmes, 2015).

Extant research suggests that people do not enjoy commuting. In a survey conducted by Kahneman and Krueger (2006), respondents identified the morning journey between home and work as their least desirable activity of the day, with the evening commute being the third worst activity. Employees not only dislike commuting but also bear negative consequences from it: several surveys have found that longer commutes are associated with lower levels of job satisfaction and increased turnover intention (Chatterjee, Clark, & Martin, Davis, 2017; Zhang & Feinzig, 2016). However, despite the pervasiveness of commuting and its significant impact on people's lives, few organizational researchers have studied this part of the day. As a result, we know fairly little about *why* commuting is so aversive, *who* is most affected by the commuting experience, *when* people are particularly affected, and *how* people could better cope with lengthy commutes.

In this paper, we address these questions by drawing on theories of boundary work (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996), self-control (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998; de Ridder, Lensvelt-Mulders, Finkenauer, Stok, & Baumeister, 2012), and work-family conflict (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996; Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005). We conceptualize commuting as a time period during which people physically and psychologically transition between different roles. We specifically focus on the *commute to work* when employees transition from their home role (by leaving home) to their work role (by arriving at the office). Boundary theory suggests that longer commutes extend the time that people are in limbo about which role to adopt (Ashforth et al., 2000), with this role ambiguity reflecting an aversive experience for employees

(Bacharach, Bamberger, & Conley, 1991; Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Tubre & Collins, 2000). We focus on two factors that may influence the ambiguity in role that people experience during their commute to work: self-control and work-family conflict. Research on self-control (de Ridder et al., 2012; Hofmann, Luhmann, Fisher, Vohs, & Baumeister, 2014) implies that people high in trait self-control may be better able to deal with this role ambiguity by effectively regulating their thoughts during their commute, thus facilitating a smoother and more efficient role transition. Moreover, literature on work-family conflict (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Rothbard et al., 2005) indicates that longer commutes may be particularly challenging for those with greater work-family conflict because these employees tend to experience heightened role ambiguity (Desrochers, Hilton, & Larwood, 2005; Glavin & Schieman, 2012). We bring these research streams together to propose that in order to cope with longer commutes, employees may engage in *role-clarifying prospection* (Austin & Vancouver, 1996; Szpunar, Spreng, & Schacter, 2014), a mental strategy that involves engaging in thoughts about their upcoming (work) role; this strategy may thus function as a transition ritual that reduces the role ambiguity that employees experience during their commute to work (Ashforth et al., 2000).

The current research makes several theoretical contributions. First, we advance boundary theory by explicating *how* people transition from one role to another, both physically and psychologically, during their commute. We specify that role ambiguity is one underlying mechanism by which longer commutes influence job-related outcomes, such as job satisfaction and turnover. By identifying a specific cognitive strategy—*role-clarifying prospection*—through which people reduce role ambiguity and buffer negative consequences of longer commutes, our research challenges the prevailing view that depicts longer commutes solely in a negative light. Second, by viewing a role transition as an activity that requires self-regulatory resources, our research adds more nuance to boundary theory. In particular, we theorize why trait self-control would enable individuals to effectively handle role transitions, thereby shedding light on the incomplete literature on the relationship between commuting length and job satisfaction. Third, we introduce work-family conflict into boundary theory as an element that gives rise to role ambiguity, thereby exacerbating the negative impact of longer commutes on job-related outcomes.

By theorizing that longer commutes prolong one's role ambiguity, the current research furthers our understanding of the dynamics between work-family conflict and role transitions. In sum, by bringing together organizational and psychological research, we advance our understanding of commuting as a practical problem and elaborate on role transitions as a neglected aspect of boundary theory.

THEORY

To develop our hypotheses, we first review existing accounts of why commuting affects job satisfaction and turnover.¹ We then draw on boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000) to explain that the effects of commuting may be contingent on the characteristics of the commuter (specifically, on his or her level of trait self-control and work-family conflict). Finally, we extend boundary theory to develop hypotheses on how employees can reduce role ambiguity in their transition from their home role to their work role through *role-clarifying prospection*, with ensuing benefits for job satisfaction and turnover.

Commuting, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover

Previous research suggests that the longer people commute, the lower their job satisfaction—defined as “the extent of positive emotional response to the job resulting from an employee’s appraisal of the job as fulfilling or congruent with the individual’s values” (Morris & Venkatesh, 2010: 145)—and the higher their likelihood to quit their current job (i.e. turnover; Chen, Ployhart, Thomas, Anderson, & Bliese, 2011). For example, in one survey of over 26,000 employees studied longitudinally over five years, employees who had lengthier commutes reported lower job satisfaction (Chatterjee, Clark, & Martin, Davis, 2017). Another survey of more than 22,000 employees showed that in response to the question “What would make you leave your current organization for a new job?,” 40 to 54% of participants responded “an easier commute to work” (Zhang & Feinzig, 2016). While an economics perspective suggests that people may reap benefits from living farther away from work, Stutzer and Frey (2008) find that in order to be fully compensated for the decrease in life satisfaction prompted by longer

¹ We examine both turnover intention and actual turnover. A recent meta-analysis suggests that turnover intention and actual turnover are strongly correlated ($\rho = .45$; Griffeth, Hom, & Gaertner, 2000). For ease of comprehension, we use the term “turnover” throughout our theory and discussion to refer to both turnover intention and actual turnover.

commutes, the average commuter would need to receive a raise of 19% per month. The linkage between longer commutes and both lower satisfaction and higher turnover is thus evident across several studies, but the reasons for why the linkage exists are less clear.

According to the “commute impedance model” (Novaco, Stokols, Campbell, & Stokols, 1979), commuters suffer when their commute is interrupted or delayed. This model defines impedance as a behavioral restraint on movement or goal attainment (Novaco, Kliewer, & Broquet, 1991), i.e., as anything that frustrates the goal to arrive at a destination, such as long distance, slow speed, or traffic congestion. When employees encounter situations during their commute that may delay their arrival at work, they experience greater levels of stress (Koslowsky, Kluger, & Reich, 1995; Novaco & Gonzalez, 2011; Stokols, Novaco, Stokols, & Campbell, 1978). Longer commutes may offer more opportunities for impedances to occur, and thus, longer commutes could be more stressful (Evans & Wener, 2006; Hennessy & Wiesenthal, 1997; Novaco et al., 1991; Schaeffer, Street, Singer, & Baum, 1988). This aversive commuting experience in turn spills over into an employees’ work experience, negatively influencing job satisfaction and encouraging turnover (Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005; Sonnentag & Binnewies, 2013). In turn, because employees view commuting as part of their job—given that they engage in commuting in order to get to work—employees are likely to attribute their negative feelings during their commute to their job (Cesario, Grant, & Higgins, 2004; Schwarz & Clore, 1983). The commute impedance model thus offers a tentative reason for why longer commutes take a toll on job satisfaction: because of the increased likelihood of interferences when people travel to work. As the psychologist Daniel Gilbert has said, “You can’t adapt to commuting, because it’s entirely unpredictable. Driving in traffic is a different kind of hell every day” (as cited in Vanderbilt, 2008: 141). By extension, the longer employees commute every day, the more exposed they are to this “unpredictable hell.”

However, there are several shortcomings to using the commute impedance model as an approach to investigate why longer commutes reduce job satisfaction and increase turnover. First, Koslowsky (1997) argues that commute length is not synonymous with the amount of impedances commuters experience; for example, a commuter driving on slower local streets may be encountering less

impedances than a commuter driving on the faster highway which is frequently congested. Second, the relationship between stress and job satisfaction is not straightforward, with some studies finding a negative relationship between stress and job satisfaction (Bogg & Cooper, 1995; Jamal, 1990) while others show little to no relationship (Fairbrother & Warn, 2003; Leong, Furnham, & Cooper, 1996). Thus, the stress experienced during commuting may not necessarily influence job satisfaction and subsequent turnover. Third, although people consistently report disliking commuting, when asked about the “ideal” commute length, their answer is not zero; instead, one study finds it to be 16 minutes (Redmond & Mokhtarian, 2001). Indeed, a study of 418 commuters found that once the variability in commuting time due to impedances is taken into account, people with longer commutes enjoy them *more* (Kluger, 1998). Even people with higher income, who can often afford to live closer to work, tend to commute longer distances, displaying a preference for some commuting time (Vanderbilt, 2008). These studies highlight that the commute impedance model may not be sufficient in capturing the varied effects of commuting time on job satisfaction and turnover; in addition, the commute impedance model does not seem to account that there is perhaps some value in commuting, and that the commute might not be equally taxing for all.

To investigate whether, why, when, and for whom the commute to work may be valuable, we draw on boundary theory to suggest that commuting offers an opportunity for a role transition. By casting commuting as a role transition and examining the linkage between longer commutes and both lower job satisfaction and higher turnover from the perspective of boundary theory, we intend to develop a more nuanced understanding of the conditions under which commuting is related to job satisfaction and turnover, beginning with the suggestion that certain people are more affected by commuting than others.

Commuting and Role Ambiguity

Commuting physically and temporally separates two domains of life—home life and work life—and offers an opportunity for people to transition from their home role to their work role. Although psychologically, home and work roles can be more or less segmented (with people drawing a clear distinction between these two roles) or integrated (with people blurring the boundary between the two

roles; Rothbard et al., 2005), during the commute, these roles are physically separated. Thus, the commuter is in the process of crossing a boundary between these two roles, which makes the role transition psychologically salient (Ashforth et al., 2000). Role transitions, defined as the “psychological and physical movement between sequentially held roles” (Ashforth, 2000: 7), involve three stages: role exit, transition, and role entry (Ashforth et al., 2000; van Gennep, 1960). In particular, the commute to work requires exit from the home role, the transition during which the role switch occurs, and entry into the work role.

