

Successfully re-entering the workforce after maternity leave



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Background: Legal Regulations

Maternity leave

= the time a mother takes off from work after childbirth (ranging from a few weeks to several years)

Parental leave laws

Germany & Austria: up to three years
(mothers and fathers)

Switzerland: up to 16 weeks
(mothers only)



Background: Official Statistics

Official statistics on women's work-force participation in Switzerland (2000):

Mothers of...	Preschoolers ¹	→ Not working:	35 %
		→ Working:	65 % (83% part-time)
	School-aged children	→ Not working:	21 %
		→ Working:	79 % (80% part-time)

¹return within 3 months: primiparous mothers → 54%; with second child → 37%

Background: Maternity Leave as a Research Topic

Maternity Leave Effects:

Economic Research:

Maternity leaves negatively affect subsequent income development (e.g., Gangl & Ziefle, 2009).

Based on human capital theory (Becker, 1975) one can assume

- ➔ leaves cause employees' skills and social networks to deteriorate or to become outdated
- ➔ these losses impair career prospects

Transitions as Benchmarks in the Human Life Cycle

„Biographical transitions define points in the life course when roles are transformed, redefined, or left behind for new ones.“

(Perrig-Chiello & Perren, 2005)

Mothers' return to work:

Despite being a common transition, mothers' return to work life has been largely overlooked in developmental and I/O-psychology so far.

Re-entry Success Criteria

Selected Re-entry Success Criteria

- Satisfaction with re-entry
- Social integration at the workplace
- Understanding of organizational structures and procedures
- Subjective location in re-entry process

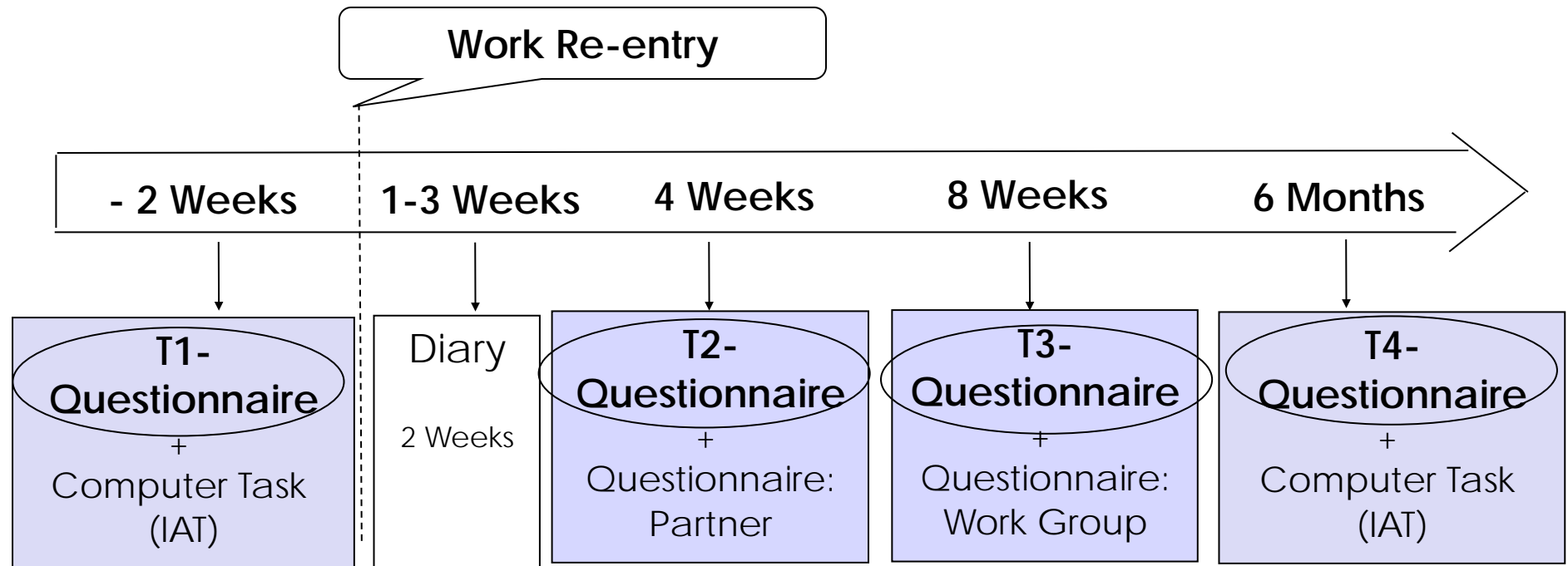
Other possible criteria (included in the re-entry project):
general well-being, job satisfaction, organizational commitment,
organizational citizenship behavior, performance ratings (colleagues)

