

**Examining the Moderation Effects of Segmentation Preference and Household Size on
the Relationship Between Role Blurring and Work Home Conflict**

Louis Eilers (s4561449)

Faculty of Social Sciences, Radboud University Nijmegen

SOW-PSMWOH70: Master's thesis and Internship

University supervisor: Prof. W. Pieters

Internship supervisor: Nicole Mai

September 10th, 2021

Word count: 4866

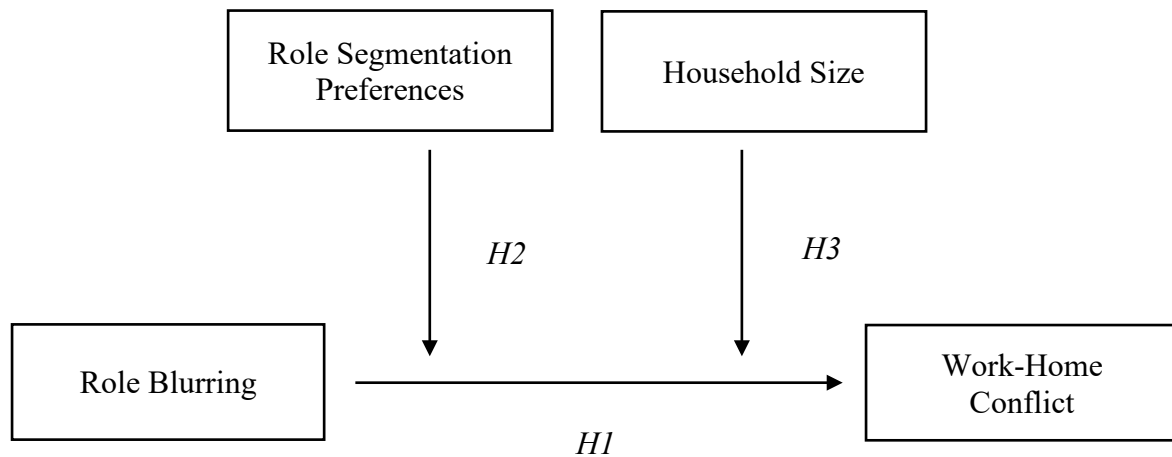
Management Summary

Background and objectives

The global Covid-19 pandemic led to a severe disruption of the work environment. Due to Covid-19 regulations, employees were suddenly forced to work from home. This meant that employees had to adjust to a new work environment and had to learn how to care for children and family during work hours. One reason to investigate working from home is that the circumstances of the home office lead to an increase in role blurring. Role blurring is the experience of struggling to distinguish the family and the work role in circumstances where they are highly intertwined. Experiencing role blurring can lead to increased work-home conflict. Work-home conflict is a conflict that arises from the conflicting demands from work and home. Work-Home conflict is associated with several negative outcomes such as sleep problems or burnout. Moreover, research has also shown that work home conflict can increase with the number of people in one's household. Especially when working from Household members can be source of distraction and represent additional care work. Furthermore, this study wanted to investigate how role segmentation preferences shaped the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict. Role segmentation preferences are individual preference that lean either towards separation of work and home or towards an integration of work and home. Therefore, this study tested how household size and role segmentation preference influenced the relationship between role blurring and work-home conflict. These relationships were tested in a specific research model (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Visual representation of the current research model



Methods

To answer the research, participants who worked from home filled in an online questionnaire comprised of 18 questions. The predictor variable role blurring, the moderator variable role segmentation preference and the dependent variable work-home conflict were measured each with one subscale. The moderator variable household size was measured with a single question. The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to complete. A total of 56 participants completed the questionnaire. The responses were then analyzed with a moderated regression analysis to test the relationships within in the research model.

Results

In line with our hypotheses, a significant positive relationship between role blurring and work home conflict was found. However, opposed to our assumptions the moderating effect of role segmentation preference on the relationship between role blurring and work-home conflict was found to be not significant. Contrary to our expectations, the moderating effect of household size was also found to be not significant.

Conclusion and advice

Based on the results it can be concluded that role blurring leads to an increase in work-home conflict. To decrease work-home conflict and prevent its negative consequences, role blurring should be reduced. A reduction of role blurring can be achieved by offering a boundary management intervention. It is recommended to carry out this intervention by offering 3 to 4 training sessions where employees can reflect to which degree they want to separate work and home. Subsequently, employees are encouraged to develop their own strategies to separate work and home. These strategies are based on the previous reflection as well as additional information about possible strategies provided during the sessions. Furthermore, it is recommended that organizations should communicate their expectations to alleviate pressure from unclear expectations.

Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted massive change of the work environments. Due to mandatory regulations, employees were forced to work from home. Therefore, the current study examined the relationship between role blurring and work-home conflict. Moreover, it was investigated whether this relationship was moderated by role segmentation preferences and household size. Based on the existing literature it was hypothesized that role blurring predicted an increase in work-home conflict. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that the relation between role blurring and work-home conflict was stronger for people who preferred segmentation. Lastly, it was hypothesized that the relationship between role blurring and work-home conflict was stronger for people with a bigger household. This was tested with an online questionnaire filled out by employees who worked from home (N = 56). A moderated regression analysis revealed that the relation between role blurring and work-home conflict was significant. The moderation effect of role segmentation preference was not significant. The moderation effect of household size was also found to be not significant. This lead to the conclusion that role blurring predicts work-home conflict. Additionally, it was concluded that role segmentation preferences and household size did not moderate the relationship between role blurring and work-home conflict. The results can be utilized to formulate practical recommendation to reduce work-home conflict.