Prior research has extensively studied home and work roles. A role is defined as “the building block of social systems and the summation of the requirements with which such systems confront their members as individuals” (Katz & Kahn, 1978: 219–220); specifically, home roles commonly concern social-psychological and affective requirements placed on the individual by family members and friends, whereas work roles typically reflect instrumental requirements conducive to task accomplishment that are put forth by colleagues and managers (Ashforth et al., 2000; Evans & Bartolomé, 1984; Oldenburg, 1997). Boundary theory is concerned with how people manage different work and non-work roles (Ashforth, 2000; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Kossek et al., 1999; Nippert-Eng, 1996) and has been applied to examine the work-home interface. Existing research has primarily focused on how employees manage the boundary between different roles and on the extent to which employees desire and enact segmentation or integration of home and work roles (Rothbard & Dumas, 2006). For example, some research has investigated the extent to which employees may psychologically transcend the physical work/non-work boundary by thinking about non-work-related activities while still at work (Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015; Smit, Maloney, Maertz, & Montag-Smit, 2016), such as thoughts related to their role as a spouse or parent (Dumas & Smith, 2017; Dumas & Stanko, 2017). The periods during which people transition between roles have not been studied much, however. By focusing on commuting as one such time period, we shed light on a neglected aspect of boundary theory: the role transition.

A prominent feature of commutes is that they give employees time to transition from their home role to their work role. During the commute itself, however, people hold no clearly defined role; that is,

they are in limbo between their home role and their work role. Extant research suggests that people experience role ambiguity when it is unclear to them which role to adopt (Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Rizzo, House, & Lirtzman, 1970; Tubre & Collins, 2000). Role ambiguity typically involves situations where “clear information is lacking regarding (a) the expectations associated with a role, (b) methods for fulfilling known role expectations, and/or (c) the consequences of role performance” (Van Sell, Brief, & Randall, 1981: 44). During commuting in particular, role ambiguity arises from the unstructured nature of the transition phase, during which people are not constrained by either family or work demands (Wanberg, Griffiths, & Gavin, 1997).

Previous research suggests that role ambiguity is not a pleasant experience. At work, employees with greater role ambiguity experience lower job satisfaction (Abramis, 1994; Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Organ & Greene, 1974; Tubre & Collins, 2000), especially when role ambiguity is sustained for extended periods of time (Bacharach et al., 1991; Rizzo et al., 1970). When people receive no external input on what they are expected to do, it is for them to decide which role to adopt and what behavior and attitude to embrace as a result (Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Rizzo et al., 1970; Van Sell et al., 1981). Although in prior studies, role ambiguity typically arose due to external factors, such as insufficient job specifications, the configuration of work, or a lack of clear supervisor guidance (Jackson & Schuler, 1985; Tubre & Collins, 2000), these findings imply that role ambiguity is an issue that people wish to resolve.

We expect that the extended role ambiguity during lengthy commutes increases turnover by reducing job satisfaction. Experiencing low levels of job satisfaction leads to a process of job withdrawal that goes along with increased turnover intention and, ultimately, voluntary turnover (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Several studies suggest that lower levels of job satisfaction are related to increased turnover (Mobley, 1977; Shaw, 1999; Tett & Meyer, 1993), and a large-scale meta-analysis concluded that job satisfaction is the strongest among several predictors of turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000). Thus, if longer commutes lead to decreased job satisfaction, then they should also lead to increased turnover.

Boundary Conditions: Trait Self-Control and Work-Family Conflict

We propose two key factors that could moderate the relationship between lengthy commutes and

job satisfaction. The first factor that we suggest helps people navigate unstructured situations, such as the commute to work, is trait self-control, or “the capacity [...] to regulate behavior, thoughts, and emotions” (de Ridder et al., 2012: 77). Prior research has found that individuals with higher trait self-control are more likely to set goals for themselves and to consistently stay on track with these intended goals (Hofmann et al., 2014), in part because they are better able to regulate what they are thinking about (Gailliot, Schmeichel, & Baumeister, 2006), whereas individuals with lower trait self-control are more likely to engage in thoughts and behaviors that are rewarding in the short term (Hofmann, Vohs, & Baumeister, 2012). Drawing on this prior research, we suggest that employees with higher levels of trait self-control are more likely to resolve the role ambiguity inherent in commuting by more efficiently transitioning into their work role, such as by thinking about upcoming tasks, setting priorities, and planning the day ahead. Indeed, a qualitative study has shown that role transitions can occur before the physical transition to work is completed (Richter, 1990). Boundary theory suggests that employees who transition more efficiently from their home role to their work role experience role ambiguity for a shorter period of time, which may offset the negative effects of a lengthy commute (Bacharach et al., 1991; Tubre & Collins, 2000). Because employees with higher levels of trait self-control are better able to regulate their thought processes, they can mentally transition into their work role even before they arrive at work and the workday begins (Ashforth, 2000; Smit et al., 2016). As Ashforth and colleagues state, lengthy commutes are less aversive if they are perceived as an “efficient way of facilitating a physical and psychological shift between roles.”

In contrast, employees with lower levels of trait self-control may be more likely to be left in limbo during their commute, engaging in behaviors that are rewarding in the short term, such as listening to music or daydreaming, but that are inconsistent with the goal of role transitioning (Kluger, 1998; Novaco et al., 1990). Because these employees do not use the commute to deliberately transition into their work role, their role transition is less efficient—that is, it takes longer to complete—and is less effective, such that employees may arrive at work with lingering thoughts about their home role. These employees’ thoughts and behaviors while on their way to work, as pleasant as they may be in the short term, do not

facilitate, but instead frustrate, their work role entry (Leander & Chartrand, 2017). As a result, a boundary theory lens highlights that employees with lower levels of trait self-control may be less likely to transition well into their work role, thus leaving them more vulnerable to the strain of commuting and, as a result, less satisfied with their job and more likely to quit it. We therefore propose the following:

Hypothesis 1. The negative relationship between commute length and both job satisfaction and turnover is less pronounced for employees with high trait self-control than for those with low trait self-control.

Another crucial factor that increases the tension between home and work roles is work-family conflict, defined as “a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible so that participation in one role [home] is made more difficult by participation in another role [work]” (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985: 77). Past research has examined such situations where employees’ role expectations are clearly defined as either work or home related. Cross-role thoughts often arise spontaneously, rather than in a planned fashion, intruding into an employee’s current role (Lin, Kain, & Fritz, 2013). With higher levels of work-family conflict, it is more likely that experiences in one’s home role interfere with the requirements of and effectiveness in one’s work (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000). The negative consequences of increased work-family conflict extend beyond work interference; for example, work-family conflict is associated with higher levels of burnout and the experience of negative emotions such as guilt and hostility both at work and at home (Bacharach et al., 1991; Ilies, Scott, & Judge, 2006) as well as poorer health outcomes among working adults (Davis, Gere, & Sliwinski, 2017).

One consequence of the combination of a lengthy commute with greater work-family conflict is the increased role ambiguity that employees may experience. Prior research has shown that increased work-family conflict can generally lead to greater role ambiguity, prompting higher uncertainty about which role to adopt at any given time (Desrochers et al., 2005; Glavin & Schieman, 2012). Given that role ambiguity is prolonged during a lengthy commute, this finding suggests that people who have greater

work-family conflict are more likely to experience heightened levels of role ambiguity during their commute to work. As a result, we propose that the aversive effects of lengthy commutes will be particularly more pronounced for employees who have high levels of work-family conflict than for those who have low levels of work-family conflict.

Hypothesis 2. The negative relationship between commute length and both job satisfaction and turnover is more pronounced for employees who experience higher levels of work-family conflict than for those with lower levels of work-family conflict.

Role-Clarifying Prospecion as a Transition Ritual

Boundary theory suggests that employees can transcend the home/work boundary cognitively by thinking about work activities while they are not yet at work or by thinking about non-work activities while they are at work (Dumas & Sanchez-Burks, 2015; Dumas & Smith, 2017; Glavin, Schieman, & Reid, 2011; Nippert-Eng, 1996). Thus, employees can cognitively inhabit another role by thinking about role-relevant aspects that pertain to it. This cognitive strategy, called *prospecion*, refers to “the ability to represent what might happen in the future” (Szpunar, Spreng, & Schacter, 2014: 18414) regarding the tasks and goals embedded in a different role than the current one (Austin & Vancouver, 1996).

Employees who commute to work thus have the possibility of engaging in role-related thoughts, which may help them clarify what role to inhabit, a strategy we term *role-clarifying prospecion*. Support for this perspective comes from previous research which has found that role-clarifying information can reduce role ambiguity (Lindberg & Wincent, 2011). Because role expectations are often implicit and dynamic, employees commonly seek information to help ascertain what is required of them (Ashford, 1986; Morrison, 1993). In previous studies, role-clarifying information is described as being sought out by employees and provided by supervisors or coworkers (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Here, we extend this perspective to suggest that during periods of role ambiguity, employees can also clarify their upcoming role to themselves by thinking about the associated aims and goals. In particular, when employees are on their way to work, they can think about their goals for the day, the strategies they may

wish to employ to overcome challenges they face at work, or the steps they can take to get closer to their work and career goals. When employees engage in such role-clarifying prospection, they mentally shift their attention from what they are experiencing in the present—thoughts pertaining to their commute—to what they will be experiencing when they arrive at work, namely, thoughts pertaining to their workday. This future focus allows employees to cognitively inhabit their work role during their commute, adding structure to relatively unstructured time, facilitating preparation for arrival at work, and thus reducing role ambiguity during the commute (Ashford, 1986; Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Morrison, 1993). In contrast, when employees engage in role-unrelated thoughts on their way to work, they prevent entry into the work role.

Thus, we suggest that role-clarifying prospection represents effortful and conscious thought that can help buffer against the aversive effects of lengthy commutes by reducing the role ambiguity experienced during the commute to work and facilitating employees' role entry. Although longer commutes are typically associated with lower job satisfaction, employees who engage in role-clarifying prospection during their morning commute may reduce their odds of being negatively affected by a longer commute, both in terms of job satisfaction and in terms of turnover (Griffeth et al., 2000).