in the long(er) run...: salary increase, promotions

Project Design

Three Research Foci: Gender-role Attitudes (implicit, explicit)
Goals and Action Regulation
Social Support

Method: longitudinal, multiple methods, multiple sources



Predicting Re-entry Success

Structural Characteristics

- Length of Leave
- Organizational Newcomer
- Workload (h/week)

Gender Role Attitude

- Mother-Child Ideology

Action Orientation

- Learning Goal Orientation

Person wants to develop his/her competence at work, e.g., by mastering challenging tasks.

Re-entry Success

Satisfaction with re-entry

Social integration at the workplace

Understanding of organizational structures

Location in re-entry process

Predicting Re-entry Success

Structural Characteristics

- Length of Leave
- Organizational Newcomer
- Workload (h/week)

Gender Role Attitude

- Mother-Child Ideology

Action Orientation

- Learning Goal Orientation

Social Support

- Partnership support
- Social support at work

Re-entry Success

Satisfaction with re-entry

Social integration at the workplace

Understanding of organizational structures

Location in re-entry process

Method: Sample

T1: 301 mothers two weeks before work re-entry

- Age 20 to 53 years ($M=34.4$, $SD=5.5$)
- Education 56% with university degree
- Country 75% Switzerland, 11% Austria, 14% Germany
- Length of Leave $M=24.7$ months, $SD=45.1$
- New Organization: 62%

Diaries filled out by 141 participants

T2: 267 mothers about four weeks after job re-entry
(weekly working hours: $M = 21.5$, $SD = 9.1$)
205 questionnaires from partners