Keywords: Role Blurring, Work-Home Conflict,

Role Segmentation Preferences, Household Size

Introduction

In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, workers experienced an unprecedented and sudden change of their working conditions. Due to pandemic restrictions, workers were forced to leave their offices and work from home. Turning their home into both an office and home. Additionally, schools and daycares closed, which meant that children were forced to stay at home as well. This unique situation presented workers with new challenges. The work and the home role were now confined in the same space and having children at home, while working, represent additional care responsibilities. In this context, workers face the challenge of balancing the tension between their work and home life in order to avoid their work and home role interfering with each other. However, when interference between work and home occurs and people experience difficulties to fulfill their duties in one of the two roles it can lead to conflict between work and home life.

In social psychology this conflict is called work-home conflict and it is a broadly studied topic in social Psychology. Work-home conflict is defined as “a form of interrole conflict in which the role pressures from work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respects” (Greenhaus and Beutell, 1985, p. 77). When duties or tasks in one domain cannot be fulfilled or not fully fulfilled, because of responsibilities in another domain, work-home conflict arises. Research indicates that experiencing work home conflict is associated with a multitude of negative outcomes such as depression, sleep problems (Zhang & Bowen, 2021) or stress (Rabenu et al., 2017).

The work home resources model proposes that resources such as time and energy are needed to fulfill the demands of the work and the home domain (Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Fulfilling the demands of either domain leads to a depletion of these resources (Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). Moreover, time and energy are finite resources (Ratanen et al., 2013), which means that there is a limited amount of resources to fulfill demands in both domains. Edwards & Rothbart (2000) proposed that fulfilling demands in one role leaves

insufficient resources to also fulfill demands in another role. When demands in one role cannot be fulfilled, because resources have been used to fulfill the demands of another role, the feeling of conflict between these two roles arises (Kulik, 2019).

One factor that is related to work home conflict is role blurring. According to Desrochers and Sargent (2004) role blurring describes the experience of difficulty distinguishing one's work role and one's family role in a setting where these roles are highly integrated. Role blurring conceptually differentiates itself from role conflict, because it focuses on overlapping roles and not on incompatible roles. Glavin and Schiemann (2011) indicated that role blurring can be more directly assessed by examining behavioral indicators such as multitasking on family and work tasks while at home and psychological indicators such as thinking about work while being at home or being contacted about work while at home.

Furthermore, Batt and Valcour (2003) argue that role blurring may result in more work home conflict. They propose the "greedy-role-perspective" which suggests that role blurring increases the likelihood that work encroaches on non-work roles by diverting attention and energy away from them and towards work. This perspective is supported by the study of Zhang and Bowen (2021). They investigated the relation between role blurring and work home conflict in construction workers. Their results suggest that role blurring was positively associated with work home conflict. Moreover, the study of Glavin and Schiemann (2011) indicates that role blurring was associated with higher levels of work home conflict. These findings suggest that experiencing role blurring is associated with an increase in work-home conflict.

Although studies have indicated that role blurring is associated with an increase in work home conflict, these studies have only been conducted with participants who worked on-site. Due to Covid-19 restriction many workers were forced to leave their worksite and work from home. Moreover, the behavioral and psychological indicators of role blurring, such

as engaging in multitasking of work and home tasks at home or being contacted about work at home (Glavin and Schiemann, 2011) indicate that working from home may facilitate role blurring. Workers are enabled to engage in work home multitasking, because they can switch more easily between work and home role in the home office, as both are in the same physical space (Delanojie et al., 2019). Additionally, workers are more likely to get contacted about work at home through an increase in email and smartphone communication after work (Derks et al., 2016). This suggests that working from home facilitates role blurring as physical space no longer separates the work and home role from each other.

A factor that may moderate the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict, is household size. Research suggests that working from home was associated with an increase in demands in the home domain, as parents had to take on additional care responsibilities (Kreyenfeld & Zinn, 2021). Furthermore, the Study of Lundberg et al. (1994) suggests that the amount of care responsibilities increase with the number of children in a household. The study of Schiemann and Badawy (2019) investigated the relationship between family contact and work home conflict. Their results indicate that family contact was positively associated with work home conflict. Moreover, their findings indicated that this relationship was stronger when people provided care for their household members. These findings indicate that work home conflict increases when providing care for a bigger household, as the amount of care responsibilities increases with household size.

The study of Glavin and Schiemann (2011) examined whether household size moderates the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict. Their findings provide support for the notion that household size is moderator for this relationship as their findings suggest that the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict is stronger for people with multiple children. Current studies have examined the relation between household size and work home conflict in the home office (Allen et al., 2021). However,

studies have yet to examine the moderating effect household size on the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict in the home office.

Another factor that may moderate the relation between role blurring and work home conflict is role segmentation preference. Role segmentation preferences describe the individual preference for boundaries between work and home life. Individuals vary in their preference with regards to segmentation or integration. Segmentors try to keep the home and work role separated from each other, while integrators prefer the blurring of work and home life (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Moreover, research indicates that a mismatch between role segmentation preferences and the ability to satisfy that preference at the physical workplace, is positively associated with work home conflict (Chen et al., 2009). Individuals whose role segmentation preference aligns with their work environment may be able to cope more effectively with stress, which allows them to deal more effectively with interrole conflict (Kreiner et al., 2006; Koeske et al., 1993). This indicates that individuals with a mismatch of their segmentation preference and their workplace experience more work home conflict.