Hypothesis 3. Engaging in role-clarifying prospection attenuates the negative effect of commuting time on job satisfaction and turnover.

Although role-clarifying prospection is a mental strategy available to anyone, we suggest that employees with higher levels of trait self-control are more inclined to engage in role-clarifying prospection. Higher levels of trait self-control are achieved in part through a variety of cognitive strategies that influence an individual's ability to remain on track with their intended goals and regulate their thoughts (Inzlicht, Legault, & Teper, 2014; Magen & Gross, 2010). For example, individuals with higher self-control are more likely to change how they perceive a situation by reframing the meaning of possible short-term temptations (Mischel, Ebbesen, & Zeiss, 1972) or by altering how distracting they perceive a temptation to be (Fujita & Han, 2009). Similarly, during their commute, employees with higher

trait self-control may use their capacity to regulate their thoughts to engage in specific cognitions that allow them to transition into their work role, rather than lingering on role-unrelated thoughts.

The suggestion that employees with higher levels of trait self-control are more likely to engage in role-clarifying prospection is further supported by prior research showing that levels of trait self-control relate to how likely individuals are to plan ahead, especially for future goal-related tasks (de Ridder et al., 2012). Individuals with high trait self-control are more likely to recognize opportunities to deploy cognitive strategies that may help them regulate their thoughts (Myrseth & Fishbach, 2009) and are more likely to acknowledge that planning is a useful activity (Alahmadi et al., 2017). We therefore propose:

Hypothesis 4. Employees who have high levels of trait self-control are more likely to engage in role-clarifying prospection during their commute to work, as compared to those who have low levels of trait self-control.

Lastly, we suggest that the beneficial outcomes associated with role-clarifying prospection that are outlined above—i.e., its attenuation of the negative consequences of lengthy commutes by smoothening role transitions—are particularly important for employees with greater work-family conflict. As described above, we propose that individuals with greater work-family conflict are more likely to experience greater role ambiguity, particularly during lengthy commutes (Desrochers et al., 2005; Glavin & Schieman, 2012). As a result, role-clarifying prospection may be particularly effective as a transition ritual for individuals with higher levels of work-family conflict. This proposition aligns with a qualitative study of individuals who work at home by Ahrentzen (1990), who found that those who did not make an effort to separate work and family were more likely to experience both role overlap between work and non-work activities and work-family conflict. In contrast, those who created boundaries to manage their work-family conflict—including transition rituals, such as exercise—were less likely to experience role overlap and work-family conflict. As a result, engaging in role-clarifying prospection may be particularly important for this group of employees, offering them an opportunity to deliberately clarify their upcoming

work role and reducing the aversive experience of role ambiguity.

Hypothesis 5. The attenuating effect of role-clarifying prospection on longer commutes is stronger for individuals with higher levels of work-family conflict.

Overview of the Present Research

Our conceptual model is depicted in Figure 1. We tested our five hypotheses across a series of three studies. Study 1 investigated, with data obtained from a field study, whether the negative relationship between the length of employees' commute and job satisfaction is attenuated for employees with higher levels of trait self-control and whether this influences turnover (Hypothesis 1). For Study 2, we recruited full-time employees through an online panel to complete a survey that featured both quantitative and qualitative elements. We sought to replicate the results of Study 1 and to test the remaining hypotheses (Hypotheses 2 to 5). Study 3 consisted of a field experiment during which we manipulated role-clarifying prospection for two weeks by prompting some employees, but not others, to think about their day ahead while commuting and then examined the effect of this manipulation on employees' job satisfaction and turnover intention. The third study thus offered a causal examination of whether role-clarifying prospection attenuates the negative effect of commuting time on job satisfaction and turnover intention, testing Hypotheses 3 and 5.

Insert Figure 1 about here

STUDY 1

Are employees with higher levels of trait self-control less adversely affected by lengthy commutes than their low-self-control counterparts? To address this question and provide support for Hypothesis 1, we conducted a multi-time-point, multi-source field study at the U.K. offices of a global media firm. We anticipated that employees with lengthy commutes and lower trait self-control would be

less satisfied with their jobs and more likely to quit the organization.

Method

Sample and Procedures. The firm's CEO sent email invitations to all 559 employees asking them to participate in a study about improving their workplace. Thirty days later, the CEO sent a second email to all employees inviting them to complete a second survey. We matched the data between the two surveys through an assigned code that participants received. In addition, the human resources (HR) department of the firm provided us with turnover data six months after the second survey. Of the invited employees, 332 responded to the first survey (59.4%), and 333 responded to the second survey (59.6%). A total of 225 employees completed both surveys and had HR data that could be matched ($M_{age} = 32.72$, $SD_{age} = 6.87$; 57% male). Respondents had worked at the firm for an average of 2.85 years ($SD = 3.37$). We compared the demographics of respondents and non-respondents and found no differences in age (*non-respondents*' $M = 31.97$, $SD = 9.00$, $t(557) = -1.24$, *ns*), gender (*non-respondents*' $N = 335$, 35.2% female, $X^2(1) = 3.50$, *ns*), or firm tenure (*non-respondents*' $M = 3.04$, $SD = 3.73$, $t(557) = .54$, *ns*).

Measures

Commuting Time. Employees reported their daily commuting time as part of the second survey. The commuting duration ranged from 2 to 240 minutes, with an average of 50.56 minutes ($SD = 31.8$). This number is comparable to the 74-minute average commute in London, U.K. (Cotton, 2018), where this study was conducted.

Trait Self-Control. We assessed trait self-control using a 10-item measure (Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004) in the first survey, e.g., "I am good at resisting temptation" and "I do things that feel good in the moment but regret later on" (1 = "Not at all like me" to 5 = "Very much like me," $\alpha = 0.77$).

Job Satisfaction. We measured employees' job satisfaction using a 3-item scale (Morris & Venkatesh, 2010) in the second survey, e.g., "Overall, I am satisfied with my job" (1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 7 = "Strongly Agree"; $\alpha = 0.81$).

Actual Turnover. We assigned a "1" to the 41 respondents (19.2%) who voluntarily left the firm

in the six months after the second survey and a “0” to all others.

Control Variables. We controlled for age, gender, and organizational tenure in the analyses because age and gender are related to job satisfaction (Clark, 1997; Clark, Oswald, & Warr, 1996; Hunt & Saul, 1975; Kalleberg & Loscocco, 1983). Age and tenure are also negatively related to turnover, with women tending to quit their jobs less often than men (Griffeth et al., 2000). In addition, we controlled for hierarchy using information that we received from the organization’s HR department about the hierarchy level of employees, which ranged from 0 (most junior) to 6 (most senior). To control for job performance, which has been associated with job satisfaction (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001), we received information from the HR department on whether an employee had received an award for exceptional performance in the year prior to data collection, which 27 employees did (12% of the sample).² Finally, to differentiate our effects from those predicted by the commute impedance model, we also controlled for levels of job stress with four items adapted from Motowidlo, Packard, and Manning (1986; $\alpha = 0.85$): “My job is extremely stressful,” “Very few stressful things happen to me at work” (reversed), “I feel a great deal of stress because of my job,” and “I almost never feel stressed because of my work” (reversed).³

Results

Table 1 reports means, standard deviations, and correlations for the study variables. First, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis with maximum likelihood estimators to examine the factor structure of the variables. The expected three-factor structure (i.e., trait self-control, job satisfaction, and job stress as separate factors) showed a better fit with the data than a two-factor ($\Delta\chi^2 = 371.04, p < .001$) or one-factor ($\Delta\chi^2 = 624.03, p < .001$) structure, and all variables had statistically significant factor

² Employees can receive awards that honor exceptional performance. They can be nominated for an award by any employee in the organization, who must provide a rationale for the nomination that is reviewed by the director of HR and the CEO. Awards are prestigious and come with a cash prize. Employees can only receive one award within a 12-month time frame.

³ We re-ran all analyses without control variables, and the results remained unchanged in terms of direction and significance.

loadings in the expected direction.

Hypothesis 1 posited that trait self-control moderates the relationship between commuting time and job satisfaction, such that employees with lower trait self-control are more likely to be negatively affected by lengthy commutes. To test this hypothesis, we conducted a regression analysis, entering commuting time as the independent variable, trait self-control as the moderator, and job satisfaction as the outcome variable. As Table 2 shows, we found a statistically significant interaction between commuting time and trait self-control on job satisfaction ($B = .212, SD = .094, p = .025$). The relationship between commuting time and job satisfaction was statistically significant for employees with low trait self-control, ($-1SD$), $B = -.28, SE = .14, p = .04$, and not for employees with high levels of trait self-control, ($+1SD$), $B = .14, SE = .11, p = .24$, as depicted in Figure 2. Hence, employees with lower trait self-control were negatively affected by lengthy commutes, whereas employees with higher trait self-control were not. For every 15-minute commuting time increase, the job satisfaction of employees with low trait self-control dropped by 0.26 points (on a 1-to-7 scale).⁴

 Insert Tables 1 and 2 and Figure 2 about here

We next tested whether the moderating effect of trait self-control on the relationship between commuting time and job satisfaction influenced an employee's likelihood of leaving the organization. In a moderated mediation model, we used commuting time as the independent variable, trait self-control as the moderator, job satisfaction as the mediator, and actual turnover six months later as the dependent variable. We found a statistically significant indirect effect of commuting time on turnover, through job satisfaction

⁴ We also tested whether employees with longer commutes reported lower levels of job satisfaction. Contrary to previous studies, we did not find a significant main effect for commute time on job satisfaction: individuals with lengthy commutes were no more likely to have lower levels of job satisfaction ($B = -.002, SE = .003, p = .57$). This finding is in line with our reasoning that the effect of commute time on job satisfaction is contingent upon a third variable: trait self-control. Furthermore, a reasonable alternative to a linear relationship between commute time and job satisfaction is a curvilinear relationship, which implies that too short a commute is as bad as too long a commute. We thus tested for a quadratic effect of commute time on job satisfaction but found no evidence for such an effect ($p = .26$).

and depending on trait self-control. For employees who have low trait self-control, a bootstrap analysis with 5,000 bias-corrected samples showed that the confidence interval for the indirect effect of commuting time on turnover (through job satisfaction) did not include zero ($estimate = .02$, $boot SE = .011$, $CI_{95\%} = [.004, .049]$). For those who have high trait self-control, however, the confidence interval included zero ($estimate = -.01$, $boot SE = .009$, $CI_{95\%} = [-.035, .002]$). Therefore, lengthy commutes put employees with low trait self-control in peril of quitting their job due to lower job satisfaction but left employees with high self-control unaffected.