T3: 238 mothers about eight weeks after job re-entry
144 from co-workers

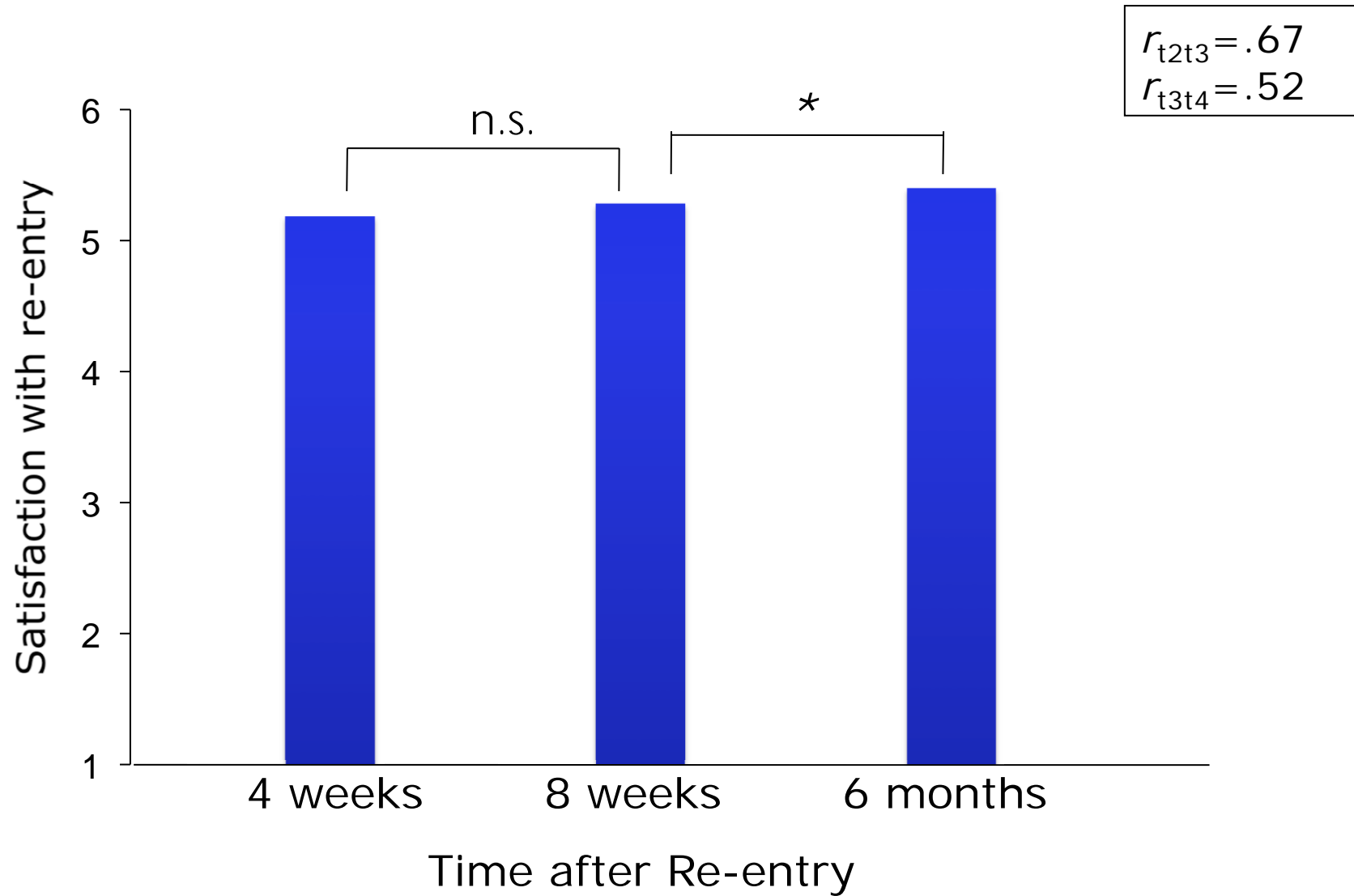
T4: 208 mothers, 6 months after re-entry

Satisfaction with re-entry¹

e.g. "I am satisfied with my re-entry so far."

¹ self-developed; 3 items

Satisfaction with Re-entry



At the beginning...

Four weeks after re-entry

Satisfaction with Re-entry (T2)

	Beta	Multiples <i>R</i>
Structural Characteristics of Re-Entry		.29**
- Length of Leave	-.05	
- Organizational Newcomer	-.09	
- Workload (h/week)	-.14*	
<hr/>		
Mother-Child-Ideology (T1)	-.10	
<hr/>		
Learning Goal Orientation (T2)	.14*	
<hr/>		
Social Support		
- Partner (T2)	.02	
- Co-Worker (T2)	.17*	

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, ¹yes = 1, no = 0

And later...?