However, studies have not yet examined the moderation effect of role segmentation preferences on the relationship between role blurring and work-home conflict in the home office. Previous studies have examined the moderation effect of role segmentation preferences on the relation between work related ICT use outside of work hours and work home conflict (Gadeyne et al., 2018). Their findings indicated that the relation between ICT use outside of work and work home conflict was stronger for people with a preference for segmentation. Since ICT use outside of work is associated with the same behavioral indicators as role blurring (Derks et al., 2014), it is assumed that role segmentation preferences moderate the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict in a similar way. This suggests that the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict in the home office will be stronger for people with a high segmentation preference. Therefore, this study aims to fill a

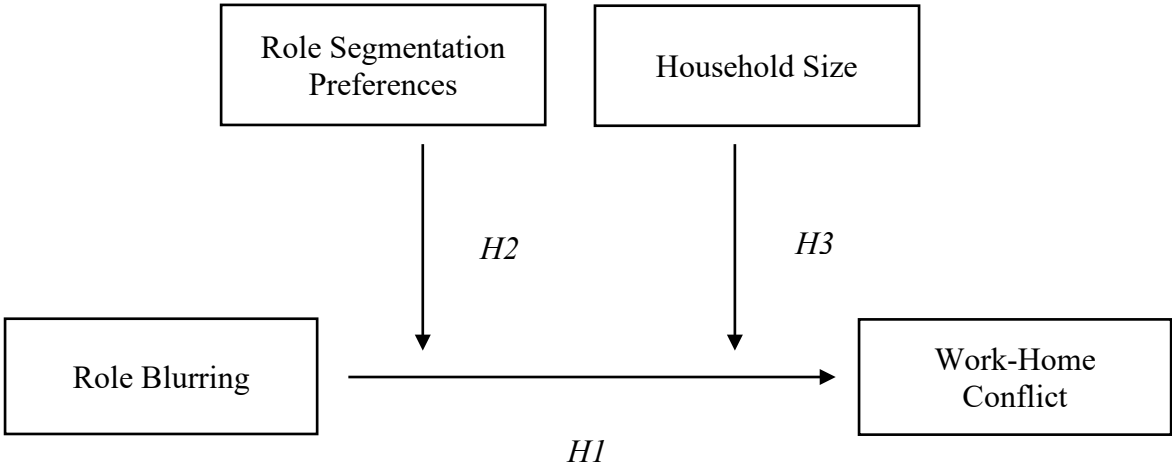
gap in the existing literature by gaining insight in how the conditions in the home office affect work home conflict.

Specifically, the current study tries to answer the question: Do role segmentation preferences and household size moderate the relationship between role blurring and work-home conflict?. Firstly, it is hypothesized that people who experience strong role blurring experience more work-home conflict (Glavin & Schiemann, 2011) (H1). Secondly, it is hypothesized that the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict is stronger for people with high segmentational preferences (Derks et al., 2016) (H2). Lastly, it is hypothesized that the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict is stronger for people with a bigger household size (Glavin & Schiemann, 2011; Badawy & Schiemann, 2019) (H3).

This study aims to fill a gap in the existing literature by examining the moderating effect of role segmentation preferences on the relation between role blurring and work home conflict. Secondly, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature on work home conflict in the home office to broaden the knowledge of the working mechanisms of the home office.

Figure 1

Visual representation of the current research model



Methods

Participants

A total of 68 people participated in this study. Participants were recruited via the internal mailing system of RRA as well as the personal network of the researcher. After excluding participants who did not complete the survey, the sample was comprised of 56 participants (29 female, 25 male and 2 non-binary). This indicates a dropout rate of 9,6 % which is considered to be average. The only requirement for participating in the study was that participants were performing some form of paid work at home. All participants took part in the study on voluntary basis. No compensation or incentive was offered to participants of the study. The data of the participants was processed anonymously.

Procedure

The recruiting email contained a short description of the research and a link to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was hosted on the survey platform LimeSurvey.com. The participants were first shown the information letter, which outlined the research in more detail and the informed consent form. After agreeing to participate in the study, participants answered to demographic questions about gender and household size. Afterwards, participants filled in the questionnaire assessing role blurring, work home conflict and role segmentation preference. When participants completed the questionnaire, a message would appear on the screen indicating that they had completed the survey and thanking them for their participation. The questionnaire took approximately 10 minutes to complete.

Materials

The questionnaire was comprised of a total of 18 items. Three subscales were used to assess role blurring, work home conflict and role segmentation preference (See Appendix C, D, E). Household size was measured with a single item.

Role blurring

Based on the study of Glavin and Schiemann (2011) role blurring was assessed with 3 items in total. The first item: a) “How often do coworkers, supervisors, managers, customers, or clients contact you about work-related matters outside normal work hours?” Response choices for the first items were presented on 5-point Likert scale as follows: (1) “*One or more times a day*”, (2) “*Several times a week*” (3) “*Once a week*”, (4) “*Less than once a month*”, (5) “*Never*”. The second and third item: b) “How often do you try to work on job tasks and home tasks at the same time while you are at home?”. c) “How often do you think about things going on at work when you are not working?”. Response choices for the second and third item were presented on a 4-point Likert scale as follows: (1) “*Frequently*”, (2) “*Sometimes*”, (3) “*Rarely*”, (4) “*Never*”. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .65 indicates an acceptable internal consistency (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Furthermore, factor analysis conducted by Glavin and Schiemann (2011) revealed that the items loaded strongly on one underlying factor.