Summary

The aim of this study was to test whether the relationship between commuting time and job satisfaction is moderated by levels of trait self-control and whether this has a downstream consequence for actual turnover six months after the initial measurement. The findings offer support for Hypothesis 1, suggesting that those with longer commutes experience lower job satisfaction to the extent that they lack high levels of trait self-control, which in turn leads to increased levels of turnover. Hence, compared to those with lower trait self-control, employees with longer commutes and higher trait self-control are less likely to leave their organization due to their relatively higher levels of job satisfaction.

STUDY 2

Study 2 had two main goals. First, we aimed to provide further support for the finding that employees with higher trait self-control are less negatively affected by longer commutes (Hypothesis 1). Second, we sought to test the remaining hypotheses, examining whether employees who experience greater work-family conflict are more negatively affected by longer commutes (Hypothesis 2), whether employees' engagement in role-clarifying prospection moderates the aversive effect of longer commutes (Hypothesis 3), whether employees with higher trait self-control are more likely to engage in role-clarifying prospection (Hypothesis 4), and whether the attenuating effect of role-clarifying prospection on longer commutes is stronger for employees with greater work-family conflict (Hypothesis 5). Study 2 featured a survey design with open-ended questions that invited employees to recall and write about their

commuting experience.

Method

Sample and Procedures. We recruited 222 individuals ($M_{age} = 36.41$, $SD_{age} = 10.60$; 58% male) through Amazon Mechanical Turk. In our job posting, we explicitly specified that this study was only available to employees who work full time and commute to work.

Measures

Commuting Time. Participants reported their actual commuting time, which ranged from 3 to 120 minutes, with an average of 35.93 minutes ($SD = 22.07$).

Trait Self-Control. We assessed employees' trait self-control using the same 10-item measure as in Study 1 (Tangney, Baumeister, & Boone, 2004; $\alpha = .88$).

Work-Family Conflict. We collected participants' responses to two items to measure work-family conflict on a 7-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree; $r = .70$; Netemeyer, Boles, & McMurrian, 1996): "The demands of my job interfere with my ability to fulfil family or home responsibilities" and "My home and family responsibilities interfere with my ability to perform my job well."

Role-Clarifying Prospection during Commute. We asked respondents to "list all of the things you typically think about while commuting" in an open text box. Two independent coders then analyzed each response, coding for role-clarifying prospection during one's commute. We asked the coders to capture the extent to which people thought about their work during their commute, ranging on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a large extent). Their ratings showed acceptable agreement ($IRR_{kappa} = .92$). The following is an example of role-clarifying prospection: "I think about what I have to do for work that day and also think about whether I had completed all of my tasks related to the day before. I think about how I'm going to try to be organized at work and get activities done in a timely manner."

Job Satisfaction. We measured the extent to which participants were satisfied with their jobs using the same 3-item instrument as in Study 1 (Morris & Venkatesh, 2010; $\alpha = .81$).

Turnover Intention. We measured employees' desire to quit their organization using two items,

“I frequently think of quitting my job” and “I am planning to search for a new job during the next 12 months” (Chen et al., 2011), rated on a scale from 1 = “Strongly Disagree” to 7 = “Strongly Agree” ($r = .89$).

Control Variables. We measured age and gender as control variables, as in Study 1. To control for performance, we also asked participants to self-report their job performance with four items adapted from Williams and Anderson (1991; $\alpha = .93$): “I fulfil the responsibilities specified in my job description,” “I perform the tasks that are expected as part of the job,” “I meet performance expectations,” and “I adequately complete responsibilities.” In addition, we controlled for participants’ current levels of job stress with the same four-item scale as in Study 1 (Motowidlo et al., 1986; $\alpha = .86$).⁵

Results

Table 3 reports means, standard deviations, and correlations for the variables. First, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis with maximum likelihood estimators. The expected five-factor structure (i.e., trait self-control, job performance, job stress, job satisfaction, and turnover intention as separate factors) showed a statistically significantly better fit with the data than a four-factor ($\Delta\chi^2 = 464.94$, $p < .001$), three-factor ($\Delta\chi^2 = 965.88$, $p < .001$), two-factor ($\Delta\chi^2 = 1206.40$, $p < .001$), or one-factor ($\Delta\chi^2 = 1843.30$, $p < .001$) structure, and all variables had statistically significant factor loadings in the expected direction.

 Insert Table 3 about here

First, we tested Hypothesis 1, investigating whether trait self-control moderated the relationship between commuting time and job satisfaction and, in turn, turnover intention. The results showed that the interaction effect for commuting time and trait self-control was statistically significant ($B = .012$, $SE = .005$, $p = .02$). Subsequent analysis showed that the relationship between commuting time and job

⁵ As in Study 1, we re-ran all analyses without control variables, and the results remained unchanged in terms of direction and significance.

satisfaction was statistically significant for employees with low trait self-control, ($-1SD$), $B = -.02$, $SE = .01$, $p < .001$, and not for those with high levels of trait self-control ($+1SD$), $B = -.01$, $SE = .01$, $p = .30$. We next investigated whether the interaction between commuting time and trait self-control predicted turnover intention through job satisfaction. We fitted the path from the interaction of commuting time and trait self-control to job satisfaction and the path from job satisfaction to turnover intention, and we found that the indirect path from commuting time to turnover intention through job satisfaction was statistically significant for employees with low trait self-control ($[-.0013; .0442]$), and not for those with high trait self-control ($[-.0095; .0130]$). The results conceptually replicate the findings from Study 1.⁶

In Hypothesis 2, we suggested that employees with greater work-family conflict are more likely to be negatively affected by longer commutes. To test this, we regressed the interaction between commuting time and work-family conflict on job satisfaction. The results showed a marginally statistically significant effect ($B = -.0043$, $SE = .0025$, $p = .095$). Subsequent simple slopes analysis suggested that for employees with less work-family conflict, the relationship between commuting time and job satisfaction was not statistically significant ($B = -.007$, $SE = .005$, $p = .23$). However, for employees with greater work-family conflict, longer commutes had a statistically significant relationship with job satisfaction ($B = -.019$, $SE = .006$, $p < .001$), such that a longer commuting time was related to lower job satisfaction. We next investigated whether the interaction between commuting time and work-family conflict predicted turnover intention through job satisfaction and found that the indirect path from commuting time to turnover intention through job satisfaction was statistically significant for employees with greater work-family conflict ($[-.0099; .0345]$; 5,000 bootstrapped iterations), and not for those with less work-family conflict ($[-.0038; .0225]$; 5,000 bootstrapped iterations). These results provide support for Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3 stated that role-clarifying prospection moderates the relationship between

⁶ We also examined whether those employees with lengthy commutes reported lower levels of job satisfaction. Unlike in Study 1, we found a statistically significant relationship ($B = -.013$, $SE = .004$, $p < .001$), such that the longer employees commuted, the less satisfied they were with their jobs. We again tested for a quadratic effect of commute time on job satisfaction but found no evidence ($p = .31$).

commuting time and job satisfaction. To test this hypothesis, we conducted a regression with commuting time as the independent variable, role-clarifying prospection as the moderator, and job satisfaction as the dependent variable and found a marginally statistically significant interaction effect ($B = .006$, $SE = .003$, $p = .057$; see Table 4). Subsequent analyses showed that the relationship between commuting time and job satisfaction was statistically significant for employees with low levels of role-clarifying prospection ($-1SD$), $B = -.021$, $SE = .006$, $p < .001$, and not for those with high levels ($+1SD$), $B = -.006$, $SE = .006$, $p = .31$. We next tested whether the interaction between commuting time and role-clarifying prospection predicted turnover intention through job satisfaction. We fitted the path from the interaction of commuting time and role-clarifying prospection to job satisfaction and the path from job satisfaction to turnover intention and found that the indirect path from commuting time to turnover intention through job satisfaction was statistically significant for employees with low role-clarifying prospection ($[-.0138; .0380]$; 5,000 bootstrapped iterations), and not for those with high role-clarifying prospection ($[-.0078; .0189]$; 5,000 bootstrapped iterations). These results provide support for Hypothesis 3.

Insert Table 4 about here

In Hypothesis 4, we suggested that employees with higher trait self-control are more likely to engage in role-clarifying prospection during their commute. A regression with trait self-control as the independent variable and role-clarifying prospection as the dependent variable showed that trait self-control was positively related to employees' likelihood of engaging in prospection, $B = .25$, $SE = .12$, $p = .03$. Hypothesis 4 was thus supported.