Eight weeks and six months after re-entry

Satisfaction with Re-Entry

At T3 (8 weeks after re-entry)

-**learning goal orientation** (Beta = .26)

(even after controlling for T2-satisfaction)

At T4 (6 months after re-entry)

-**learning goal orientation** (Beta = .21)

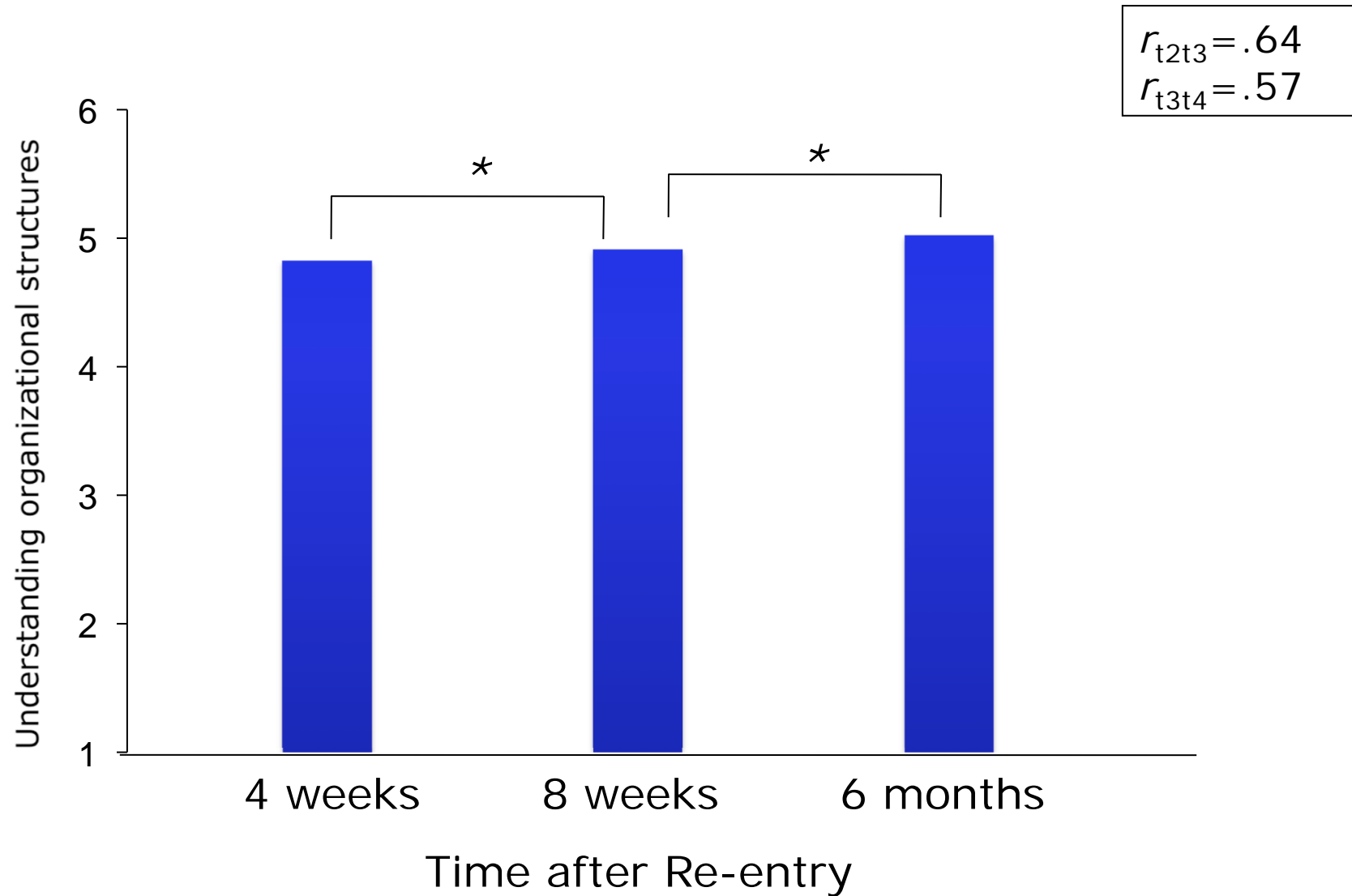
(but not after controlling for T3-satisfaction)

Understanding of organizational structures and own tasks¹

e.g. "I know very well how to get things done in this organization."

¹ following Taormina (2004); 4 items

Understanding of organizational structures and procedures



At the beginning...