Work home conflict

Work home conflict was measured with the work-family conflict scale developed by Netemayer, Boles and McMurrian (1996). The Work Family Conflict scale consists of 10 items. The response choices are presented on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “Strongly Agree” to 7 = “Strongly Disagree”. Examples of the items are: “The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.”. And “The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities.”. The scale has Cronbach’s alpha

coefficient of .88, which indicates a good reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). This measure of work home conflict has been used in prior research (Kreiner, 2006).

Role Segmentation Preference

Role segmentation preference was measured with the workplace segmentation preference scale developed by Kreiner (2006). The scale consists of 4 items. Participants indicated their preference for the segmentation between work and home on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = “Strongly agree” to 7 = “Strongly disagree”. Examples of the statements are: “I don’t like to have to think about work while I’m at home.” And “I don’t like work issues creeping into my home life.”. The workplace segmentation preference scale has a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .91 which indicates a high reliability (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994).

Household Size

Household size was measured with a single item. Participants were asked to indicate the number of people living in their household (“Please indicate the number of people (Partners, children, family members, roommates) including yourself, that are currently living in your household.”).

Data Analysis

The raw data was automatically gathered by the online platform Limesurvey.com. The raw data was then imported into SPSS 24. In order to prepare the data for the analysis the variables were first recoded from string variables into numeric variables. Afterwards, participants who did not complete the survey were filtered out from the data set. Then, mean scores for the predictor variable role blurring (continuous), the moderator variables role segmentation preference (continuous) and household size (continuous) and the dependent variable work home conflict (continuous) were calculated.

In order to conduct the moderated regression analysis, the underlying assumptions which are normality, linearity, homoscedasticity and multicollinearity were tested. The current study utilized bootstrapping, a resampling strategy which resamples the samples multiple times. This means that our sample $N = 56$ was resampled 5000 times. According to the central limits theorem, a sample is normally distributed if the sample size is sufficiently large (Kwak & Kim, 2017). Because bootstrapping implies a large sample size, the assumption of normality is satisfied. Furthermore, linearity was tested by visually examining the P-P plot of the regression standardized residual. It was indicated that the relationship of the predictor variable and the moderation variables were approximately linear. Therefore, the assumption of linearity was not violated. Homoscedasticity was tested by examining the scatterplots of standardized errors and standardized predicted values. The examination indicated that the assumption of homoscedasticity was not violated. Lastly, multicollinearity was tested by examining VIF and tolerance values. Initial examining revealed that the assumption of multicollinearity was violated ($VIF > 5$, tolerance $> .01$, Mansfield & Helms, 1982). Therefore, it was chosen to for means centering of the predictor variables. A subsequent test for multicollinearity revealed that the assumption was not violated after the means were centered ($VIF < 5$, tolerance $> .01$). Additionally, the data was checked for outliers (Three times the standard variations) and no outliers were found. Furthermore, Cooks distance of all values was smaller than 1.0. This indicated that no outliers needed to be excluded.

Before the main analysis, preliminary analysis were carried out to calculate the descriptive statistics (see Table 1) and the bivariate correlations (see Table 2). To examine the research question a moderated multiple regression analysis was conducted on SPSS 24. The analysis was carried out, using the Process Macro Model 2 (Version 3.5) by Hayes (2012). The analysis was carried out with role blurring as the predictor variable, role segmentation preference and household size as the moderator variables and work home conflict as the

dependent variable. Moreover, the analysis utilized bootstrapping (B = 5000) and was carried out with means centered.

Results

Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations of the Research Variables

| | Range | SD | M |
|------------------------------|-------|------|------|
| Role Blurring | 1-5 | .74 | 2.35 |
| Role Segmentation Preference | 1-7 | 1.45 | 3.23 |
| Household Size | | 1.07 | 2.43 |
| Work-Home Conflict | 1-7 | 1.11 | 4.00 |

Note. $N = 56$

Table 2

Pearson Correlation Matrix of the Research Variables

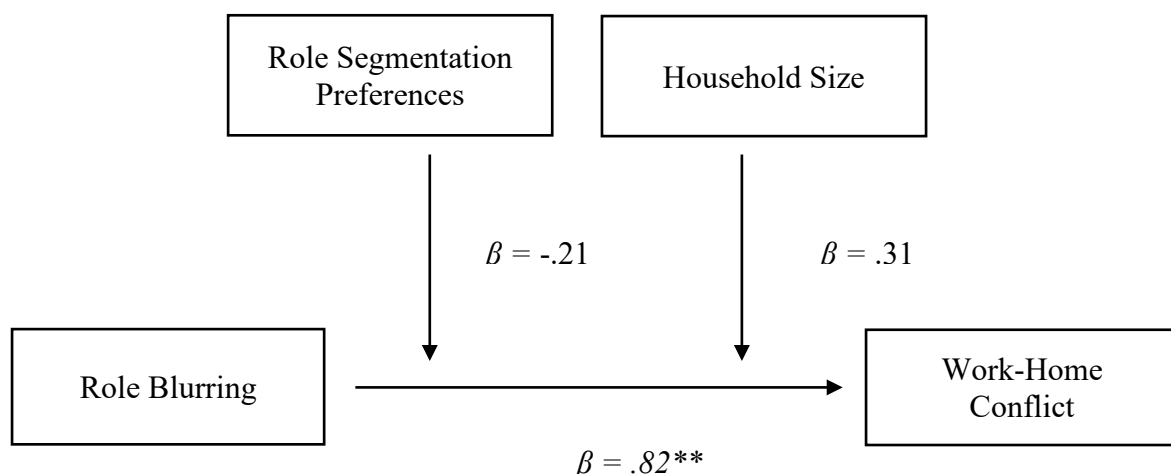
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---------------------------------|--------|------|-------|---|
| 1. Role Blurring | - | | | |
| 2. Role Segmentation Preference | -.341* | - | | |
| 3. Household Size | -.037 | .177 | - | |
| 4. Work-Home Conflict | .460** | .031 | -.053 | - |