Lastly, to provide support for Hypothesis 5, we tested whether the interaction of commuting time and role-clarifying prospection is further qualified by the extent of work-family conflict that participants experience. To investigate this, we draw on recent work by Iacobucci et al. (2015), who suggest that median splits can be preferable in situations where multicollinearity between predictor variables is low, a condition that the current setting fulfills. We therefore conducted a median split of the sample by work-

family conflict and re-ran the same regression as before, with commuting time as the independent variable, role-clarifying prospection as the moderator, and job satisfaction as the dependent variable. The analysis showed that the interaction between commuting time and role-clarifying prospection was not statistically significant for participants with less work-family conflict ($B = -.001, SE = .004, p = .717$). However, the interaction between commuting time and role-clarifying prospection was statistically significant for participants with greater work-family conflict ($B = .010, SE = .003, p = .002$), such that for this group of employees, the relationship between commuting time and job satisfaction was statistically significant for employees with low ($-1SD$) levels of role-clarifying prospection ($B = -.027, SE = .006, p < .001$), and not for those with high levels of role-clarifying prospection ($+1SD$), $B = .002, SE = .005, p = .97$. Subsequent analysis showed that for employees with greater work-family conflict, the indirect path from commuting time to turnover intention through job satisfaction was statistically significant when they engaged in low levels of role-clarifying prospection ($[-.0170; .0456]$; 5,000 bootstrapped iterations), and not when they engaged in high levels of role-clarifying prospection ($[-.0089; .0132]$; 5,000 bootstrapped iterations). Thus, engaging in role-clarifying prospection was especially effective in offsetting the negative effects of longer commutes for participants with higher levels of work-family conflict, providing support for Hypothesis 5.

Summary and Discussion

The aims of Study 2 were to provide further support that employees with higher trait self-control are less negatively affected by longer commutes, to examine whether employees who experience greater work-family conflict are more negatively affected by longer commutes, and to investigate the effects of role-clarifying prospection. Replicating Study 1, we first found that the relationship between lengthy commutes and job satisfaction is moderated by levels of trait self-control, such that higher levels of trait self-control attenuate the negative effect of lengthy commutes (Hypothesis 1). Second, we found that the aversive effects of lengthy commutes are stronger for employees with greater work-family conflict (Hypothesis 2) and that lengthy commutes are less aversive for employees who engage in role-clarifying prospection (Hypothesis 3). As expected, employees with higher trait self-control engage in more role-

clarifying prospection (Hypothesis 4), and role-clarifying prospection has a stronger ameliorating effect for employees with greater work-family conflict (Hypothesis 5).

While Studies 1 and 2 provide support for our key hypotheses, one possible concern pertaining to potential reverse causality remains. Both prior research and correlations in the current studies indicate that individuals with higher levels of trait self-control are also more likely to report higher job satisfaction (see also de Ridder et al., 2012, for a more comprehensive review). Because thinking about their work may also be more enjoyable for employees with higher trait self-control, they may spend more time during their commute to work engaging in role-clarifying prospection. We provided analyses controlling for performance (in Studies 1 and 2) and hierarchy level (Study 1) to show that the moderating effect of trait self-control on the relationship between commuting time and job satisfaction holds even when accounting for performance and rank. To explicitly address the issue of reverse causality, we designed Study 3, in which employees were randomly assigned to a condition where they were prompted to engage in role-clarifying prospection.

STUDY 3

Is role-clarifying prospection a cognitive strategy that all commuters can employ to counter the detrimental effects of commuting on job satisfaction? The goals of Study 3 were to generalize the findings of Studies 1 and 2 and to provide causal evidence in support of the idea that role-clarifying prospection, as a cognitive strategy, can offset the negative effect of commute length on job satisfaction and turnover (Hypothesis 3), particularly for employees with greater work-family conflict (Hypothesis 5). In this study, the only aspect that differed between employees was the random assignment to conditions, which therefore allows us to provide support for the distinct causal direction that we propose. Following this logic, we designed four conditions to investigate whether engaging in role-clarifying prospection during the morning commute offsets the aversive effects of lengthy commutes. Contrasting the role-clarifying prospection condition with three control conditions allowed us to test whether employees can offset commuting-related detriments by engaging in role-clarifying prospection.

Method

Sample and Procedures. We recruited full-time employees in collaboration with ClearVoice, a professional online survey recruiter. In particular, we invited participants for a study that ran over the course of four weeks (see Figure 3 for timeline). A total of 443 of the 600 invited employees ($M_{age} = 42.23$, $SD_{age} = 10.01$; 47.5% women) provided complete responses, with a final response rate of 74%. To address the possible problem of self-selection, we compared the demographic information provided by respondents and non-respondents, and we found no difference in age (*non-respondents'* $M = 42.25$, $SD = 10.11$, $t(598) = -.10$, *ns*) nor gender (*non-respondents'* $M = 1.51$, $SD = .50$, $t(598) = .67$, *ns*).

Insert Figure 3 about here

In phase 1, participants received an initial online survey that included questions about their commute, trait self-control, job satisfaction, turnover intention, demographics, and control variables. In phase 2, participants received daily text-message prompts on their mobile phone approximately 30 minutes after arriving at their workplace every workday for four weeks. The prompts invited them to answer a question regarding the extent to which they engaged in role-clarifying prospection on their commute to work. Participants' responses to the daily online surveys served as a baseline and manipulation check for the intervention conducted in phase 3.

In phase 3, two weeks after the start of the study, participants were randomly allocated to one of four experimental conditions: either the treatment condition (role-clarifying prospection) or one of three control conditions (role-unrelated thoughts, mixed, or no prompt), which we next describe in further detail. In the *role-clarifying prospection condition*, instructions were based on sentences that we collected from commuters that were coded as role-clarifying prospection in Study 2. Employees were specifically asked to engage in role-clarifying prospection with the following prompt: "Many people find it helpful to focus on making a plan of their workday, or week ahead and reflect on how these plans will help them achieve their personal and career goals. We would like to invite you to do that during your commute, too. Ask yourself, for example, what are the strategies you have for the week to be productive? What steps can

you take today and during this week to get closer to your work goals, as well as your personal and career goals? Please use your commuting time to focus on your goals and make plans about what to do.”

We prompted participants in the *role-unrelated thoughts condition* to use their commuting time to engage in thoughts and activities that they find enjoyable. Specifically, employees received the following prompt: “Many people find it helpful to do something enjoyable and relaxing on their way to work. We would like to invite you to do that during your commute, too. For example, you could listen to music, read the news, or catch up on social media—anything that you inherently enjoy is fine. Please use your commuting time to relax and do something enjoyable.”

In the *mixed condition*, we highlighted that employees could use the commute for both role-clarifying prospection and role-unrelated thoughts. In the mixed condition, employees were sent the following text message: “Many people find a combination of activities helpful. They make a plan of their workday or week ahead and reflect on how these plans will help them achieve their personal and career goals, and they also do something enjoyable and relaxing on their way to work. We would like to invite you to do that during your commute, too. Ask yourself, for example, what are the strategies you have for the week to be productive? What steps can you take today and during this week to get closer to your work goals, as well as your personal and career goals? Also do something that you inherently enjoy such as listening to music, reading the news, or catching up on social media. Please allocate some of your commuting time to focusing on your goals and making plans about what to do, and some to relaxing and doing something enjoyable.”

Finally, in the *no-prompt condition*, participants received a text message that did not contain any particular prompt and that told them to do what they normally do during their commute.

In phase 4, all participants were asked to fill out a final survey that once again measured their level of job satisfaction and turnover intention.

Measures

Manipulation Checks. We measured the extent to which employees engaged in role-clarifying prospection on their commute to work in our daily surveys before and after the intervention. Consistent

with Study 2 and our theoretical model, participants received a prompt each workday, approximately 30 minutes after arriving at their workplace, with the question “To what extent did you think about work during your commute to work today?” In addition, to measure role-unrelated thoughts, participants were asked “To what extent did you engage in pleasurable thoughts during your commute to work today?” Participants responded to both questions on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 5 (to a large extent).

Commuting Time. We measured the length of employees’ commute in the initial survey.

Commuting time ranged from 16 to 180 minutes, with an average of 51.54 minutes ($SD = 32.15$).⁷

Trait Self-Control. We assessed employees’ trait self-control in the initial survey using the same 10-item measure as in our prior studies (Tangney et al., 2004; $\alpha = .83$).

Work-Family Conflict. We collected participants’ responses in the first phase to measure work-family conflict with the same two items as in Study 2 ($r = .73$; Netemeyer et al., 1996).

Job Satisfaction. We measured job satisfaction in both the initial and the final surveys using a 3-item scale, as in Studies 1 and 2 (Morris & Venkatesh, 2010; $\alpha = .82$).

Turnover Intention. We measured employees’ desire to quit their organization in both the initial and the final surveys using the same 2-item scale as in Study 2 (Chen et al., 2011; $r = .87$).

Control Variables. We controlled for employees’ age and gender as in the first and second studies. In addition, we asked participants to indicate their levels of positive and negative trait affectivity (PANAS; Watson & Clark, 1999), as both are linked with job satisfaction (Connolly & Viswesvaran, 2000; Shaw, 1999). Finally, we asked employees to report how they commute. Most participants drove to work (85.41%), followed by train (5.08%), bus (4.36%), and car travel as a passenger (1.74%) as means of transportation to work.

Results

Table 5 reports means, standard deviations, and correlations for the variables in the initial survey.

⁷ We removed one outlier, a participant who indicated that they commuted 270 minutes, as they were nearly three standard deviations away from the next-closest participant. Keeping this participant in our sample does not alter any of our results.

Insert Table 5 about here

Analysis Strategy. We first checked whether there were any differences in commuting time, trait self-control, or job satisfaction between conditions prior to the intervention. This was not the case, suggesting that the randomized allocation of participants to the four conditions had created four groups of participants that were not statistically significantly different from each other. In order to examine the causal effect of our interventions, we aggregated participants' responses on the daily measures over the course of weeks 1 and 2 and then proceeded to do the same for weeks 3 and 4 in all our analyses.