Four weeks after re-entry

Understanding of Organizational Structures (T2)

	Beta	Multiples <i>R</i>
Structural Characteristics of Re-Entry		.35**
- Length of Leave	.07	
- Organizational Newcomer	-.34**	
- Workload (h/week)	-.06	
.....		
Mother-Child-Ideology (T1)	-.02	
.....		
Learning Goal Orientation (T2)	.14*	
.....		
Social Support		
- Partner (T2)	-.01	
- Co-Worker (T2)	.09	

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, ¹yes = 1, no = 0

And later...?

Eight weeks and six months after re-entry

Understanding of Organizational Structures and procedures

At T3 (8 weeks after re-entry)

-**organizational newcomer status** (Beta = $-.21$)

-**learning goal orientation** (Beta = $.22$)

(but not after controlling for T2-understanding)

At T4 (6 months after re-entry)

-**organizational newcomer status** (Beta = $-.19$)

(but not after controlling for T3-understanding)

-**learning goal orientation** (Beta = $.26$)

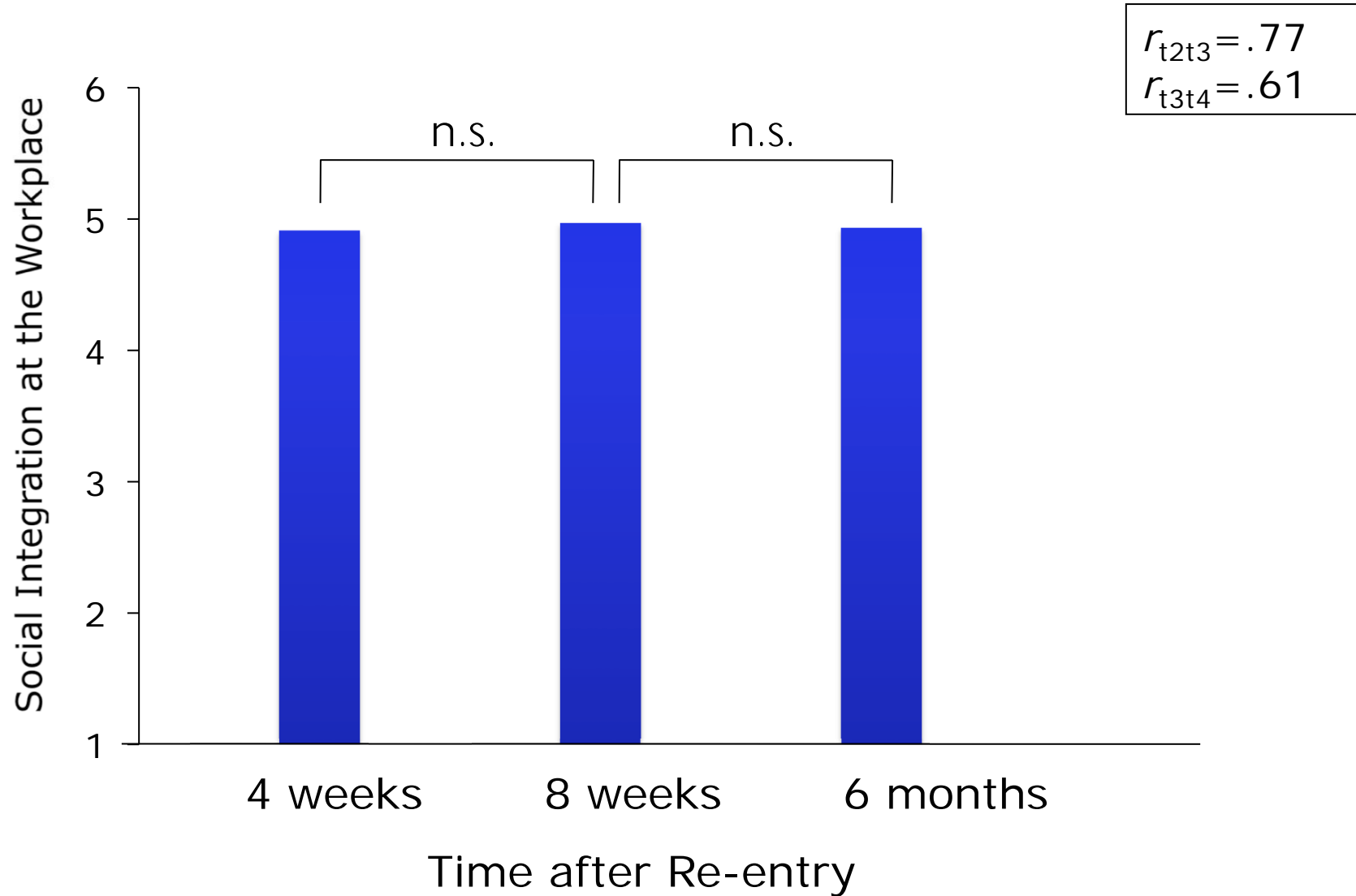
(even after controlling for T3-understanding)

Social Integration at the Workplace¹

e.g., „Most of my co-workers have accepted me as a member of this company.“

¹ following Taormina (2004)

Social Integration at the Workplace



At the beginning...

Four weeks after re-entry

	Social Integration at the Workplace (T2)	
	Beta	Multiples <i>R</i>
Structural Characteristics of Re-Entry		.28*
- Length of Leave	.15*	
- Organizational Newcomer	-.13	
- Workload (h/week)	-.10	
.....		
Mother-Child-Ideology (T1)	-.05	
.....		
Learning Goal Orientation (T2)	.09	
.....		
Social Support		
- Partner (T2)	.04	
- Co-Worker (T2)	.18**	

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, ¹yes = 1, no = 0

And later...?

Eight weeks and six months after re-entry

Social Integration at the Workplace

At T3 (8 weeks after re-entry)

-**length of leave** (Beta = .18)

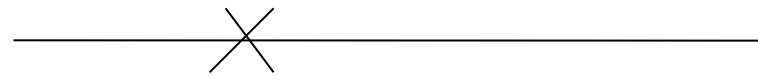
(but not after controlling for T2-integration)

At T4 (6 months after re-entry)

-no significant predictors (only autocorrelation)

Localization in the Re-entry Process

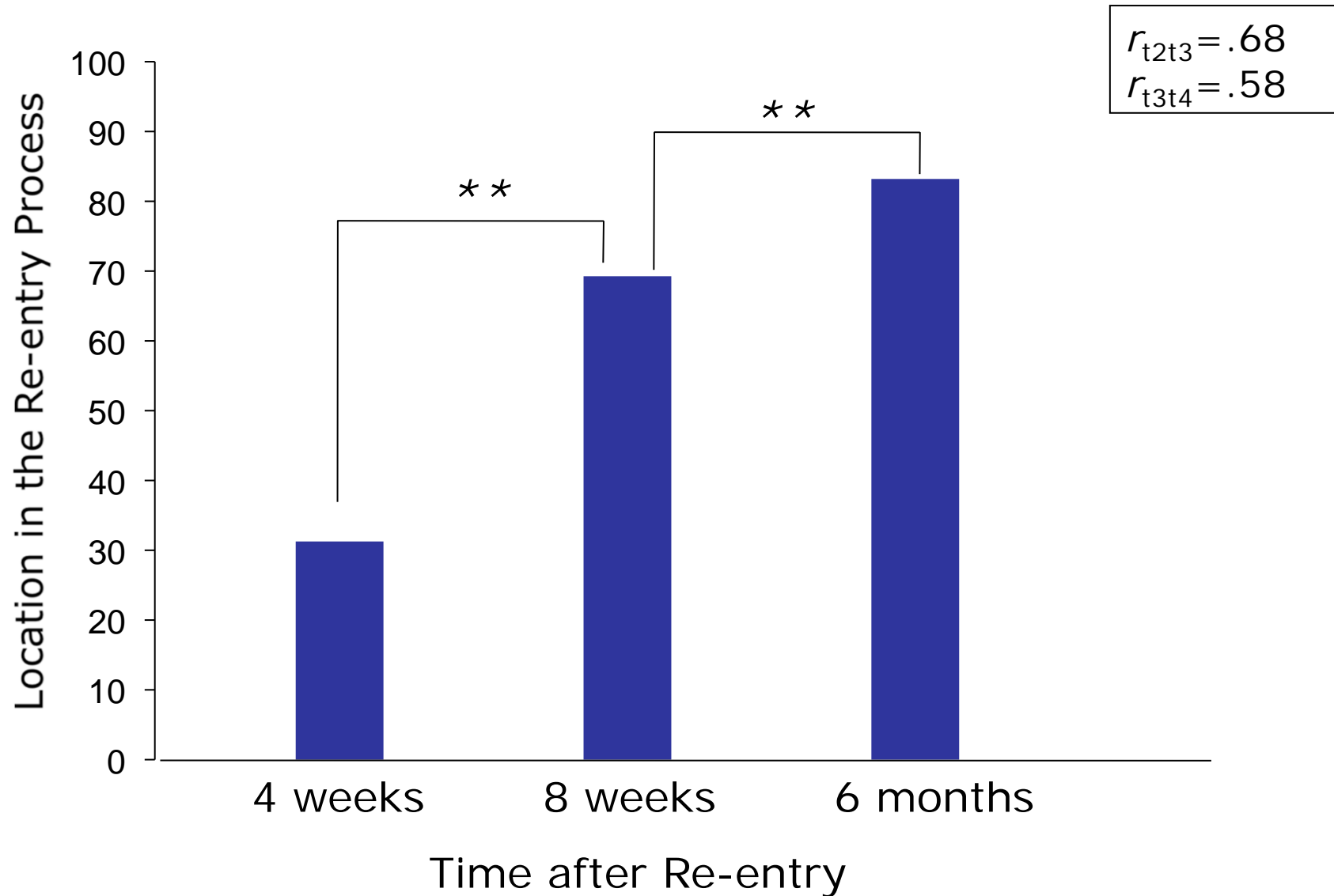
very much at the
beginning



re-entry process is
completed

visual analog scale

Localization in the Re-entry Process



At the beginning...

Four weeks after re-entry

	Location in Re-entry Process (T2)	
	Beta	Multiples <i>R</i>
Structural Characteristics of Re-Entry		.42**
- Length of Leave	-.26**	
- Organizational Newcomer	-.22**	
- Workload (h/week)	.05	
.....		
Mother-Child-Ideology (T1)	-.05	
.....		
Learning Goal Orientation (T2)	.04	
.....		
Social Support		
- Partner (T2)	-.10	
- Co-Worker (T2)	-.03	

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$, ¹yes = 1, no = 0

And later...?

Eight weeks and six months after re-entry

Location in Re-Entry Process

At T3 (8 weeks after re-entry)

- length of leave** (Beta = $-.26^{**}$)

 - (even after controlling for T2-location)

- organizational newcomer status** (Beta = $-.24^{**}$)

 - (but not after controlling for T2-location)

At T4 (6 months after re-entry)

- no significant predictors (only autocorrelation)

To sum up...

With respect to the selected outcome criteria...

- (1) Structural characteristics of the re-entry situation, particularly **length of leave** and **organizational newcomer status**, have to be taken into account
- (2) **Learning orientation** is a crucial psychological predictor
- (3) Social support is of minor importance (only co-worker support → social integration at the workplace).
- (4) Traditional gender role attitudes did not add to the success prediction

but: overall, longitudinal predictive power is weak due to relatively high criteria autocorrelations