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .001$

To test the three hypotheses, a moderated multiple regression analysis with the Process Model 2 Macro (Hayes, 2013) was conducted. The explained variance ($R^2 = .56$) was significantly greater than zero ($F(5, 50) = 4.36, p < .01$). The regression weight of the total effect of role blurring on work-home conflict was significant, ($\beta = .82, t(50) = 4.19, p < .001$). This means that participants who scored high on role blurring also scored high on work-home conflict. Secondly, the regression weight of the total effect of role segmentation preference on work-home conflict was not significant ($\beta = .11, t(50) = 1.04, p = .30$). Thirdly, the regression weight of the total effect of household size on work-home conflict was not significant ($\beta = -.11, t(50) = -.87, p = .38$). Moreover, the interaction effect of role blurring and role segmentation preference was not significant ($\beta = -.21, t(50) = -1.49, p = .14$). This indicates that the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict is not moderated by role segmentation preference. Lastly, the interaction effect of role blurring and household size was not significant ($\beta = .31, t(50) = 1.72, p = .09$). This indicates that the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict is not moderated by household size.

Figure 2

Visual representation of the current research model and the results



Note. N = 56

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .001$

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict. Furthermore, this study examined whether the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict is moderated by role segmentation preference and household size. Three hypotheses were proposed. Firstly, it was hypothesized that strong role blurring is associated with an increase in work home conflict. Secondly, it was hypothesized that the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict was stronger for people with a high segmentation preference. Lastly, it was hypothesized that the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict was stronger for people with a larger household size. The relationship between role blurring and work home conflict was significant. Therefore, role blurring did predict work home conflict, which is in line with the hypothesis. The results indicated that the moderation effect of role segmentation preference was not significant. The results indicated that the moderation effect for household size was not significant. Thus, the hypotheses on the moderation effect of role segmentation preference and household size were not retained. Role segmentation preference and household size did not moderate the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict.

This study aimed to fill a gap in the existing literature by examining the moderation effect of role segmentation preference on the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict. In the following the results will be discussed in the context of the existing literature. The hypothesis was based on the study of Gadeyne et al. (2018) which indicated that the relationship between ICT use outside of work and work home conflict is moderated

by role segmentation preference. The findings of this study are not in line with the findings of Gadeyne et al. (2018). However, their study examined the moderation effect of role segmentation preference on the relation between ICT use outside of work and work home conflict. Moreover, the study was conducted with participants that did not work from home. Therefore, it may not be surprising that the results of the current study are not in line with the findings of Gadeyne et al. (2018). Research suggests that preference for segmentation, might be linked to a more efficient management of work and non-work roles in the home office (Allen et al, 2021). Therefore, the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict might not be stronger for people with a preference for segmentation, because they are able to balance the demands of work and home more efficiently. This might explain why the findings of this study are not in line with the results of Gadeyne et al. (2018).

Moreover, the results indicated that role blurring predicted work home conflict, which was in line with the hypothesis that stronger role blurring is related to more work home conflict. The hypothesis was based on the study of Glavin and Schiemann (2011), that suggested that role blurring is associated with higher levels of work home conflict. Thus, the findings of the current study support the results of Glavin and Schiemann (2011). However, the results of this study did not indicate whether working from home is associated with an increase in role blurring, as this study did not compare role blurring in the home office and while working on-site. Lastly, the findings of this study did match the results of Delanoetje et al. (2019). Their results indicated that workers would engage more frequently in role transition, when working from home. Role transitions are defined as behavioral or psychological switches between the work and the home role, which employees make in order to deal with their work and home responsibilities. Moreover, their findings indicated that role transitions were associated with an increase in work home conflict. This might explain why role blurring predicted work home conflict in our results.

The results of the present study did not indicate that household size moderates the relationship between role blurring. Therefore, our hypothesis that the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict is stronger for people with a bigger household size was rejected. This contradicts the findings Glavin and Schiemann (2011), which indicated that the relationship between role blurring is stronger for people with multiple children in their household. Furthermore, this is not in line with the findings of Badawy and Schiemann (2019), which indicated that family contact was positively associated with work home conflict. The results of the current study did indicate that the main effect of household size on work-home conflict was not significant.

One possible explanation why no moderation effect of household size was found, is that household size does not account for marital status. Research has indicated that single parents experience more work home conflict than married couples. Single parents have to fulfill demands from the work and home domain alone while married parents can share the responsibilities from the home domain and experience more social support. This suggests that the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict might be stronger for a single parent and child compared to married parents and a child, despite having a smaller household size. Thus, differences in marital status could explain why no moderation effect of household size was found.