Manipulation Checks. We tested whether there were differences between conditions in terms of the extent to which participants engaged in role-clarifying prospection or role-unrelated thoughts on their commute to work *prior* to the intervention. We did not find significant differences, suggesting that the baseline for each group of participants was not different.⁸

Next, we examined whether there were any differences between the treatment and the three control conditions in terms of the extent to which participants engaged in role-clarifying prospection on their commute to work *after* the intervention. We first dummy-coded each condition and then conducted a linear regression with conditions as the independent variable and role-clarifying prospection in weeks 3 and 4 as the dependent variable. As Table 6 shows, we found that in comparison to the no-prompt condition, role-clarifying prospection was higher in the condition that prompted role-clarifying prospection ($B = .20, SE = .08, p = .02$), as expected, and lower in the condition that prompted role-

⁸ We checked whether participants with higher levels of trait self-control would be more likely to engage in role-clarifying prospection *prior* to the intervention. We averaged responses from weeks 1 and 2, and we specified a linear regression with trait self-control as the independent variable and role-clarifying prospection in weeks 1 and 2 as the dependent variable. We found a statistically significant effect of trait self-control on role-clarifying prospection prior to the intervention ($B = .14, SE = .07, p = .04$), such that all participants with higher levels of trait self-control were more likely to engage in role-clarifying prospection prior to the intervention. This finding was expected based on Hypothesis 2. Next, we checked the distribution of trait self-control across the four experimental conditions and found no significant differences, suggesting that trait self-control was equally distributed across the four conditions, as expected from the randomized allocation of participants to the conditions (Hauser, Linos, & Rogers, 2017).

unrelated thoughts ($B = -.20$, $SE = .08$, $p = .02$). In addition, role-clarifying prospection was not statistically significantly different between the no-prompt condition and the mixed condition ($B = .03$, $SE = .08$, $p = .70$). Thus, our manipulation was successful in increasing levels of role-clarifying prospection during the morning commute, but only in the condition that prompted role-clarifying prospection alone. We also ran analyses controlling for role-clarifying prospection in weeks 1 and 2, and the results did not change in terms of direction or significance.

We repeated the same analysis to test if there were any differences between conditions in terms of the extent to which participants engaged in role-unrelated thoughts on their commute to work *after* the intervention. In comparison to the no-prompt condition, only participants in the role-unrelated thoughts condition indicated higher levels of role-unrelated thoughts ($B = .21$, $SE = .08$, $p = .01$); conversely, there was no statistically significant difference for the role-clarifying prospection ($B = .01$, $SE = .08$, $p = .90$) nor the mixed ($B = .05$, $SE = .08$, $p = .52$; see Table 6) condition. We also ran analyses controlling for role-unrelated thoughts in weeks 1 and 2, but the results did not change in terms of direction or significance.

Insert Table 6 about here

Hypothesis Testing. We next tested Hypothesis 3, investigating whether participants who were prompted to engage in role-clarifying prospection were less negatively affected by longer commutes than were participants in the other conditions. We conducted a regression analysis with commuting time as the independent variable; condition as the moderator (coded using the Helmert method); job satisfaction at time point 2 as the dependent variable; and age, gender, and trait affectivity (positive and negative) as control variables.⁹ The analysis shows that the relationship between commuting time and job satisfaction

⁹ Hayes and Montoya (2017) suggest using the Helmert coding method, which allows comparison of one group to all other groups that are higher on a categorical variable in a path-analytic approach. When using the Helmert coding method, it is assumed that the arbitrarily numerically coded variable corresponds in ascending ordinality to the multicategorical variable of interest.

following the intervention was statistically significant for two conditions in comparison to the no-prompt condition. First, for employees in the role-clarifying prospection condition, commuting time was statistically significantly related to *higher* levels of job satisfaction at time point 2 ($B = .012, SE = .005, p = .02$). This finding provides support for Hypothesis 3. Second, for employees in the role-unrelated thoughts condition, commuting time was marginally associated with *lower* levels of job satisfaction ($B = -.011, SE = .006, p = .08$). For those in the mixed condition, there was no statistically significant effect of the condition on job satisfaction ($B = .005, SE = .005, p = .31$).

We next tested the effect of the intervention on turnover intention through job satisfaction, comparing participants in the two conditions that differed from each other in role-clarifying prospection and role-unrelated thoughts, i.e., participants in the role-clarifying prospection condition with participants in the role-unrelated thoughts condition. To test for the indirect effect, we ran a mediation analysis for this subset of participants ($N = 221$), using the interaction between condition and commuting time as the predictor variable, job satisfaction as the mediator, and turnover intention as the outcome variable. We found a marginally statistically significant indirect effect, $CI_{90\%} = [.0069; 0.083]; p = .06$, such that participants in the role-unrelated thoughts condition were more likely to indicate higher turnover intention than were participants in the role-clarifying prospection condition.

We repeated all analyses without control variables, and the results remained unchanged in terms of direction and significance. In addition, we re-ran all analyses with and without entering job satisfaction at the baseline as a control variable, and this did not alter our results.¹⁰

Next, we tested whether the effect of role-clarifying prospection is further moderated by the extent of work-family conflict that participants experience, in line with Hypothesis 5. To do so, we

¹⁰ Additionally, we examined the possibility that commuters' mode of transport influences employees' ability to engage in role-clarifying prospection, and we found no statistically significant relationship between the type of commuting and role-clarifying prospection ($B = .02, SE = .03, p = .46$). We next tested whether mode of transport influences the relationships between our manipulation, commuting time, job satisfaction, and turnover intention. We ran additional analyses either controlling for mode of transport or computing additional interaction terms with mode of transport and found no significant differences in effects across different modes of transport (all $ps > .25$). These results suggest that our hypotheses were supported regardless of the mode of transport that employees used to commute to work.

conducted a median split of participants by work-family conflict, following the same logic as in Study 2 (Iacobucci et al., 2015), and re-ran the same regression as before, with commuting time as the independent variable, condition as the moderator (coded using the Helmert method), and job satisfaction at time point 2 as the dependent variable. The analysis reveals that for participants with less work-family conflict, there was no significant interaction between commuting time and the role-clarifying prospection condition ($B = .011$, $SE = .010$, $p = .27$). However, for participants with greater work-family conflict, the interaction between commuting time and the role-clarifying prospection condition was significant ($B = .020$, $SE = .008$, $p = .017$), such that participants in this condition who experienced greater work-family conflict reported *higher* levels of job satisfaction with longer commutes. No other interaction between commuting time and condition was statistically significant in this analysis. These analyses indicate that the intervention to engage in role-clarifying prospection was particularly effective in offsetting the negative effects of longer commutes for participants who reported higher levels of work-family conflict, in line with Hypothesis 5.

Summary and Discussion

In Study 3, we found causal evidence that role-clarifying prospection attenuates the negative effect of commuting time on job satisfaction and turnover intention. Specifically, after we prompted some commuters to engage in role-clarifying prospection during their daily commute for two weeks, these individuals did not suffer decrements in job satisfaction with lengthy commutes, in contrast to commuters in the three control conditions. Thus, our findings suggest that role-clarifying prospection can be employed as a strategy by individuals with varying levels of trait self-control to buffer the aversive effects of lengthy commutes. In addition, employees who experience greater work-family conflict are more likely to benefit from engaging in role-clarifying prospection.

Participants in the mixed condition were not more likely to engage in increased role-clarifying prospection or role-unrelated thoughts. It is possible that commuters in the mixed condition were unable to engage in both role-clarifying prospection and role-unrelated thoughts. Alternatively, the two different types of thoughts might have cancelled each other out, leading to no difference in the extent to which

participants engaged in role-clarifying prospection. In any case, participants in the mixed condition were no less aversively affected by longer commutes, as compared to those in the role-clarifying prospection condition, and showed a similar pattern of results as participants in the no-prompt condition. Similarly, participants who engaged in role-unrelated thoughts were more likely to be negatively affected by longer commutes, potentially because engagement in such cognitions not only does not facilitate but may also even further extend role ambiguity.

In addition, the results of Study 3 provide further support for the relatively stronger effects of the intervention of role-clarifying prospection on employees with greater work-family conflict. In line with Hypothesis 5 and our theoretical framework, we found that employees who experience greater work-family conflict face larger role transitions during their morning commute. By prompting them to engage in role-clarifying prospection, the experimental manipulation allowed them to more effectively transition from their home role to their work role, resulting in reduction of the negative impact of lengthy commutes.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Integrating theories of boundary work, self-control, and work-family conflict in psychological and organizational sciences, we proposed that commuting represents a unique opportunity for a role transition between home and work roles because employees hold no clearly defined role, but rather an ambiguous role, during their commute. Across three studies, we found that lengthy commutes were more aversive for employees with lower trait self-control and greater work-family conflict, leading to decreased job satisfaction and increased turnover. Further, role-clarifying prospection in turn attenuated the relationship between lengthy commutes and both job satisfaction and employee turnover. Employees with higher levels of trait self-control were more likely to engage in role-clarifying prospection, and employees who experienced greater work-family conflict were more likely to benefit from engaging in this cognitive strategy.

Theoretical Contribution

Our research revitalizes the literature on boundary theory by conceptualizing commuting as an

opportunity for employees to engage in boundary work to facilitate the transition from their home role to their work role. Boundary work involves the activities comprising the “strategies, principles, and practices we use to create, maintain, and modify cultural boundaries” (Nippert-Eng, 1996: 7). In specifying that longer commutes are aversive in part because they keep employees in limbo about their role, thus extending aversively experienced role ambiguity, our work furthers our understanding of the ambiguity inherent in commutes. While we did not measure role ambiguity directly in this paper, our research provides an alternative way to test this mechanism by introducing role-clarifying prospection. Importantly, our research offers a new way of thinking about transition rituals (Ashforth et al., 2000) by portraying them as matters of the mind, and suggesting that role-clarifying prospection can psychologically reduce role ambiguity during such transitions.

By proposing that longer commutes decrease job satisfaction due to extended role ambiguity, our research challenges the existing framework that views commuting predominantly as an impedance or a stressor. Our theoretical framework around role ambiguity also allowed us to explore new factors that modulate the relationship between commuting time and job-related outcomes. Our research identifies two theoretically relevant boundary conditions: work-family conflict and trait self-control. In doing so, we applied and advanced the growing literature on boundary work, trait self-control, and work-family conflict (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner, 2006; Kreiner et al., 2009; Rothbard et al., 2005).