This research has several methodological limitations that should be discussed in the context of the findings. Firstly, the current study had a small sample size of $N = 56$, which increases the occurrence of type II error (Swiatkowski & Dompnier, 2017). Therefore, the non-significant interaction effects of the moderation may be the result of a type II error. Secondly, all data gathered for this research is self-reported data from an anonymous online questionnaire. While using self-reported data is in line with previous research on the topic, research also suggests that people are more likely to give more positive answers in online questionnaire (Chin et al., 2012). Another limitation is the selection of participants.

Participants were selected from the personal network of the researcher and not random. The data indicates that the average household size of our participants was 2.43. The average household size of the German population was 1.99 in 2019. There was no data available on the average household size of the working population in Germany, but this indicates that generalizability is limited, because it is not clear whether our sample is representative of the working population in Germany. Moreover, the questionnaire did not assess the industry in which participants work. Therefore, generalizability across industries is limited, because it is unclear if participants work in various industries or only a few select ones. Furthermore, as noted by Allen et al (2021), individuals who are already experiencing high work home conflict might be less likely to participate in the study. Lastly, it is unclear if the results of this study can be generalized outside of the current pandemic situation. The participants are currently in unique situation with mandated work from home and closed schools and daycares. It is not clear if the results of this study were influenced by these contextual factors and how applicable they are to remote work in general.

Despite these limitations, these results suggest several theoretical implications. Firstly, the results of the current provided empirical evidence for the positive association between role blurring and work home conflict in the home office. While previous research has provided support for the positive association between role blurring and work home conflict (Glavin & Schiemann, 2011; Zhang & Bowen, 2021), research on work home conflict in the home office is still limited. Secondly, this study represents a first attempt to examine how role segmentation preference moderates the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict. Therefore, the findings of this research contribute to the existing literature on role segmentation preference in a novel way by suggesting that role segmentation preferences might not moderate the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict. Lastly, this study provided insight in the role of household size as contextual factor in the home

office. Research on household size and its implication for working from home is limited. Therefore, this research extends the literature on household size and working from home.

In terms of future research, it would be useful to extend the current findings by comparing the relationship of role blurring and work home conflict between people who work from home and people who work on site. Previous research has examined the relation between role blurring and work home conflict for participants who work on-site (Gavin & Schiemann 2011; Zhang & Bowen, 2021), but has not investigated whether this relation is different to people who work from home. This could provide additional insight in how role blurring affects work home conflicts in different work environments. Although, some of the findings of this study were in line with the existing literature, the current study had a small sample size of $N = 56$. Therefore, a follow up study that replicates the research design of the current study with a bigger sample size is needed to further examine the moderating effects of role segmentation preference and household size. Moreover, future research is needed to disentangle how more specific household characteristics such as marital status or the number children in the household moderate the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict. This could be achieved by measuring household composition differently. Future studies could measure marital status of parents or the number of children in the household in addition to household size. Thus, gaining more insight in how different characteristics of household size moderate the relationship between role blurring and work-home conflict.

The results of the current study can be utilized for informed practical recommendations with the aim of decreasing work home conflict. Our results suggest that this aim can be accomplished by reducing role blurring. Research indicates that being contacted about work after hours is an indicator of role blurring (Glavin & Schiemann, 2011). Therefore, reducing work communication after hours should decrease role blurring. Research shows that a boundary management intervention can facilitate employees to develop boundary management strategies. These boundary management strategies are effective at achieving

better segmentation between work and home at home (Rexroth et al., 2016). A boundary management intervention consists of 4 training sessions. In the first session, employees are encouraged to reflect on their desired segmentation of work and home. Subsequently, employees develop their own strategies to segment work and home more efficiently. Furthermore, organizations could display a short alert in their e-mail program when employees send e-mail after hours. The short alert should remind employees that they cannot expect an answer until the next morning. This alleviates the organizational pressure to be available after hours and communicates expectations about communication after work hours.

In conclusion, the current research expands on the existing literature of work home conflict by examining its relationship to role blurring in the home office. This study makes a novel contribution to the current body of research as previous research has not yet examined the moderation effect of role segmentation preference on the relationship between role blurring and work home conflict. Furthermore, this study provides practical suggestions to workers who work remotely and experience work home conflict. Due to the methodological limitations future research is needed to establish the generality of the current results.

References

- Allen, T. D., Merlo, K., Lawrence, R. C., Slutsky, J. & Gray, C. E. (2021). Boundary Management and Work-Nonwork Balance While Working from Home. *Applied Psychology, 70*(1), 60–84. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12300>
- Badawy, P. J. & Schieman, S. (2019). When Family Calls: How Gender, Money, and Care Shape the Relationship between Family Contact and Family-to-Work Conflict. *Journal of Family Issues, 41*(8), 1188–1213. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192513x19888769>
- Batt, R., & Valcour, P. (2003). Human Resources Practices as Predictors of Work-Family Outcomes and Employee Turnover. *Industrial Relations, 42*(2), 189-220. doi: 10.1111/1468-232x.00287
- Chen, Z., Powell, G. N. & Greenhaus, J. H. (2009). Work-to-family conflict, positive spillover, and boundary management: a person-environment fit approach. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 74*(1), 82–93. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2008.10.009>
- Chin, Thatcher & Wright. (2012). Assessing Common Method Bias: Problems with the ULMC Technique. *MIS Quarterly, 36*(3), 1003. <https://doi.org/10.2307/41703491>
- Delanoëije, J., Verbruggen, M., & Germeys, L. (2019). Boundary role transitions: A day-to-day approach to explain the effects of home-based telework on work-to-home conflict and home-to-work conflict. *Human Relations, 72*(12), 1843-1868. doi: 10.1177/0018726718823071
- Derks, D., Bakker, A. B., Peters, P. & van Wingerden, P. (2016). Work-related smartphone use, work–family conflict and family role performance: The role of segmentation preference. *Human Relations, 69*(5), 1045–1068. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0018726715601890>

- Derks, D., van Mierlo, H. & Schmitz, E. B. (2014). A diary study on work-related smartphone use, psychological detachment and exhaustion: Examining the role of the perceived segmentation norm. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology, 19*(1), 74–84.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035076>
- Desrochers, S., & Sargent, L. (2004). Boundary/Border Theory and Work-Family Integration1. *Organization Management Journal, 1*(1), 40-48. doi:
10.1057/omj.2004.11
- Edwards, J. R. & Rothbard, N. P. (2000). Mechanisms Linking Work and Family: Clarifying the Relationship Between Work and Family Constructs. *Academy of Management Review, 25*(1), 178–199. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2000.2791609>
- Gadeyne, N., Verbruggen, M., Delanoeije, J. & de Cooman, R. (2018). All wired, all tired? Work-related ICT-use outside work hours and work-to-home conflict: The role of integration preference, integration norms and work demands. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 107*, 86–99. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2018.03.008>
- Glavin, P., & Schieman, S. (2011). Work–Family Role Blurring and Work–Family Conflict. *Work And Occupations, 39*(1), 71-98. doi: 10.1177/0730888411406295
- Greenhaus, J., & Beutell, N. (1985). Sources of Conflict Between Work and Family Roles. *Academy Of Management Review, 10*(1), 76-88. doi: 10.5465/amr.1985.4277352
- Hayes, A. F. (2012). PROCESS: A versatile computational tool for observed variable mediation, moderation, and conditional process modeling [White paper]. Retrieved 10 September 2021 from <http://www.afhayes.com/public/process2012.pdf>
- Koeske, G. F., Kirk, S. A. & Koeske, R. D. (1993). Coping with job stress: Which strategies work best? *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 66*(4), 319–335.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1993.tb00542.x>

- Kreiner, G. E. (2006). Consequences of work-home segmentation or integration: a person-environment fit perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 27(4), 485–507.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/job.386>
- Kreyenfeld, M. & Zinn, S. (2021). Coronavirus and care: How the coronavirus crisis affected fathers' involvement in Germany. *Demographic Research*, 44, 99–124.
<https://doi.org/10.4054/demres.2021.44.4>
- Kulik, L. (2019). Work-home conflict, antecedents and outcomes: a life-stage perspective among working parents. *Career Development International*, 24(3), 257-274. doi: 10.1108/cdi-06-2018-0177
- Kwak, S. G. & Kim, J. H. (2017). Central limit theorem: the cornerstone of modern statistics. *Korean Journal of Anesthesiology*, 70(2), 144.
<https://doi.org/10.4097/kjae.2017.70.2.144>
- LUNDBERG, U., MÅRDBERG, B. & FRANKENHAEUSER, M. (1994). The total workload of male and female white collar workers as related to age, occupational level, and number of children. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 35(4), 315–327.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9450.1994.tb00956.x>
- Mansfield, E. R. & Helms, B. P. (1982). Detecting Multicollinearity. *The American Statistician*, 36(3), 158. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2683167>
- Netemeyer, R. G., Boles, J. S. & McMurrian, R. (1996). Development and validation of work-family conflict and family-work conflict scales. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 81(4), 400–410. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.81.4.400>
- Nippert-Eng, C. E. E. (1996). *Home and Work: Negotiating Boundaries through Everyday Life* (2nd ed.). University of Chicago Press.
- Rabenu, E., Tziner, A. & Sharoni, G. (2017). The relationship between work-family conflict, stress, and work attitudes. *International Journal of Manpower*, 38(8), 1143–1156.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/ijm-01-2014-0014>

Rantanen, J., Kinnunen, U., Mauno, S., & Tement, S. (2013). Patterns of conflict and enrichment in work-family balance: A three-dimensional typology. *Work & Stress*, 27(2), 141-163. doi: 10.1080/02678373.2013.791074

Rexroth, M., Feldmann, E., Peters, A. & Sonntag, K. (2016). Learning How to Manage the Boundaries Between Life Domains. *Zeitschrift für Arbeits- und Organisationspsychologie A&O*, 60(3), 117–129. <https://doi.org/10.1026/0932-4089/a000197>

ten Brummelhuis, L., & Bakker, A. (2012). A resource perspective on the work–home interface: The work–home resources model. *American Psychologist*, 67(7), 545-556. doi: 10.1037/a0027974

Świątkowski, W. & Dompnier, B. (2017). Replicability Crisis in Social Psychology: Looking at the Past to Find New Pathways for the Future. *International Review of Social Psychology*, 30(1), 111. <https://doi.org/10.5334/irsp.66>

Zhang, R. P. & Bowen, P. (2021). Work-family role blurring and conflict among South African construction professionals. *Construction Management and Economics*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01446193.2021.1916973>

Appendix

Appendix A: Information letter

INFORMATION LETTER

for participation in scientific research:

Relationship Between Role Blurring and Work Home Conflict and the Moderating Influence of Role Segmentation Preferences and Household Size

This study is conducted as part of the master thesis of the master's program: "Work, Health and Organisational Psychology" of the Radboud University. In this course, students conduct a study on a psychological topic under supervision of a teacher of the master's program.