In particular, first, we advanced boundary theory by integrating perspectives from self-control theory (Baumeister et al., 1998; de Ridder et al., 2012). Given that role transitioning is an effortful process that inherently involves self-regulation, researchers have called for a deeper understanding of the role of self-regulatory resources as a boundary management strategy (Allen, Cho, & Meier, 2014). Our finding that employees with higher levels of trait self-control are less negatively affected by longer commutes adds an important nuance to previous literature, which offered incomplete insights into the relationship between commuting length and job satisfaction (e.g. Chatterjee et al., 2017; Zhang & Feinzig, 2016). In addition, our work extends the literature on self-control by illustrating that individuals

with higher levels of trait self-control are more likely to identify situations where deploying cognitive strategies that allow them to achieve their goals is applicable (Myrseth & Fishbach, 2009).

Second, the present research explored how work-family conflict shapes the commute to work and has spillover effects on work-related outcomes, such as job satisfaction and turnover intention. Past research on work-family conflict focused primarily on how assuming one role (work or family) may interfere with accomplishing the other role. Cross-role thoughts can represent discrete episodes where an individual currently engaged in one role, such as work, experiences off-topic thoughts regarding a different role, such as family (Smit et al., 2016), and can lead to negative outcomes for employees (Dumas & Smith, 2017; Lanaj, Johnson, & Barnes, 2014; Sonnentag, 2001; Sonnentag & Binnewies, 2013). Our work broadens the scope of this research by examining a possible spillover of work-family conflict into individuals' experience of role transitions during their commute. Specifically, our research suggests that employees, and particularly on those with greater work-family conflict, may have agency in ameliorating the aversive effects of lengthy commutes (Ashforth et al., 2000) via role-clarifying prospection.

Finally, we posited that work-related outcomes are affected not only by what happens *at* work but also by what happens *outside* of work. A wealth of research, especially in the field of work recovery, has investigated how what employees do *during* (Trougakos & Hideg, 2009; Trougakos, Hideg, Cheng, & Beal, 2014) or *after* work (Lanaj et al., 2014; Sonnentag, 2012; Sonnentag, 2001, 2003) can affect them. After all, many predictors of job satisfaction and turnover, such as psychological detachment from work and work-family conflict, fall into these categories (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; Kubicek & Tement, 2016; Rothbard et al., 2005; Sonnentag, 2012). Our research adds to these insights by demonstrating that the time period *before* work can help offset the negative effects of lengthy commutes and thus increase the job satisfaction of employees.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our studies are subject to several limitations that suggest directions for future research. While the current studies provide support for the theoretical model that we proposed, there are additional

mechanisms that could also be in play and thus are worthy of further study. One possibility revolves around how individuals with higher trait self-control appraise their commuting time. More specifically, because the experience of time is subjective, it is possible that individuals with higher trait self-control experience lengthy commutes as less aversive because they frame their commute more positively (Mogilner, Whillans, & Norton, 2017). However, this perspective does not explain why we found that individuals with higher trait self-control engage in more role-clarifying prospection. Additional data that we collected in Study 2 similarly does not provide support for this perspective. In the survey, participants were also asked to respond to the question “How productive do you feel during your commute?” on a scale of 1 (not productive at all) to 7 (extremely productive). Analysis revealed that participants’ levels of trait self-control were not statistically significantly related to how productive they felt during their commute ($B = .122$, $SE = .097$, $p = .21$); thus, employees’ perceptions of how productive they felt during their commute did not vary by trait self-control.

A second mechanism linking trait self-control with reduced aversive impacts of lengthy commutes might involve emotion regulation, or an individual’s ability to control how he or she feels, particular in challenging situations (Gross, 1998; Gross & John, 2003). Indeed, a recent study provides neural evidence for the relationship between trait self-control and successful emotion regulation (Paschke et al., 2016). It could be that individuals with higher trait self-control—because they are better able to control how they feel—are more adept at engaging in role-clarifying prospection. However, the results of Study 3 also show that employees with varying levels of trait self-control have the ability to learn how to engage in role-clarifying prospection during their commute.

A third possibility concerns individuals’ ability to manage stressors, such as those posed by commutes; that is, individuals with greater trait self-control may be less likely to view lengthy commutes as a source of stress (LePine, Podsakoff, & LePine, 2005; Podsakoff, LePine, & LePine, 2007). Viewed from this perspective, lengthy commutes would only be aversive if employees viewed them as a hindrance. This concept may more closely apply to the commute impedance framework than to our distinct theoretical perspective, given our focus on commuting time rather than commute impedance.

Indeed, Koslowsky (1997) proposes that commuting time does not measure commute impedance. In addition, the results of Studies 1 and 2 hold even when including job stress as an additional control variable, providing further support for our described mechanism. Notwithstanding these results, we encourage further work to unpack these additional possible explanations in more detail.

Throughout our studies, we focused our investigation on the commute to work. The theoretical conceptualization of commuting as a role transition does not differ substantially for the commute from work back home, but the direction of the role transition changes. Whereas role-clarifying prospection serves to strengthen boundary work unilaterally on the way to work, it is likely that home-related prospection is the counterpart for the commute back from work. Evening commutes might benefit from home-related prospection regarding activities in one's private life, such as making plans for the evening (e.g., what to cook for dinner, what book to read to the children; see also Dumas & Smith, 2017). This transition may be fraught if the role transition is not completed by the time of arrival. For example, if individuals continue to ruminate about work-related problems at home, they may not fully enact their home role. In this case, role-unrelated thoughts—because they are distinctly non-work related—could help employees to transition during their commute back to their home-related role.

In addition, although we found no differences in our pattern of results across different commuting types in Study 3, future research may need to take a broader perspective on how employees commute. The null results that we found may in large part be driven by the lack of variance in the commuting types of employees in our sample: over 85% of participants commuted by car. How employees commute may in fact have substantial implications, particularly when those commuting types drain employees' ability to engage in role-clarifying prospection and thus affect the quality of their thoughts. Future research might consider various naturally occurring commuting distractions (such as traffic, background music or noise, and other commuters) as well as other possible commuting activities in which employees may engage (such as socializing or learning).

While our field experiment allowed us to shed further light onto the direction of the causal path, the longevity of the intervention remains unclear. In Study 3, participants received daily prompts to

engage in role-clarifying prospection, and the dependent variables of interest were assessed immediately after the termination of the intervention. However, the question regarding the potential sustainability of the intervention is crucial, as helping individuals with lower levels of trait self-control to make their lengthy commutes less aversive is an important objective of the current investigation. Sustainability is especially a concern given that individuals with lower levels of trait self-control tend to have difficulties in establishing and maintaining beneficial routines (de Ridder et al., 2012; Galla & Duckworth, 2015). However, some studies have had success in teaching individuals to adopt cognitive strategies and deploy them in appropriate situations (Duckworth, Gendler, & Gross, 2016; Yeager et al., 2018). This may be the case particularly in situations where the adoption of beneficial strategies becomes a habit, as once a behavior becomes habitual, self-control is no longer needed to engage in this behavior (Wood & Ruenger, 2016). Notably, although age is related to trait self-control, in our studies, age was not related to employees' propensity to engage in role-clarifying prospection. Thus, future research could investigate whether the current intervention has sustained effects and could devise better mechanisms to teach individuals, and particularly those with lower trait self-control, to engage in role-clarifying prospection when commuting to work.

Practical Implications

Our research offers valuable practical insights for both leaders and employees. For leaders, the findings highlight that commute length might have variable effects on their employees. When employees have lower levels of trait self-control, longer commutes may place them at a higher risk of being less satisfied with their job, and subsequently leave their job. The popular press is quick to warn employees that long commutes have negative consequences, but some employees may stand to gain more from the benefits of living farther away from work, while offsetting the negative effects of commuting through role-clarifying prospection. Leaders can help manage especially draining commutes for employees with lower trait self-control, either by supporting role-clarifying prospection during commuting or by suggesting ways to reduce commuting time, such as increased teleworking.

For employees, our findings highlight that although commuting time may be outside their control,

they are nonetheless in charge of their commute. Commuting is not *per se* a chore to endure but can also be viewed as a useful time period. Being able to set aside some time during one's commute for role-clarifying prospection can turn a time period that many employees rate as their least desirable of the day into a less aversive and even a potentially beneficial one. Furthermore, our research highlights the need to consider boundaries between home and work. Engaging in role-clarifying prospection while commuting—when employees are neither at work nor at home—can reduce role ambiguity and improve work-related outcomes.

Conclusion

The logic of the billboards that claim “If you lived here, you’d be home by now” also works in the reverse—“If you worked elsewhere, you’d be home sooner”—such that lengthy commutes may prompt employees to desire leaving their job. Our theory and research suggest that role transitions are at least to some extent at the discretion of the employee and that some employees are better able to manage the interface between home and work that commuting provides. While commuting is a ubiquitous and widespread experience in employees’ everyday life, the effects of lengthy commutes are more nuanced than previously stated. Rather than being passive actors, employees can actively shape whether the commute from home to work can serve as an effective role transition.

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FIGURE 1

Theoretical Framework

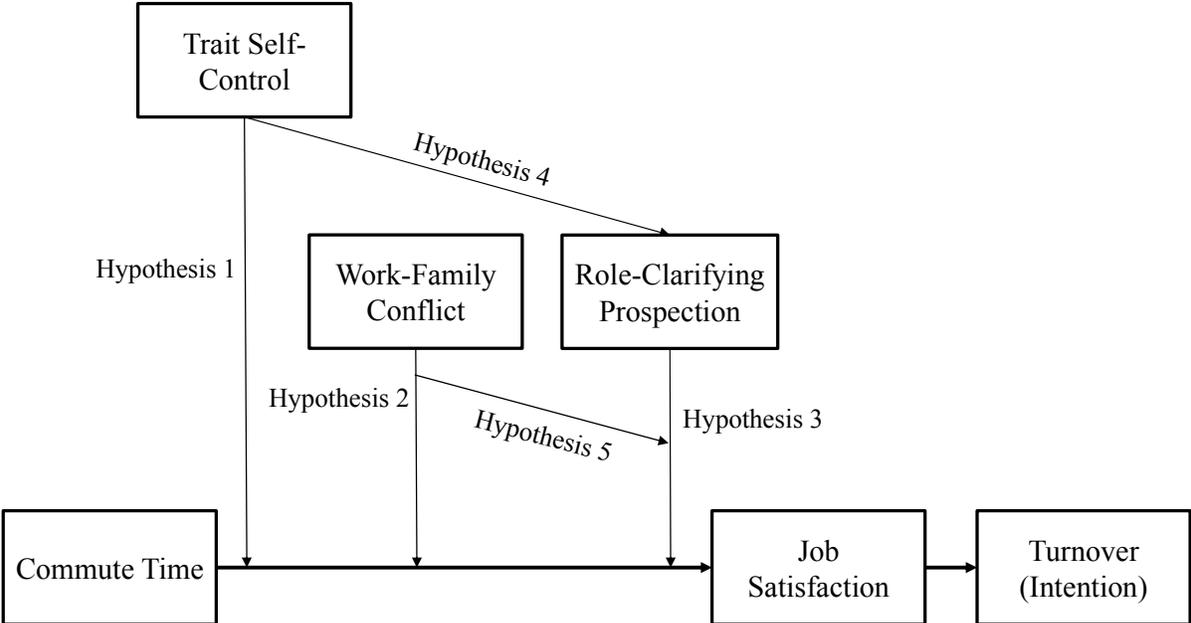
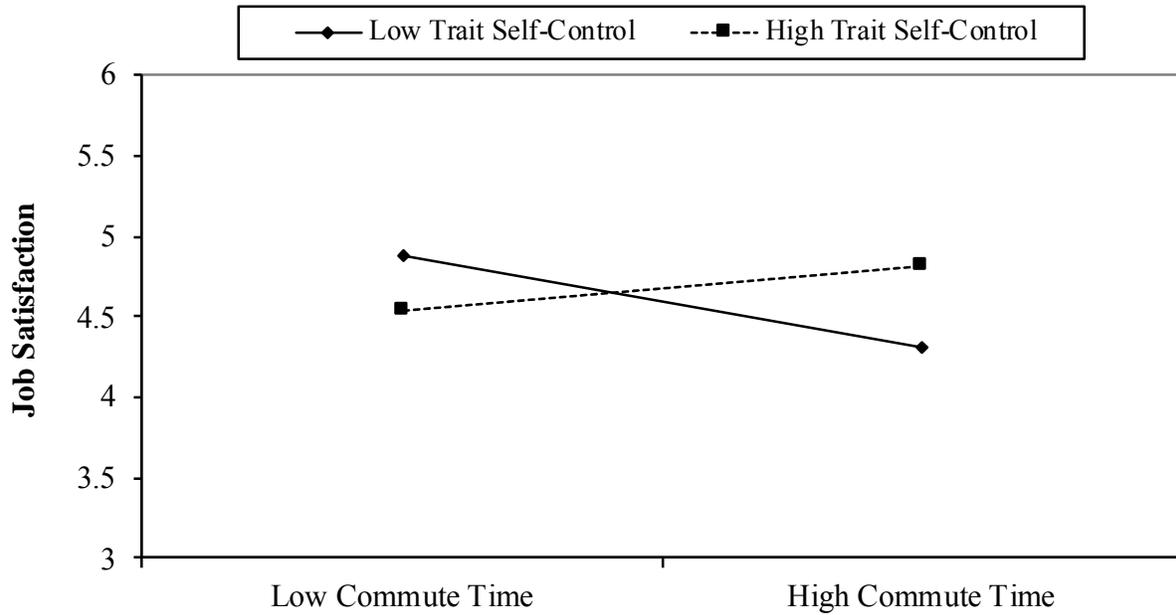


FIGURE 2

**Study 1: Relationship between Commuting Time and Job Satisfaction
as a Function of Trait Self-Control**



Note. Only the slope for low trait self-control (-1SD) is statistically significant ($B = -.28, SE = .14, p = .04$), while the slope for high trait self-control (+1SD) is not ($B = .14, SE = .11, p = .23$).

FIGURE 3

Study 3: Timeline of Experimental Procedure

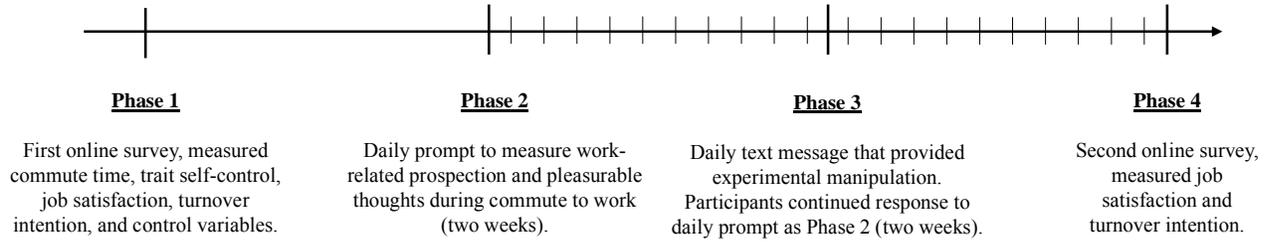


TABLE 1**Study 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study Variables**

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Commuting Time (minutes)	50.56	31.8									
2. Trait Self-Control	3.42	0.57	.11								
3. Age	32.72	6.87	.18**	.19**							
4. Women	0.43	0.50	-.13	.02	-.14*						
5. Tenure (months)	34.56	40.38	.28**	.22**	.43**	-.15*					
6. Hierarchy Level	3.33	1.25	.12	.12	.61**	-.14*	.40**				
7. Performance Award	0.12	0.33	.10	.03	.04	-.07	.25**	.20**			
8. Job Stress	4.35	1.29	.04	-.08	.00	-.10	.14*	.20**	.16*		
9. Job Satisfaction	4.66	1.23	-.03	.02	.14*	.05	.00	.06	-.01	-.16*	
10. Actual Turnover	0.20	0.40	-.13*	.01	.02	.04	-.03	.04	-.08	.06	.17**

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

TABLE 2
Study 1: Moderated Regression Analysis

Predictor Variables	Job Satisfaction	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Age	.029	.016
Women	.131	.166
Tenure	-.001	.002
Hierarchy Level	-.028	.086
Performance Award	.005	.261
Job Stress	-.176**	.066
Commuting Time	-.002	.003
Trait Self-Control	-.013	.147
Interaction (Commuting time x Self-Control)	.014**	.005
<i>N</i>		225
<i>F</i>		1.56
<i>R</i> ²		.055

Note. ** $p < .01$. Commuting time and trait self-control were centered prior to analyses.

TABLE 3**Study 2: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study Variables**

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Commuting Time (minutes)	35.93	22.05										
2. Trait Self-Control	3.11	0.81	-.17*									
3. Age	37.50	10.72	-.04	.22**								
4. Women	1.42	0.49	.12	-.06	.20**							
5. Job Performance	6.24	0.86	.02	.28**	.20**	.11						
6. Job Stress	2.99	0.98	.08	-.07	.06	.03	-.01					
7. Role-Clarifying Prospection	2.08	1.44	.06	.14*	.02	-.04	-.08	-.11				
8. Role-Unrelated Thoughts	3.10	1.10	-.08	-.01	-.05	.06	.04	.19**	-.42**			
9. Work-Family Conflict	3.05	1.50	.02	-.31**	-.11	-.06	-.31**	.33**	-.00	.07		
10. Job Satisfaction	4.58	1.38	-.22**	.19**	.02	.09	.17*	-.22**	.00	-.07	-.29**	
11. Turnover Intention	3.63	1.90	.16*	-.15*	-.07	-.07	-.11	.30**	-.01	.08	.29**	-.80**

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$.

TABLE 4**Study 2: Moderated Regression Analysis**

Predictor Variables	Job Satisfaction	
	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>
Age	-.006	.009
Women	.279	.186
Job Performance	.299**	.107
Commuting Time	-.016***	.004
Role-Clarifying Prospection	.045	.062
Interaction (Commuting Time x Role-Clarifying Prospection)	.006*	.003
N		222
F		4.58
R ²		.11

Note. *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$. Commuting time and role-clarifying prospection were centered prior to analyses. Entering job stress into the regression reveals a statistically significant relationship on job satisfaction ($B = -.267$, $SE = .090$, $p = .003$). The interaction between commuting time and role-clarifying prospection subsequently drops to marginal significance ($B = .006$, $SE = .003$, $p = .057$), but the significance levels of the simple slopes remain the same.

TABLE 5**Study 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Study Variables (Initial Survey)**

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Commuting Time (minutes)	51.05	30.46								
2. Trait Self-Control	3.72	0.71	-.01							
3. Age	42.21	10.01	-.11*	.22**						
4. Women	0.48	0.50	.03	-.08	.05					
5. Positive Affect	3.27	0.92	.03	.17**	-.01	.00				
6. Negative Affect	1.46	0.66	.01	-.44**	.20**	-.11*	.06			
7. Work-Family Conflict	2.86	1.45	.04	-.30**	.11*	.01	.01	.41**		
8. Job Satisfaction	4.91	1.26	-.10*	.18**	-.05	-.05	.27**	-.17**	-.18**	
9. Turnover Intention	2.69	1.18	.08	-.14**	.13**	.06	-.17**	.28**	.31**	-.71**

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

TABLE 6**Study 3: Means and Standard Deviation for Role-Clarifying Prospection and Role-Unrelated****Thoughts (Weeks 3 and 4) by Condition**

Condition	Role-Clarifying Prospection		Role-Unrelated Thoughts	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Role-Clarifying Prospection	2.81	.98	2.83	.99
Role-Unrelated Thoughts	2.44	.94	2.93	.94
Mixed	2.68	.92	2.84	.88
Control	2.64	.90	2.79	.99