For my master thesis, I want to examine if the blurring of private life and work life in the home office leads to more conflict between the work and private life. Furthermore, I will be examining if personal preference for separation of work and home life and household size affects this relation. The research consists of an online questionnaire, that contains questions and statements with regards to the aforementioned topics. You will be asked to fill the questionnaire as accurately as possible.

You will need approximately 5 minutes to complete the questionnaire. You will receive no compensation for participating in the study.

During the study you can indicate at any moment in time that you want to quit participating, without you having to explain why you want to quit. Quitting during the study has no consequences for the participants what so ever.

To conduct the research it is necessary that your personal data are collected, used and stored. The use and storage of your personal data is necessary, because we have a legal obligation to register your permission to participate in this study.

The information that will be collected, will be anonymously processed. This means that later on the results cannot be traced back to you. As a consequence it is not possible to inform you about your personal results after the study has been completed. However, we could inform you about the results of the study as a whole. If you wish to be informed about the results of this study, then please let us know.

Did this study unintentionally prompt unpleasant feelings, thoughts or insecurities for you? Then, please contact the researcher via l.eilers@student.ru.nl.

If, after the study, you have remarks or complaints about our study, you can contact the researcher via l.eilers@student.ru.nl. They will then invite you as soon as possible for a personal conversation.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. If you decide not to participate, there will be no consequences. If, during the course of the research, you wish to withdraw your

consent and terminate your participation, you have every right to do so at all times. Again, there will be no adverse consequences for you.

The consent form signed by you will be kept for 10 years upon completion of the research. Your research data will be stored *for 10 years* after the research has been completed.

If you indicate that you want to participate in this study, you will be asked to indicate your consent below. By signing this form, you indicate that you are sufficiently informed about the study and that you want to participate in the study and that you voluntarily do so.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about this study, please contact the researcher responsible.

Researcher: Louis Eilers

E-Mail: l.eilers@student.ru.nl

With kind regards,

Louis Eilers

l.eilers@student.ru.nl

Master Student

Work, Health and Organizational Psychology Program

Radboud University

Appendix B: Informed consent

CONSENT FORM

for participation in scientific research:

Relationship Between Role Blurring and Work Home Conflict and the Moderating Influence of Role Segmentation Preferences and Household Size

I herewith confirm that:

- I have been satisfactorily informed of the study in writing;
- I have read the written information
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the study;
- my questions have been answered satisfactorily;
- I have been given ample opportunity to think carefully about participating in the study;
- I participate in the study entirely on a voluntary basis.

I understand that:

- I have the right to withdraw my consent at any time without having to state reasons and without fear of adverse consequences by contacting Louis Eilers at l.eilers@student.ru.nl
- I have the right to have my research data deleted up until 1 Month after the research has been completed
- I have the right to withdraw my consent for the (further) processing of my personal data; my personal data are processed in accordance with the applicable European privacy regulations;
- my personal data are processed in accordance with the privacy statement of Radboud University (<https://www.ru.nl/english/vaste-onderdelen/privacy-statement-radboud-university/>);
- the tests and questionnaires used are not medical/clinical tests, but the researchers nonetheless have an obligation to inform me about scores that may be of personal clinical interest.

I agree that:

- my personal and research data within this research will be obtained for scientific purposes and will be available for verification, reuse and replication for 10 years;
- the signed consent form with my personal data is kept for 10 years;
- my personal data, which are obtained for administrative purposes only, will be kept for a maximum of 1 month after completion of the research.
- supervisory authorities may inspect my personal and research data for the purpose of auditing the research.

I agree to participate in the study.

| | |
|-----|----|
| YES | NO |
|-----|----|

Appendix C: Role blurring scale (Glavin & Schiemann, 2011)

In the following you will be presented with ten questions about your work and family situation. You are only able to select one answer option per question. Please try to answer the questions as accurately as possible.

Question 1

How often do coworkers, supervisors, managers, customers, or clients contact you about work-related matters outside normal work hours?

- One or more times a day
- Several times a day
- Once a week
- Less than once a week
- Never

Question 2

How often do you try to work on job tasks and home tasks at the same time while you are at home?

- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Question 3

How often do you think about things going on at work when you are not working?

- Frequently
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

Appendix D: Work-Family Conflict (Netemayer, Boles & Mcmurrian, 1996)

Question 4

The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Question 5

The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Question 6

Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Question 7

My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral

Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

Question 8

Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.

Strongly agree
Agree
Somewhat agree
Neutral
Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

Question 9

The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities.

Strongly agree
Agree
Somewhat agree
Neutral
Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

Question 10

I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home.

Strongly agree
Agree
Somewhat agree
Neutral
Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

Question 11

Things I want to do at work do not get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner.

Strongly agree
Agree
Somewhat agree
Neutral
Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

Question 12

My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime.

Strongly agree
Agree
Somewhat agree
Neutral
Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

Question 13

Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties.

Strongly agree
Agree
Somewhat agree
Neutral
Somewhat disagree
Disagree
Strongly disagree

Appendix E: Role segmentation preference scale (Kreiner et al., 2006)

In the following you will be presented with 4 Statements with regards to your work and home situation. You are only able to select one answer option per question. Please try to answer the questions as accurately as possible.

1.

I don't like to have to think about work while I'm at home.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

2.

I prefer to keep work life at work.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

3.

I don't like work issues creeping into my home life.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

4.

I like to be able to leave work behind when I go home.

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree