2019

How Fitting in to The Social Context influences Work-Life Balance Effectiveness and Work Performance

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ABSTRACT

HOW FITTING IN TO THE SOCIAL CONTEXT INFLUENCES WORK-LIFE BALANCE EFFECTIVENESS AND WORK PERFORMANCE

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This study examines the notion that what may matter most in achieving an authentic feeling of work-life balance is fit within the immediate social context among work teams. Both work-life balance effectiveness and work performance depend on managing and meeting others’ expectations. Thus, the extent to which an individual shares work-life balance values and preferences with others on one’s team (i.e., a form of person-team fit) influences the amount of resources expended or gained from navigating and negotiating others’ expectations. In a field study, 106 full-time employees at a commercial real estate company were surveyed measuring the extent to which their personal work life values and preferences fit with critical others on their teams, computed using Profile Symmetry Index (PSI) scores. I did not find support that shared boundary preferences predict work performance due to changes in work-life balance effectiveness. Further, I did not find support that the model is weakened by two contextual factors: team family-supportive supervision and team cohesion. Evidence did not support the importance of the immediate social context in which employees operate as it relates to achieving work-life balance and ultimately work performance. Two main limitations to the current study include poor response rate and severe range restriction resulting in underpowered statistical tests.
However, very preliminary results suggest that team task cohesion may be related to work life balance effectiveness. Theories and results are interpreted in the context of person-team fit literature as it applies to work-life balance.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am forever grateful to very important people for strongly influencing my graduate school career from start to finish. I dedicate this project to my brother Carter Conlin III for pushing me to work harder, no excuses, to get what I want. I also dedicate this project to my brother Michael Conlin for pushing me to think deeper, without assumptions, to get closer to the truth.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Work-life balance policies (e.g., flexible work arrangements, vacation time) are meant to allow employees to accommodate personally meaningful goals both within and outside of work (Kossek, Colquitt, & Noe, 2001). However, evidence suggests that when employees take advantage of policies that are offered, they experience interpersonal backlash from critical others who may not share the same personally meaningful goals (Houston & Waumsley, 2003), making it more difficult to work together. While an accepting work-life balance organizational culture buffers some interpersonal risk in pursuing one’s work-life goals (Thompson, Beauvais, & Lyness, 1999), what may matter most in achieving an authentic feeling of work-life balance (Friedman & Lobel, 2003) is support from the immediate social context within work teams (Vogel & Feldman, 2009). Both work-life balance effectiveness and work performance depend on managing and meeting others’ expectations. Thus, the team’s norms around work-life balance values and preferences represent components of the immediate social context, a nascent construct in the work-life literature.

Employees operate within a dynamic social environment in meeting others’ expectations and pursuing their own. What people expect comes from their own role expectations derived from values and preferences, behavioral scripts, and past experiences (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Critical stakeholders may have different expectations for prioritizing work and responding to messages outside of work hours. In some cases, employees’ personal
values and preferences may naturally fit the expectations of critical others on their teams. In other cases, meeting those expectations may be much more of a burden. Thus, work-life balance is optimized when employee values and preferences match those of others in their immediate work groups (Vogel & Feldman, 2009), promoting better work performance via increased resources such as cohesion, coordination, and communication (DeCooman, Vantilborgh, Bal, & Lub, 2016; Marks, Mathieu, & Zaccaro, 2001). Further, work-life balance is likely reduced when employees’ values and preferences do not match others in their work groups. This is because resources (time and effort; Hobfoll, 1989) are diverted from work tasks to extraneous demands (e.g., managing others’ perceptions) and potentially costing coveted resources (e.g., help from the team so one can leave on time) from peers.

For the purposes of this study, two critical components of work-life balance will be highlighted: work life values and segmentation preferences (Barber, Grawitch & Maloney, 2016). Individual differences exist in the degree to which employees value their roles outside of work and within work (Edwards & Rothbard, 2000), nd in preferences for setting boundaries between work and nonwork time (segmentation preferences; Ashforth, Kreiner & Fugate, 2000; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009). No single profile is better; what matters instead is the degree of consistency among an individual and other members of the work team. This type of alignment can be considered a form of supplementary person-group fit (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987).

If an employee shares the same values and preferences as others on the team, work-life resources are increased within the team, potentially resulting in an increase in perceived available resources such as energy and abilities (i.e., a resource gain spiral), fostering work-life
balance for individuals on the team. Plus, according to person-group fit theories, when teams share values and preferences, they are more cohesive, engaged, and also communicate better, all of which facilitate work performance (De Cooman et al., 2016; Marks et al., 2001). For this study, shared segmentation preferences are used to conceptualize the immediate social context as it relates to expectations around work-life balance values and preferences. The purpose of this study is to examine whether fit in this way facilitates work performance via improvements in work-life balance effectiveness (see Figure 1). Additionally, team constructs will be examined to test whether the proposed model depends on other meaningful constructs such as team family-supportive supervision and cohesion.

Figure 1: Conceptual model of the indirect effect of work-life balance on shared boundary preferences and values and performance.
Choosing a Work-Life Balance Definition

In this study, work-life balance is defined as the extent to which an individual’s performance in meeting others’ expectations is consistent with what matters most personally to them (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011; Grywacz & Carlson, 2007). Work-“life” balance was chosen as it encompasses one’s whole life, rather than just family demands, as suggested by past researchers aimed at including all employees equally regardless of family status (Wayne, Butts, Casper, & Allen, 2017). There are two additional points about this definition. First, work-life balance is an idiosyncratic construct; there is no such thing as an ideal path to work-life balance (Major, Fletcher, Davis, & Germano, 2008; Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005). Although the term implies a 50/50 split between work and nonwork goals (Allen, 2001), reality does not fit that mold for most people. Work and nonwork goals are different for everybody (Barber et al., 2016), and so too is the process by which employees effectively achieve those goals (Kossek, Lautsch & Eaton, 2006). Work-life balance depends on a dynamic process by which individual goals are pursued and managed relative to personal values (e.g., role commitment values) and preferences (e.g., boundary management preferences). Thus, a key predictor of work-life balance that will be examined in this study is the extent to which an individual’s social context supports one’s life values and preferences (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011).

Second, most researchers define work-life balance as either employees’ effectiveness or employees’ satisfaction (45% and 35%, respectively; (Casper, Vaziri, Wayne, DeHauw, & Greenhaus, 2018) with work-life balance, both of which have unique antecedents and power in explaining different outcomes (e.g., work performance and job satisfaction; Wayne et al., 2017). Work-life balance effectiveness is a system-level appraisal of one’s performance in meeting
expectations, whereas satisfaction with work-life balance is an individual-level evaluation of one’s life (Wayne et al., 2017). Effectiveness is chosen here because this study focuses on behavioral indicators of person-team fit (e.g., the extent to which self-reported behavioral preferences are aligned with others’ responses on the team) and a behavioral outcome, work performance, both of which map on more directly to mechanisms related to effectiveness (Wayne et al., 2017). Indeed, behaviors required for work-life balance effectiveness are more compatible (i.e., corresponding in measurement; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977) with behaviors required for performing well in teams (Wayne et al., 2017).

In this light, effectiveness depends on meeting shared expectations from one’s self, family and other personal relationship constituents, and work stakeholders (i.e., being able to accomplish what is expected at work and in one’s personal life (Grywacz & Carlson, 2007). Effectiveness does not solely depend on resources; it also depends on managing others’ expectations and thus one’s ability to expend resources in the right ways to meet them. Expectations are socially negotiated via cultural norms, obligations, and explicit stakeholder beliefs (Grywacz & Carlson, 2007). Behavioral scripts and past history result in role expectations (Kahn et al., 1964) that are customized based on more immediate circumstances. For example, one might be expected to spend extra time at home to be with a sick family member, and they can still meet their team’s expectations if they communicate they will be less available that month and why. In theory, if individuals did not differ in their work-life values and preferences (i.e., if everyone “fit” into their teams perfectly), complex social behaviors would not be required to achieve work-life balance effectiveness measured at the system level. Because individual differences exist, work-life balance effectiveness depends on managing the social context and is
achieved via complex behaviors including negotiation, resource allocation, and communication. When fit is low, these complex behaviors are more demanding and thus managing others’ role expectations (e.g., for work tasks and communication processes) will require one to divert resources away from more meaningful goals. When fit is high, resources are expanded and demands are reduced. Viewing balance from a fit perspective implies that meeting others’ expectations for work behaviors and roles has different consequences on work-life balance effectiveness depending on individual values and preferences (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011).

Why Does Work-Life Balance Effectiveness Matter?

Work-life balance is arguably more complex for employees than ever before. A technological shift in the way work demands interface with nonwork demands has resulted in new challenges with managing the two domains simultaneously (Hammer, Kossek, Bodner & Crain, 2013; Hammer, Kossek, Yragui, Bodner, & Hanson, 2009). For example, information communication technologies (e.g., email, texting; Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004) offer employees constant accessibility to work messages and thus various options for ways in which work and life can be managed. With more optionality comes diverse expectations from critical stakeholders in terms of response time and prioritization not only outside of the work environment but also outside of traditional work hours. Indeed, the new version of being stuck at the office all day is being psychologically attached to work constantly. Failing to detach while away from the work environment compromises employees’ health and engagement (Sonnentag, Binnewies & Mojza, 2010) and puts employees at risk of neglecting important personal responsibilities and recovering from work fatigue (Sonnentag & Fritz, 2007).
Managing both domains today requires constant adapting and updating an approach to fit within a dynamic social environment (e.g., others’ diverse preferences, new technologies); there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach to balancing work and life. As autonomy and optionality have increased, idiosyncratic preferences and values for work-life balance that are held by employees, peers, and supervisors are also what they expect in return.

Not only is this work-life management process increasingly complex, but it is also critical to employee well-being and work performance (Kossek, Colquitt, & Noe, 2001). According to conservation of resources theory (COR; Hobfoll, 1989), employees carefully expend or conserve energy based on perceptions of threat (e.g., loss of self-esteem; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) and/or actual threat (e.g., job loss) to their abilities, skills, resources, energy, and time. When employees are effectively managing their responsibilities, perceived (e.g, social acceptance) and actual (e.g., work performance) resources interact, resulting in a resource gain spiral (Matthews & Toumbeva, 2014). In this case, work-life balance effectiveness generates positive self-appraisals, resulting in more resources via perceived competence (a coveted resource) with which to invest in current or future work demands (Hobfoll, 1989). Investing in work demands is a typical response to work-life balance effectiveness because employee perceptions of work-life balance are often attributed to the employer or supervisor (Kossek, Pichler, Bodner & Hammer, 2011). In return for what they consider a discretionary behavior, employees mobilize their knowledge, skills, and abilities, resulting in better task performance and loyalty for an employer who allows them to balance it all.

In contrast, when work-life balance perceptions are low, the mere negative self-appraisals of competence threaten perceptions of available resources and abilities (Hobfoll, 1989), resulting
in a smaller pool with which to allocate across subsequent demands. Ultimately, when employees experience a downward spiral, less effort is expended on work tasks in attempt to conserve coveted resources and protect the self (Hobfoll, 1989). However, social strategies exist (e.g., renegotiating new expectations; Hobfoll, 1989) which employees may use to manage their resources and return to expected levels of balance. In this light, work-life balance requires a dynamic skill (self-regulation; Carver & Scheier, 1982) and effectiveness fluctuates based on one’s actual ability to allocate time and energy (Barber et al., 2016). In sum, work-life balance effectiveness influences perceived and actual psychological resources and the propensity for employees to invest resources in work tasks. While work-life balance as a construct is hypothetical and abstract, the measurable effects on psychological resources is a key driver of employee work performance.

Why Work-Life Balance Programs Fail

Organizations and researchers are struggling to understand ways in which they can increase employee work-life balance (Eaton, 2003) and ultimately work performance, given the evidence that doing so will increase their human capital (Junita, 2016). However, according to the empirical support for work-life interventions, it is not always easy to accommodate employees’ preferences and values on a large scale. Work-life policies do not produce the intended outcomes, such as increased work-life balance and performance, without accounting for a number of factors related to employees’ unique experiences (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). For instance, employees who take advantage of a flexible work schedule policy may experience interpersonal backlash from others on their team who do not share the same values or
preferences (Houston & Waumsley, 2003). In fact, they have every right to be reluctant to take advantage of what the company offers. Sometimes utilizing work-life balance policies may do more damage than good by creating more social threats (Hobfoll, 1989) and demands (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001) from those who do not utilize the policies.

A healthy work-life culture seems to help buffer some of the interpersonal backlash (Thompson et al., 1999) and decrease the risks associated with utilizing work-life policies. For example, a meta-analysis examining general support for work-life balance suggests that the broader the support, the better the employee outcomes (French, Dumani, Alle, & Schockley, 2018) because it increases employees’ perceived social resources (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Hobfoll, 1989) and reverses the stigma around spending time with family or other nonwork goals via social information processes (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978). Thus, in healthy work-life balance cultures it is relatively popular to discuss roles and responsibilities outside of work. At the organizational level, work-life balance culture is one route, although rudimentary, to acceptance for nontraditional ways to manage the work-life interface.

However, some evidence suggests cultures that promote work-life balance can be negatively related to desirable employee outcomes (McCloskey & Igbaria, 2003) because they ignore individual differences (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). While support acts as a generally positive resource, popular norms around work-life balance do not fit what everybody actually desires. A more authentic feeling of balance is achieved when individuals work towards goals that are consistent with deeply held values and personal preferences (Friedman & Lobel, 2003) rather than those imposed by coercive public norms (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Overly generalized norms can potentially be problematic because, as discussed above, there is no right
way to achieve work-life balance. For example, norms that promote “family matters” unreasonably exclude those who think work matters most. Surprisingly, evidence suggests there can be such a thing as a “happy workaholic” (Friedman & Lobel, 2003) and prioritizing work over family is not necessarily a negative work-life balance approach. Even the most family-supportive work cultures might still lack alignment within employees’ more immediate social context. In fact, the relationship between perceptions of organizational support and employee work performance often depends on the extent to which employees’ values and preferences match the popular norms in their immediate work groups (Vogel & Feldman, 2009).

The underlying issue is critical and an impetus for this study: individuals differ in their approach to work-life balance and it is more or less supported by their immediate social context. There is no evidence that an employee’s work performance is necessarily related to a specific set of work-life values (Graves, Ohlott, & Ruderman, 2007) or boundary management preferences (Kreiner et al., 2009); what matters more is one’s fit within a dynamic social context in meeting others’ expectations (Carlson, Grywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009).

The Social Context: Person-Team Fit

Work teams are collections of interdependent employees who share responsibilities and outcomes (Sundstrom, Demeuse, & Futrell, 1990). The extent to which an individual shares values and preferences with others on the team predicts positive outcomes because sharing values and preferences likely results in shared goals (Bunderson & Sutcliff, 2003; Ellis, 2013). Person-team fit (P-T fit; Halfill, Sundstrom, Lahner, Calerone, & Nielsen, 2005) is the congruence between individual employees’ values and preferences and others’ values and
preferences on the team. These team dynamics are especially meaningful when it comes to managing the work-life balance interface; however, the application of P-T fit has not been extended to this research area. The focus of this study is to begin examining factors related to the social context in which employees operate as it relates to work-life balance and ultimately how such alignment fosters work performance. P-T fit in this way is different from work-life balance culture (Thompson et al., 1999), as fit focuses more locally on critical peers and supervisors, or what some researchers consider the micro-level work environment (Bronfrenbrenner, 1999). Also, fit focuses on specific values and behavioral preferences, whereas work-life balance culture is a more generalized type of support for the nonwork domain. As such, shared work-life values and preferences among individuals and others on their work teams will be used as a starting point to represent characteristics of the social context as it relates to work-life balance effectiveness.

Shared work-life balance values (e.g., role priorities) and shared work-life balance preferences (e.g., segmentation preferences) among a team should naturally foster support from immediate work peers for personal work-life balance; not only that, but alignment also fosters employees’ ability to meet others’ expectations. Thus, when an individual shares values and preferences with others on the team, there are fewer opportunities for perceived and actual threats to one’s psychological resources to occur (Barber et al., 2016; Hobfoll, 1989). While researchers have demonstrated high levels of interest in the effects of coworker demographic similarity among teams, little research exists on how psychological similarity influences individual outcomes (Kristoff-Brown, Zimmerman, & Johnson, 2005). A general question of
interest is the extent to which shared preferences for work-life balance predict work-life balance effectiveness and ultimately individual work performance.

Shared Boundary Preferences and Work-Life Balance Effectiveness

The work-life balance literature can be informed by applying concepts from the person-team fit literature (Greenhaus & Allen, 2011). Person-team fit is a type of alignment that can be considered a form of supplementary team fit (Muchinsky & Monahan, 1987), as alignment is strengthened when individuals are more similar to others on their work teams than different. Further, shared values is one of the most common ways to conceptualize fit (Piasentin & Chapman, 2006) because when an individual fits with what one’s teammates value and prefer, one’s performance is likely to improve (Feldman, 1984). According to the ecological systems theory (Bronfrenbrenner, 1999; Grywacz & Marks, 2000), work-life balance is a system-level construct, meaning it is a function of the person, values, preferences, context, and time (Grywacz & Marks, 2000). Combining both literatures would suggest that when individuals share preferences, they are better able to manage and predict what others in the system expect of them as it relates to work-life balance. This is particularly relevant when employees work on teams and their work-life balance effectiveness depends on their coordination with others. As one might imagine, critical and high-pressure situations in which group coordination is tested are less demanding and require less negotiation and navigation if individuals are likely to behaviorally express the same underlying personal values (Feldman, 1984).

Feldman’s (1984) perspective on group processes further applies to the work-life domain in the form of boundary management. According to boundary theories, shared preferences for work-life strategies (work-life integration versus work-life separation) are essential to work-life
balance effectiveness (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kossek & Lautsch, 2012; Kreiner et al., 2009). Boundaries help to increase work-life balance effectiveness when they are congruent with individual preferences.

Because work-life balance effectiveness involves social contracting, shared values and preferences naturally provide psychological resources (e.g., signals of support) and decrease demands caused by differing opinions (e.g., time and energy saved by not having to explain chosen behaviors or manage misconceptions). For example, some employees who do not fit with what their colleagues value and prefer may experience extra demands in managing perceptions. Kreiner and colleagues (2009) conducted a set of qualitative studies to understand the processes and nuances of the work-life interface as it relates to boundary management. In their sample of Episcopal priests who are always expected to be “on call,” they found that individuals varied on a continuum of preferences from pure integration of work and outside life to pure segmentation with strict boundaries. A theme that came out of these stories was that regardless of personal preferences, what mattered most was whether or not incongruence existed between one’s individual preferences and the expectations of critical stakeholders. For example, one female reported a lack of fit between her preference for integrating and her rector’s preference for separating, stating,

Lately I am just feeling a little self-conscious about integrating both of those roles at the same time. I guess right now because my baby is so young, I’m nursing him all the time—literally nursing him in the bishop’s office or in my meetings with my rector, whatever. My rector, he’s older; he’s close to retirement. He’s not always comfortable with that. He kind of like turns his head away. (p. 172)

In this example, it is the difficulty in meeting the supervisor’s expectations that is more burdensome than the integrating behaviors themselves, resulting in lower perceptions of work-life balance effectiveness.
Another example of how fit influences evaluations of one’s work-life balance effectiveness can be demonstrated by a study conducted by Kossek, Barber, and Winters (1999). By sampling predominantly first-level supervisors, they found that neglecting personal values and preferences and conforming to group norms is an important signal to the rest of the team. Perceptions of critical others’ values and preferences were stronger predictors of work-life policy utilization than actual intentions to use the policies in accordance with one’s personal values and preferences (Kossek et al., 1999). This is critical given the evidence that, when utilized, policies can in fact reduce employee stress and provide a sense of control over the way time is spent (McDonald, Guthrie, Bradley & Shakespeare-Finch, 2005; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). However, it seems to be the case that regardless of policies offered, social and business pressures determine individuals’ work-life balance strategies, as often reported by practitioners too (Kofodimos, 1995; Sheley, 1996). To some extent, employees seem to be at the mercy of critical others’ values and preferences, whether they fit with personal expectations or not.

Together, the evidence reviewed supports the notion that, for better or worse, employees’ ability to manage the expectations of others, and thus achieve work-life balance, requires extra resources if fit is low. It is established that managing one’s own values and boundaries is an inherently social process. However, what is less explored in the existing literature is an empirical test of the extent to which shared work-life values and boundary preferences foster work-life balance effectiveness. Thus, this study aims to demonstrate a link between shared boundary preferences among and work-life balance effectiveness.

H1: *Shared boundary preferences and life role values is positively related to individual work-life balance effectiveness.*
Shared Boundary Preferences and Performance

Fit among work-life values and boundary preferences should theoretically be related to the extent to which individuals on that team effectively meet individual work-life balance goals and ultimately their work performance. As outlined above, purely from a resource perspective, misfit diverts employee resources to extraneous demands. This has potential to translate into performance decrements as demand-ability mismatch limits one’s ability to achieve desired work performance (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). On the other hand, when a team shares values and preferences, they are more cohesive and engaged and also communicate better (De Cooman et al., 2016). When fit is high, action processes are “lubricated,” such that coordination is increased regarding the ways in which they will get the work done (Fisher et al., 2014) and information is exchanged, all of which increase individual-level work performance (De Cooman et al., 2016). Further, the extent to which an individual fits with others in the group moderates the links between one’s fit to the job or to the organization and work performance (Vogel & Feldman, 2009). Thus, fitting in to the broader context at work depends on fitting in to the local context. Simply put, the immediate social context in which one works is critical to one’s ability to perform critical work tasks and ultimately perform consistently well at work.

H2: Shared boundary preferences and life role values is positively related to work performance.

When team members’ goals are compatible and work-life balance effectiveness among the team is increased, employees exert more effort, focus on work while they are there (Wayne, Musisca & Fleeson, 2004), and ultimately perform better (VanSteenbergen & Ellemers, 2009). Related to the resource allocation process (Barber et al., 2016), an employee’s resources can be conserved to the extent that they need to expend less on navigating a complex social context;
thus alignment will make work-life balance effectiveness less demanding and work performance less demanding, as both require meeting others’ expectations. Further, resource gain and loss spirals, as discussed above, operate on a team level as well as the individual level (Halbesleben & Wheeler, 2014). Thus, alignment among employees and others on their team as it relates to work-life balance values and preferences facilitates resource sharing and enhances the opportunity for team members to have shared expectations rather than conflicting expectations (Vogel & Feldman, 2009), ultimately fostering work performance via the resource benefits of work-life balance effectiveness.

**H3: The indirect effect of shared boundary preferences and life role values on performance is explained by work-life balance effectiveness.**

**Boundary Conditions**

Work-life balance effectiveness depends on a number of factors related to employees’ experiences (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). Within the P-T fit literature there is a call for empirical research that helps to understand the ways in which team dynamics operate among complex systems, treating teams as emergent entities beyond the sum of individual employees (Mathieu, Hollenbeck, van Knippenberg, & Ilgen, 2017). Two contextual variables that influence the level of support for individual work-life balance values and preferences will be examined. First, there is reason to believe that the indirect effect of fit on individual work performance through work-life balance may be buffered by family-supportive supervision. Said differently, the effects of fit may disappear among teams with family-supportive supervisors. Family-supportive supervision is a secondary route by which acceptance for personal values and
preferences may be achieved, regardless of the values and preferences of others on the team. Further, among teams with high levels of cohesion there is greater acceptance for diverse styles and a subculture that serves as a general resource (Thompson et al., 1999). Thus, in more cohesive groups the indirect effect of work-life balance effectiveness on the fit and performance link will matter less. The model would likely be weaker in groups where family-supportive supervision or team cohesion is high. With either of these routes to a more accepting immediate work environment, individuals are less at the mercy of fit and better able to negotiate expectations with critical stakeholders (see Figure 2).

![Diagram](image-url)

**Figure 2:** Conceptual diagram for boundary conditions in the model.
Boundary Condition 1: Team Family-Supportive Supervision

Rather than alignment with a set of proximal others (i.e., person-team fit), there is the possibility that one only needs to align with a single important other—the supervisor. Family-supportive supervision is the extent to which supervisors exhibit emotional support, instrumental support, role modeling behaviors, and creative work-family management (Hammer et al., 2009). The key to family-supportive supervision for this study is that it provides an alternative route for employees’ immediate work environments to be customized. Thus another way an employee may experience fit within the immediate work environment is to have a family-supportive supervisor. A link has been consistently demonstrated between managerial support and work-life balance effectiveness (Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Hammer et al., 2009). Even when organizations offer policies aiming at work-life balance, the utilization of such policies is largely dependent on support from supervisors (McConville & Holden, 1999; Parris, Vickers, & Wilkes, 2008; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007; Ryan & Kossek, 2008), and as such, supervisors are considered the “linking pins” (Hammer, Kossek, Zimmerman, & Daniels, 2007, p. 169) for individual accommodations.

Managerial support is a form of family-specific socioemotional resource that is perceived as an unexpected, discretionary behavior from managers (Hammer, Neal, Newsome, Brockwood, & Colton, 2005; Morganson, Major, & Litano, 2017). In other words, it is perceived as a luxury if one’s supervisor takes responsibility for accommodating specific work-life balance values and preferences. This leads to the desire for employees to reciprocate via loyalty and performance. Odle-Dusseau, Britt, and Greene-Shortridge (2012) found significant relationships over time between employee perceptions of FSSB and desirable work attitudes, including reduced turnover.
intentions and increased job satisfaction. The underlying mechanism that supports the effects of both person-team fit and supervisor support for work-life balance are two routes to customization of the employees’ immediate work environment and thus both similarly and uniquely contribute to work-life balance and performance outcomes. For instance, even if a work team does not share work life values and preferences, individual employees may still receive customized accommodations with minimal interpersonal backlash if the supervisor is creatively supporting the employees’ work-life needs (Hammer et al., 2009). Further, if a work team shares values and preferences, a family-supportive supervisor provides incremental support above and beyond what is fostered by team fit.

Family-supportive supervisors can do this by identifying ways in which the team can work together better (role crafting at the team level) and providing individualized support in the ways team members need it most, both of which are specific to work-life balance effectiveness. Thus, teams with family-supportive supervisors are provided opportunities to personally negotiate the process by which they accommodate work and nonwork goals in a way that is in line with their values and preferences, which ultimately maximizes fit to the immediate work environment. Managers play an increasingly active role in HRM decision making, including work-life balance decisions (Bach, 1994; Hales, 2006; McConville & Holden, 1999; Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007); it is important to understand how line managers, who are a critical micro-level factor in the immediate work environment (Hales, 2006), affect and influence employees’ ability to manage work and life demands. When supervisor support is maintained on an individualized basis, there is an opportunity to accommodate employees even when they are part of a team that is not necessarily aligned. Importantly, while the construct focuses on family, it is
limited in generalizing to employees with less salient family roles but other nonwork priorities such as social demands and hobbies.

**H4: The positive indirect effect of shared boundary preferences and life role values on performance through work-life balance effectiveness is moderated by (is weakened by) team family-supportive supervision.**

**Boundary Condition 2: Team Task Cohesion**

Finally, I propose a second moderator that influences the indirect effect of work-life balance effectiveness on the shared preferences and performance link: team task cohesion. As mentioned above, individuals who work within interdependent teams are required to exercise self-regulatory skill (Hobfoll, 1989) in managing their peers’ expectations and carefully spreading their time and energy across their stakeholders (Grywacz & Carlson, 2007) to achieve work-life balance effectiveness. Thus, when examining the immediate social context, it may be the case that individual differences in segmentation preferences matter less when resource sharing is high. For example, when employees are focused on the results of the work and coordinated around how to work together to accomplish those tasks, the individual processes by which tasks are achieved may not seem to matter. In contrast to offering policies in line with an accommodation model of work-life balance demands (e.g., flexible work arrangements; Perlow & Kelly, 2014), a task-focused culture allows employees to be “free to do whatever they want, whenever they want, as long as the work gets done” (Perlow & Kelly, 2014, p.117). Especially when a team is virtual, a team’s focus on the task at hand predicts its ability to come to consensus and move forward together (Huang, Kahai, & Jestice, 2010).
While there is reason to believe that objective fit among work-life values and preferences is related to work-life balance effectiveness because of natural agreement among expectations, team task cohesion might provide a contextual factor that buffers these effects. Team task cohesion is the extent to which individuals perceive that the group is supportive of individual differences in attempting to get the job done (Widmeyer, Brawley, & Carron, 1985). When operationalized at the team level, this measures the extent to which a team can overcome differences in order to get the job done. If evidence supports an interaction between shared boundary preferences and team-level task cohesion, we can be confident that teamwork buffers individual differences among a team’s values and preferences.

**H5:** The positive indirect effect of shared boundary preferences and life role values on performance through work-life balance effectiveness is moderated by (is weakened by) team task cohesion.
CHAPTER 2

METHOD

Participants

Data for this study were collected from a single real estate firm headquartered in the United States of America. Employees were located in geographically dispersed domestic locations and represent various functions (e.g., finance, HR) and levels (e.g., C-Suite, administrative). Employees across the entire organization ($N = 670$) were recruited with an anonymous link and an email explaining the purpose of the study (see Appendices A and B). The response rate was 24%, as 158 employees responded to the survey. After removing individual responses that were over 90% incomplete ($n = 52$), the final sample included 106 full-time employees. Respondents were between the ages of 21 and 71 ($M = 39.45$, $SD = 11.66$). They also had on average 2.21 dependents ($SD = 1.53$). Almost half of the respondents were male ($n = 48$, 45%), over half of the respondents were White ($n = 73$; 68%), and other race and ethnicities included Hispanic/Latino ($n = 17$; 16%), Black/African American ($n = 7$; 7%), Asian ($n = 7$; 7%), and two or more races ($n = 2$; 2%). Also, respondents reported their marital status as Single ($n = 28$, 26%), Married ($n = 25$, 24%), Separated/Divorced ($n = 7$, 6%), or did not report their status ($n = 46$, 43%). Finally, while all employees were considered full time, actual work hours reported ranged from 35 – 80 hours per week ($M = 46.95$, $SD = 7.87$).
Procedure

Recruitment

Full-time employees were recruited via an email sent out from the principal researcher’s University address. Importantly, this email address was unaffiliated with the organization, and the text outlined that participation and feedback did not influence performance evaluations or compensation (see Appendix B). Employees who voluntarily decided to invest 5-10 minutes of their time were offered a reusable anonymous link and asked to specify their employee ID on the survey for the purposes of identifying teams without collecting identifiable names or demographics. They also completed an informed consent form (see Appendix C).

Identifying Teams

Further, employee IDs were linked with regional Group designation and functional Department designation in the existing archival dataset (see Appendix C). To identify which designation would best represent teams, I first asked the HR team at the organization. After defining work teams as collections of interdependent employees who share responsibilities and outcomes (Sundstrom, Demeuse, & Futrell, 1990), they suggested the best proxy for peers who work together would be by clustering the data by those who share a supervisor. However, while Supervisor ID was also available, Department designation explained relatively more variability in the focal variables of interest. ICC values that assessed clustering by Segmentation Preferences scores (used to create person-team fit scores) for Supervisor ID, Department, and Group designations were all examined and compared to choose a grouping variable ($ICC = .06, .18, and .09$ respectively). I decided to use Department designation, as it demonstrated the most
clustering and it was also the next closest measure to what was suggested by the HR Department, Supervisor ID. The assumption was that, because the individuals who perform work in the same functions in the same offices also work on various projects together and are informally evaluated as a team, Department designation was the best grouping variable for work teams in the dataset both conceptually and statistically.

Thus, teams in the dataset were created using the Department code as a grouping variable. However, departments in the dataset were incomplete, as not all employees in the same departments responded to the survey voluntarily. Employees who did respond within the same department ranged in team sizes between 2-7 respondents. Most commonly, department team size in the dataset was 3 (n = 14 teams, 39%), followed by 2 (n = 12 teams, 23%), 5 (n = 5 teams, 23%), 4 (n= 3 teams, 8%) and 7 (n = 1 team, 7%).

Work-Life Balance Survey

When participants followed the anonymous link, they were first asked to specify their worker identification (ID) numbers. IDs were used to link the newly collected survey data with existing archival employee data (demographics and department designation) and with employee work performance ratings. This new survey included measures of interest in this study (see Appendix E) that were not included in existing archival employee data (Appendix D).

Measures

Shared Boundary Preferences

In order to better understand the extent to which individuals’ preferences and values depend on fit with popular preferences and values among the team in which they work,
individual responses were compared to other employees’ responses in the same department to determine shared boundary preferences. Life Role Values was measured using two items: “How important and significant is work in your total life?” and “How important and significant is family in your total life?” (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000; Stoner, Hartman, & Arora, 1991).

Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with each item on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Segmentation Preferences was measured using four items (e.g., “I don’t like work issues creeping into my home life”) soliciting preferences with response options from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Each individual received a Profile Symmetry Index (PSI) score, calculated by subtracting the focal individual’s composite Segmentation Preferences score from the average composite score among other members on his or her team who responded to the survey. Importantly, Life Role Values were also considered initially to represent a form of shared boundary preferences; however, due to lack of variability, these more distal indicators of boundary preferences were left out of the PSI calculations. Specifically, there was minimal variability in the scores on either the family importance (rated as very or extremely important by 97% of participants) or work importance (rated as very or extremely important by 82% of participants) single-item measures. Thus, a single difference score was computed using only responses to the Segmentation Preferences items, excluding minor differences, if any, in life role values. I decided that excluding life role values would also disambiguate the interpretation of person-team differences as a more precise construct to represent shared boundary preferences.
Work-Life Balance Effectiveness

As outlined above, the definition chosen for these work-life balance links involves effectiveness, or the actual ability of an employee to successfully manage one’s resources relative to expectations of critical others (e.g., “I am able to negotiate and accomplish what is expected of me at work and in my family”; Carlson et al., 2009). Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with each item on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree; α = 97).

Employee Work Performance Ratings

Employees at this organization are rated on their performance (via Job Competency ratings) at end-of-year reviews, mid-year reviews, and two quarterly reviews in between. Approximately one month after the work-life balance survey responses were collected, employee end-of-year reviews were conducted and those cross-sectional scores were used for the current project. During these reviews, supervisors verbally rate each direct report on five competencies identified as critical based on the employee’s specific role, level, and function. Then, after the feedback is discussed, managers submit a single global performance rating by providing a response to the item, “Overall, rate this employee’s performance for this year.” Response options for the global performance ratings included: 1 (needs improvement), 2 (opportunities to develop), 3 (solid skilled performer), 4 (talented performer), and 5 (outstanding performer; see Appendix F).
Family-Supportive Supervisor Behaviors

This construct developed by Hammer et al. (2007) is characterized by the extent to which employees perceive their supervisor as being supportive of nonwork responsibilities across four dimensions: emotional support (“Your supervisor makes you feel comfortable talking to him/her about your conflicts between work and non-work”), instrumental support (“Your supervisor organizes the work in your department or unit to jointly benefit employees and the company”), role modeling behaviors (“Your supervisor demonstrates effective behaviors in how to juggle work and non-work issues”), and creative work-family management (“Your supervisor works effectively with employees to creatively solve conflicts between work and non-work”). Participants rated the extent to which they agreed with four items on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree; $a = .92$).

Team Task Cohesion

Team cohesion is defined as an emergent group property in which individuals tend to rise above their differences in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives (Tekleab, Quigely, & Tesluk, 2009). Three items from Widmeyer, Brawley, and Carron (1985) were adapted from a sports setting to a more neutral setting to assess team task cohesion using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree; $a = .87$). A sample item reads, “Our team is united in trying to reach its goals for performance.” Team was defined before the items were revealed as “the group they work with on a regular basis,” which describes their department but did not explicitly define teams as departments.
Existing Archival Employee Data

To reduce time requirements and to maximize existing available resources, employee demographics and team composition variables were linked to the new work-life balance survey responses via merging the archival dataset with the new survey responses using employee IDs. Existing archival employee data included gender, age, marital status, department, work hours, and dependents (number of dependents). See Table 1 for descriptive statistics and demographic information.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations

<table>
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<td>.57**</td>
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<td>7. Age</td>
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<td>-.18*</td>
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<td>-.24*</td>
<td>.08</td>
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<td>.09</td>
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<td>9. Work Hours</td>
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<td>.28**</td>
<td>.24*</td>
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Note. *N = 106. Cronbach’s alpha for multi-item measures are shown on the diagonal. *p < .05, **p < .01
CHAPTER 3
DATA ANALYTIC STRATEGY AND RESULTS

Data Cleaning

Because measuring fit is a relatively “elusive” concept (Judge & Ferris, 1992), there were additional assumptions to check to ensure that the PSI can be interpreted as a proximal indicator of person-team fit (e.g., Shared Boundary Preferences), the underlying concept of interest. According to Edwards and Harrison (1993), PSIs are limited because they fail to preserve the underlying three-dimensional relationship of fit (comparing the person, team, interaction, and squared terms), and thus polynomial regression preserves these sources of variability. Specifically, Edwards and Harrison argue that there is conceptual ambiguity in the interpretation of difference scores that abstract the components that contributed to them (scores from the focal individual, $P$, and from the rest of the individuals on the team, $T$). This is especially problematic because the direction of symmetry is often abstracted prematurely, which means that it is difficult to tell the impact of directionality on the outcome.

However, the PSI used for this study meets the critical assumption that the effects of positive or negative deviations from the group average on the outcome are symmetric. To interpret the effects of differences between an individual and the team as it relates to segmentation preferences, one must assume that preferring segmentation more than the team or less than the team will similarly impact performance in a negative way. Indeed, there is symmetry in the direction of fit within the work-life domain because, as argued above, no single
profile of values or preferences results in better or worse work-life balance or performance; what matters is the degree of absolute fit (Barber et al., 2016). Thus, PSIs (i.e., difference scores) were used for hypothesis testing for this study.

To explicitly compare the results of the popular Edwards and Harrison (1993) approach and the PSI approach, the two main effects predicted by Shared Boundary Preferences, namely Work-Life Balance Effectiveness (H1) and Work Performance (H2), were also tested using polynomial regression in R. This involved computing a squared person-team interaction term and treating the individual scores, team scores, the interaction scores, squared individual scores, and squared team scores as five predictors in a multiple regression equation. These person-team fit hypotheses were tested in this way and effect sizes and variance explained by the predictors in both models were compared to better understand the impact of abstracting the dimensions of fit into a single difference score.

Hypothesis Testing

To test for measurement error, I first examined internal consistency of multi-item measures using Cronbach’s alpha. The items measuring Work-Life Balance Effectiveness, Family-Supportive Supervision, and Team Task Cohesion all demonstrated sufficient internal consistency ($a = .94, .92, \text{ and } .87$, respectively). Further, the Durbin-Watson statistic was examined to identify unrelated residual error in each of the predictors of interest. All predictors demonstrated acceptable Durbin-Watson statistics, including the measures of Shared Boundary Preferences (1.62), Work-Life Balance Effectiveness (1.92), and the team predictors Family-Supportive Supervision (1.87) and Team Task Cohesion (1.78). Further, skewness and kurtosis were examined graphically for all interval measures to test for normality of the sample.
distribution. Values for asymmetry and kurtosis between -2 and +2 are considered acceptable in order to prove normal univariate distribution (George & Mallery, 2010). All measures passed this general diagnostic with the exception of Work Performance scores, which demonstrated considerable kurtosis (2.67), which will be discussed further in the limitations. Also, all demographic variables were assessed for bivariate relationships with both the predictor and outcome variables to determine which, if any, should be treated as covariates. Age, number of dependents, and hours worked demonstrated relationships with target variables (see Table 1 for descriptive statistics and bivariate correlations) and additional iterations of the model were tested, including each variable separately and all variables simultaneously as covariates, which is explained in the results. Also, when examining bivariate relationships, work hours and number of dependents were not surprisingly related with Work-Life Balance Effectiveness ($r = -.33^*$ and -.24*, respectively). Also, the relationship between Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors and Work-life balance Effectiveness ($r = .57^{**}$) was not surprising, given that supervisors are typically a large determinant of employees’ work-life balance (Hammer et al., 2009). Further, Team Task Cohesion and Work-Life Balance Effectiveness were related ($r = .35^{**}$), providing interesting initial support for the link between team coordination and the negotiation process involved in Work-Life Balance Effectiveness. These relationships are discussed further below.

Further, Mahalanobis distance scores were computed to identify significantly unique multivariate combinations of the predictor variables including Shared Boundary Preferences, Work-Life Balance Effectiveness, Family-Supportive Supervision, and Team Task Cohesion. Mahalanobis distance scores were compared to the relevant cutoff score, 18.47 ($df = 4$), and no multivariate outliers were identified in the data. Finally, because the data were collected from individuals within departments, the Levene’s test was used to assess whether the departments
being compared had similar population variances. All predictors demonstrated significant heteroscedasticity, suggesting the reliability of some departments’ scores is higher than others, and is considered a limitation discussed below as this violates an assumption of regression.

Additional tests were examined treating meaningful demographics as moderators (gender, age, dependents, and team size); however, no moderators significantly impacted the test results. Additional tests comparing groups on these dimensions are assessed in the discussion.

Given all individual data are nested within departments, both individual-level predictors (shared boundary preferences and work-life balance effectiveness) and group-level moderators (family-supportive supervision and team task cohesion) were tested for clustering (i.e., differences across departments). Random-effects ANOVAs were used to produce parameters for calculating intraclass correlations (ICCs) and design effects. The ICC was used to provide a measure of how much variance (response variable variation) from each of the individual predictors is explained by department designation. ICC values between .05 and .20 were used as boundaries that typically suggest clustering is minimally meaningful, supporting the use of multilevel modeling, as demonstrated by other cross-sectional research examples in the literature (Muthén, 1991, 1994; Spybrook, Raudenbush, Liu, Congdon, & Martinez, 2008). Further, the design effect was computed using the ICC statistic and the average department size (n = 2.76), quantifying the effect of independence violations on standard error estimates. Design effects greater than 2.0 indicate multilevel modeling is needed, according to some researchers (e.g., Muthén, 1991, 1994; Muthén & Satorra, 1995a, 1995b). Individual scores on Shared Boundary Preferences did not meet the established criteria for multilevel modeling (ICC = .33, DEFF = 1.59), specifically because it demonstrated low design effects. This was also the case for Work-Life Balance Effectiveness (ICC = .18, DEFF = 1.32). Thus both variables were treated as
individual-level predictors. However, because conceptually the individual data demonstrated some clustering (i.e., nonzero ICC scores), between-group variability was accounted for using multilevel modeling in hypothesis testing at the lower level (H1, H2, and H3). Also, before testing the models, predictor variables were group centered around Department means (a typical centering approach for level 1 research questions; Peugh, 2010).

To begin, a multilevel one-way random-effects ANCOVA was used to test if Shared Boundary Preferences was positively related to Work-Life Balance Effectiveness (H1), accounting for clustering within departments. After group mean centering the scores for Shared Boundary Preferences, the main effect was not significant ($\gamma_{10} = .11$, $SE = .43$, $t = .74$, $p = .46$), suggesting the individual Shared Boundary Preferences did not predict Work-Life Balance Effectiveness while controlling for clustering in departments. Random effects were also examined as measures of variance explained between the departments ($\sigma^2_{\mu_{ij}} = .20$) and within departments ($\sigma^2_{\tau_{ij}} = .62$). Combined, these results suggest that the clustering in departments did not greatly influence scores on Work-Life Balance Effectiveness and that the relationship hypothesized in H1 was not supported.

Also, this relationship was tested using polynomial regression. The variable Shared Boundary Preferences is a difference score computed to represent person-team fit among segmentation preferences. To test the alternative model, Work-Life Balance Effectiveness was regressed on individual Segmentation Preferences composite scores and team Segmentation Preferences scores (based on the average Department score excluding the focal individual), in addition to squared individual and team scores, and an interaction term. The polynomial regression total model did not support H1 by explaining variance in employees Work-Life
Balance ($R^2 = .046$, $p = .459$). Specifically, individual and team scores did not interact to predict Work-Life Balance Effectiveness ($b_4 = -.092$, $SE = .172$, $p = .591$), and thus the individual scores did not depend on the scores of the rest of their team in predicting Work-life balance Effectiveness. See Table 2 for all path estimates of each component of person-team fit in the polynomial regression model.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Robust $SE$</th>
<th>95% CI (lower)</th>
<th>95% CI (upper)</th>
<th>$p$</th>
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<td>1.052</td>
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<td>-1.706</td>
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<td>Team Preferences$^2$</td>
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<td>.113</td>
<td>-.026</td>
<td>.489</td>
<td>.834</td>
</tr>
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<td>Team x Individual</td>
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<td>.172</td>
<td>-.340</td>
<td>.245</td>
<td>.591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Preferences$^2$</td>
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<td>.231</td>
<td>.257</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another test of the person-team fit hypothesis can be graphically displayed in a 3D surface plot by examining the curvature orthogonal to the ridge in Figure 3. However, this curvature does not seem to support the hypothesis that fit (i.e., congruence between individual and team preferences) predicts Work-Life Balance Effectiveness.
Figure 3: Response surface plot of individual and team preferences predicting Work-Life Balance Effectiveness using polynomial regression.

The same series of tests was conducted to examine if Shared Boundary Preferences was positively related to individual Work Performance (H2), accounting for clustering within the departments. The main effect was not significant ($\gamma_{10} = .03, SE = .12, t = .28, p = .78$), suggesting Shared Boundary Preferences did not predict Work Performance when controlling for clustering within departments. Random effects were also examined as measures of variance explained between the departments ($\sigma^2_{\mu_{0j}} = .07$) and within departments ($\sigma^2_{\epsilon_{ij}} = .49$). Taken together, these results suggest that the clustering in departments did not greatly influence scores on Work Performance, and the relationship hypothesized in H2 was not supported.

This effect was also tested using polynomial regression, which treated Segmentation Preferences as individual and team scores (based on the average Department score excluding the focal individual) rather than a single difference score. Again, the polynomial regression total
model results did not support H2 (R2 = .046, p = .459). Specifically, individual and team scores did not interact to predict Work Performance ($b_4 = .068$, SE = 1.712, p = .689). See Table 3 for all path estimates of each component of person-team fit. Another test of the person-team fit hypothesis can be graphically displayed in a 3D surface plot by examining the curvature orthogonal to the ridge in Figure 4. However, this curvature does not seem to support the hypothesis that fit (i.e., congruence between individual and team preferences) predicts Work Performance. Also, while the graph suggests the shape (i.e., relationships) may not be symmetric, none of the path estimates were significant and no generalizable conclusions should be drawn from the graph with confidence.

Table 3

Full Polynomial Regression Unstandardized Coefficients for the Effects of Individual and Team Preferences on Work Performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Estimate</th>
<th>Robust SE</th>
<th>95% CI (lower)</th>
<th>95% CI (upper)</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team Preferences</td>
<td>-1.475</td>
<td>1.003</td>
<td>-3.930</td>
<td>.501</td>
<td>.144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Preferences</td>
<td>-.009</td>
<td>5.509</td>
<td>-.150</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Preferences^2</td>
<td>-1.43</td>
<td>1.047</td>
<td>-.062</td>
<td>.347</td>
<td>.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team x Individual</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>1.712</td>
<td>-.267</td>
<td>.404</td>
<td>.689</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Preferences^2</td>
<td>-.0499</td>
<td>1.002</td>
<td>-.246</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>.618</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To test whether the relationship between Shared Boundary Preferences and Work Performance was explained through the indirect effect of Work-Life Balance Effectiveness (H3), a structural equation modeling technique was used via the Lavaan package in R. Specifically, the mediation model accounting for clustering between departments was used to compute path estimates and test model fit. The data had a relatively good fit to the model, where CFI = .97, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .08, and SRMR = .03, even though the main effect size (i.e., the deviation from the specified model) was relatively high, $\chi^2 (41, N = 106) = 57.202, p = .010$, suggesting the estimated covariance matrix was significantly different than the sampled covariance matrix. This could be a consequence of a small sample size and a high number of path estimates. However, paths a, b, and c were not significant, and the indirect path c’ was also not significant (see Table 4). These results suggest the relationships hypothesized in H3 were not supported by the data. Further, the model was also tested including demographic variables that were correlated

Figure 4: Response surface plot of individual and team preferences predicting Work Performance using polynomial regression.
with the predictors (age, dependents, and hours worked), and none of the significance tests changed (see Table 4). Thus, the basic model results excluding covariates were used for interpretation purposes in Figure 5; however, the path estimates increased slightly when all covariates were included simultaneously.

Table 4
Path Estimates for Lower Level Mediation Accounting for Clustering Within Departments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Level 1 Mediation without Covariates</th>
<th>Level 1 Mediation with Covariates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Estimate</td>
<td>SE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>.119</td>
<td>.148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>.040</td>
<td>.131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a x b</td>
<td>.010</td>
<td>.014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.050</td>
<td>.130</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. Both models accounted for clustering within departments. Age, Dependents, and Work Hours were included simultaneously as covariates in the second model. *Indicates the true regression coefficients are within an interval that does not include zero.

Figure 5: Lower-level mediation model accounting for clustering within departments.

Notes. Unstandardized regression coefficients are reported for each separate path. The unstandardized regression coefficients between Shared Boundary Preferences and Work Performance, controlling for Work-Life Balance, is in parentheses. The indirect effect for the tested mediator variable is reported within the box. *Indicates the true regression coefficients are within an interval that does not include zero.
To test the moderated mediation hypothesis, R script from Baayen, Davidson and Bates (2008) was used to produce random indirect effects for H4 and H5 using the Haven and Lavaan packages. Following the procedure employed above, random-effects ANOVAs were used to compute ICC and design effects statistics for the level 2 predictors. Family-Supportive Supervision ($ICC = .15$, $DEFF = 1.27$) and Team Task Cohesion ($ICC = .26$, $DEFF = 1.46$) did not meet the predetermined criteria to be treated as a level 2 variable. However, given both variables demonstrated relatively strong clustering in the ICC scores, and they are conceptually at the team level for the research questions of interest, they were treated as level 2 team predictors in addition to testing them as level 1 individual-level predictors. Also, both variables were grand mean centered by subtracting the grand mean from each individual predictor score (on Family-Supportive Supervisor Behaviors and Team Task Cohesion). Grand mean centering is the best method for multilevel modeling when level 2 predictors are also in the equation (Peugh, 2010).

To test moderated mediation hypotheses (H4 and H5), I tested a cross-level interaction between each moderator and a lower level mediation model, with the mediation model (H3) at level 1 and each moderator at level 2 and then at level 1. To test whether the indirect effect of Work-Life Balance Effectiveness on the relationship between Shared Boundary Preferences and Work Performance depends on (is buffered by) Family-Supportive Supervision (H4), I first examined model fit indices. When treating the moderator as a level 2 team variable, the data had a relatively good fit to the model, where $CFI = .97$, $TLI = .95$, $RMSEA = .09$, and $SRMR = .04$, even though the main effect size was high, $\chi^2 (55, N = 106) = 97.83, p < .001$). The variance component estimate for the effect of Family-Supportive Supervision on the indirect effect was not significant (unstandardized estimate $b = .068$, $SE = .044$, $z = 1.557, p = .153$). This fails to
support the main hypothesis for H4, and the path estimates for the lower level mediation model were not significant when allowing the indirect effect to be free to vary. The model was also tested treating the moderator as a level 1 variable while still accounting for clustering in departments, and no significance tests changed in support of the hypothesis, including the effect of Family-Supportive Supervision on the indirect effect (unstandardized estimate $b = .070$, $SE = .044$, $z = 1.583$, $p = .113$) of the lower level mediation model.

Last, to test whether the indirect effect of Work-Life Balance Effectiveness on the relationship between Shared Boundary Preferences and Work Performance depends on (is buffered by) Team Task Cohesion (H5), I examined model fit and variance component estimates. When treating the moderator as a level 2 variable, the data adequately fit the model, where $\text{CFI} = .91$, $\text{TLI} = .99$, $\text{RMSEA} = .05$, and $\text{SRMR} = .03$, $\chi^2 (56, N = 106) = 47.69$, $p = .14$). The variance component estimate for the effect of Team Task Cohesion on the indirect effect was not significant (unstandardized estimate $ab = .050$, $SE = .034$, $z = 1.505$, $p = .116$). This fails to support the main hypothesis for H5, and the path estimates for the lower level mediation model were not significant when allowing the indirect effect to be free to vary. The model was also tested treating the moderator as a level 1 variable while still accounting for clustering in departments, and no significance tests changed in support of the hypothesis, including the effect of Team Cohesion on the indirect effect (unstandardized estimate $ab = .051$, $SE = .034$, $z = 1.498$, $p = .119$) of the lower level mediation model.
Severe limitations discussed below resulted in underpowered and deficient tests of the relationships of interest. No statistical tests of the model provided support for any of the hypotheses. Thus, I would not have confidence to confirm or deny the model that is outlined in the literature review because the sample did not fairly test the effects that may or may not exist in reality. However, in exploring the basic bivariate relationships (see Table 1), there is support for some typical effects that are found in the literature as well as some initial support for the effects outlined in the main model of interest. First, work hours and number of dependents are typically related to work-life balance effectiveness, and not surprisingly, the relationships are found in this sample as well ($r = -.33^*$ and -.24*, respectively). This is because when individuals have greater demands (Demerouti et al., 2001) either at work (e.g., more work hours) or at home (e.g., more dependents), they have fewer resources with which to invest across the other domain, resulting in lower work-life balance effectiveness (Grywacz & Carlson, 2007). This may also be due to greater difficulty in negotiating across either the work or life domain, given more work hours suggests a higher workload and dependents suggests an increase in critical stakeholders with which to negotiate (e.g., children or elderly parents to please). However, the reason for these relationships cannot be determined by the evidence in this study.

Also, the relationship between Family-Supportive Supervisor Behaviors and Work-Life Balance Effectiveness ($r = .57^{**}$) was not surprising, given supervisors are typically a large
determinant of employees’ work-life balance (Hammer et al., 2009). This link is generally found due to the supervisor’s ability to act as a “linking pin” between the employee and the organization. However, this may also be due to the supervisor’s general acceptance and thus easier to manage expectations, which was an integral component of the social context of work-life balance of interest in this study. However the evidence cannot support or deny that proposition.

Finally, Team Task Cohesion and Work-Life Balance Effectiveness were related ($r = .35^{**}$), which was a novel finding and provides initial support for the main and unique theoretical grounding for the model examined in this paper, i.e., that the immediate social context matters when it comes to employee work-life balance. Team Task Cohesion is the team’s ability to rise above their differences to get the work done,-namely, their different preferences for separating or integrating work and life (Shared Boundary Preferences). Thus, while this measure did not moderate the non-existing link between Shared Boundary Preferences and Work-Life Balance Effectiveness, the basic relationship that was supported with Team Task Cohesion and Work-Life Balance Effectiveness suggests that the social context in general influences work-life balance. While cohesion has been examined as a predictor of work performance, it has not necessarily been examined in past literature as a predictor of work-life balance. Thus, based on the logic argued in this paper that work-life balance requires a cohesive immediate social context (i.e., Team Task Cohesion), it seems to be initially supported by this correlation. This evidence suggests it may be worthwhile to test the model in a different sample that is not prone to the significant limitations of the current sample, as discussed below.
Limitations

First, the greatest limitation in this study is the low response rate across employees. Of the 650+ employees who were recruited, only 106 individuals were included in the final analyses. Because of this small subset of the sample, not only were the statistical tests underpowered and thus not strong enough to test the effects of interest, but also the person-team scores were severely deficient. Specifically, teams in the dataset were incomplete, as not all employees in the same department responded to the survey voluntarily. Employees who did respond within the same department ranged in team size between 2-7 respondents. Most commonly, department team size in the dataset was 3 (39%), followed by 2 (23%), 5 (23%), 4 (8%) and 7 (7%). However, in reality, the teams range in size from 2-15 team members. Most commonly, individuals are on teams with 5 team members total (15%), followed by 4 (13%), 6 (12%) and 7 (10%). Scores that computed the difference between the target individual and another single individual or two severely limited my ability to represent the entire team’s work-life balance preferences. Specifically, the processes underlying cohesion and communication (De Cooman et al., 2016) and congruent goal orientations (Kreiner, et al., 2009) that are facilitated when fit is high were not represented among teams because only a small proportion of team members were measured. For example, if an extremely low fit score existed in reality, it may not have come out in the dataset if another team member was also a minority in the group in terms of preferences. The point is that there is significant error introduced in teams that were underrepresented in size.

Relatedly, individual Shared Boundary Preferences scores demonstrated considerable heteroscedasticity, violating an assumption of regression. Error terms were not normally distributed across group sizes, suggesting that (at least descriptively) larger departments had
more error (SD = .54) in representing the construct compared to smaller group sizes (SD = .36; \( t(104) = -1.44, p = .15 \)). This in combination with the scatterplot distribution of errors suggests that a more robust test of the effects of interest would require a more complete set of team data.

Additional group comparisons were examined to help understand potentially meaningful error, given the incomplete dataset. Number of dependents ranged from 1-7. However, individuals with no dependents or who did not report any dependents did not differ on Work-Life Balance Effectiveness or Work Performance (\( M = 4.00, 3.25 \), respectively) compared to those with 1 or more dependents reported (\( M = 4.07; t(104) = .37, p = .70 \) and \( M = 3.29; t(104) = .36, p = .72 \) respectively). Further, hours worked ranged from 35 – 80. However, individuals who worked 40 hours or under reported higher Work-Life Balance Effectiveness (\( M = 4.40 \)) than those who worked more than 40 hours per week (\( M = 3.81; t(104) = 3.34, p < .001 \)). Individuals who worked 40 hours or under did not differ on Work Performance (\( M = 3.13 \)) from those who worked over 40 hours per week (\( M = 3.35; t(104) = -1.51, p = .133 \)).

Second, there was significant skewness in the Work Performance scores. The scores were very restricted in range. Graphically examining the data, the peak of response density was extremely high at the 3-point anchor on the 1-4 scale, showing that almost all team members scored the same for that year on their work performance. Further, the kurtosis score was 2.67, which suggests the data were significantly non-normal (George & Mallery, 2010) and do not represent the population of interest. The assumption is that in reality, work performance is normally distributed, with a small portion of employees being underperformers and a small portion of employees being overperformers, with a large number performing in the average range. While the 3-point anchor is not surprising due to the central tendency bias (average performance scores can be rationalized more easily than non-average), the lack of variability is
problematic. Thus, any differences that exist in reality were not represented by the data. Further, the effects of fit and work-life balance effectiveness on work performance were not sufficiently tested by the data because of the restriction of range; relationships between the target variables were not sufficiently tested. For example, if an employee scored very high or very low on the measure of Work-Life Balance Effectiveness, it most likely did not co-vary with their Work Performance score, on average, across the sample because of the restriction of range and perhaps not truly testing whether or not in reality the relationship exists.

Study Contributions

Due to the severe limitations of the sample, the response rate, and the restriction of range, the analyses did not have enough power to test the relationships of interest to the scientific or practitioner audiences. However, if the tests were examined in a more robust sample with a more precise measure of work performance and person-team fit, the design would have strong contributions to the literature. Support for the hypotheses would have suggested that the processes underlying fit within one’s immediate work environment is a part of the equation for work-life balance. Past research examining the link between shared values and behaviors (Schwartz, 1992) has not been applied to the work-life interface (Carlson & Kacmar, 2000). Also, there is high demand for empirical evidence for the effects of family-supportive supervisor behaviors and how they may or may not facilitate the integration of work and life (Hammer et al., 2013; Hammer et al., 2009; Kossek et al., 2011). Theoretical and empirical understanding of managerial support is lacking (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, in press). Thus, the current models proposed that the immediate social context (person-team fit), the supervisor, and the team culture are all separate routes to acceptance for work-life preferences. If these
hypotheses were supported in a separate sample, we would understand that to some extent work-life balance effectiveness depends on those within one’s work team sharing values and preferences, producing valuable resources such as communication and coordination within the immediate social environment. Further, if this model was applied and supported in a separate sample, the effects would contribute to the understanding of work-life balance effects on individual performance from supervisor rating data, which is an important extension of the dominant self-reported ratings of performance used in other work-life research (Van Steenbergen & Ellemers, 2009). Finally, if the hypotheses around boundary conditions were supported in another sample, this would provide theoretical clarity regarding the conditions under which fit is related to work-life balance effectiveness. Specifically, if the effect of fit on work performance through work-life balance effectiveness is smaller in some contexts (among teams with family-supportive supervisors or among highly cohesive teams), we would have reason to believe that these contextual factors have something in common, such as acceptance for individual preferences. Theoretically, if these boundary tests were supported it would suggest fit operates via the same underlying function as family-supportive supervision and team cohesion because it provides employees with support for their personal, individualized work-life balance needs and thus provides acceptance of individual needs.

If a future study addressed the limitations outlined above and still did not support the model of interest to this study, it would suggest the social context is not a critical component of work-life balance. While there is indirect evidence to support the role the immediate social context plays in this process, the evidence may stop with the main effects that are supported, such as family-supportive supervision and team cohesion. If person-team fit was sufficiently represented in measurement and still did not predict work-life balance, it may suggest work-life
balance is in fact an independent process that each individual must manage regardless of critical stakeholders’ alignment around them. It may be the case that skills and competencies, such as good communication, conscientiousness, and good time management are processes that supersede any relational similarities. In order to aid measurement of the main construct of interest, it may be reasonable to use group variability of boundary preferences as a group-level construct measure of similarity. The current study measures the differences, but the similarity may be easier to represent statistically with a smaller sample size.

Practically, support for these hypotheses would suggest that interventions should aim to foster person-team fit when it comes to work-life values and preferences. The implications for such conclusions may suggest an additional factor to consider when managing the broader workforce from an HR and talent management perspective. Also, training for family-supportive supervision (Nielsen, 2013) or team task cohesion may be another indirect route to employee work-life balance that adds to or buffers team fit, or lack thereof.

Last, select correlational findings may provide tentative practical implications. The link between Team Task Cohesion and Work-Life Balance Effectiveness suggests that, at least tentatively, there may be an alternative route to person-team fit in the work-life balance context. Thus, perhaps one route to be explored further as an intervention for work-life balance may be to support team’s in their ability to rise above their differences to get the work done via cohesive and coordinated communications. It seems to be the case once again that healthy, functional teams produce innumerable and invaluable positive outcomes for employees that transcend other seemingly critical factors such as fit and similarity.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

WORK-LIFE BALANCE SURVEY INTRODUCTION
Hi there,

We at CLIENT X care to understand how employees Be Well and have recently decided to build upon insights gathered from our review of our Wellness Program. Specifically, we’d like to learn more about what we as an organization are doing well in terms of work-life balance, and where we can improve. To that end, we are excited to say we’ve decided to partner with our friends at Ferguson Partners and a work-life balance researcher at Northern Illinois University to help us answer this question.

Your participation matters! In late November, you will be invited to participate in a short (5-10 min) voluntary survey. To protect your confidentiality and anonymity, your responses will be collected and analyzed via an external research platform at Northern Illinois University. Your unidentifiable responses will contribute to an empirical work-life balance research project, in addition to being shared with our HR team to inform our strategy for fostering a healthy wellness culture.

Thank you for your consideration and interest in this project. If you have any questions, contact the lead researcher, Amanda Conlin at aconlin@niu.edu or the HR team at CLIENT X.

CLIENT X
Vice President & Head of HR, Client X
Amanda Conlin, MA
Senior Associate, Ferguson Partners & Doctoral Candidate, Northern Illinois University
APPENDIX B

WORK-LIFE BALANCE SURVEY RECRUITMENT
Subject: Work-life balance Survey

To: All CLIENT X Employees

Hi there,

As you know, CLIENT X is trying to understand how employees Be Well and build upon insights regarding the Wellness Program. CLIENT X is partnering with research consultants to better understand and ultimately strengthen a culture that supports work-life balance.

We invite you to participate in a voluntary survey aimed at better understanding your work-life balance preferences.

Work-life balance is the extent to which an individual is able to meet others’ expectations, both at work and outside of work. This might look totally different for everyone, as we all care about living up to expectations from different people (e.g., supervisors, co-workers, sports teams, friends, children, etc.). What matters most depends on our personal values. Plus, we can do things to manage others’ expectations, such as clearly communicate how our time and energy will be spent, and update others as our priorities are constantly shifting based on demands.

If you are interested in the topic, please allow yourself 5-10 minutes to complete the survey link below. The results of the survey will remain totally confidential. What you indicate on the survey will in no way influence your performance evaluations. Further, the results will never be shared with your name attached; they will only be shared in aggregate form with other researchers who study work-life balance and with the HR team at CLIENT X.

If you have any questions, contact the lead researcher, Amanda Conlin at aconlin1@niu.edu. We look forward to learning more about the work-life balance at CLIENT X!

Click Here: Work-life balance Research Survey Link
APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT
You will be presented with information relevant to your opinions regarding your work experiences. Please be assured that your responses will be kept completely confidential. Your responses will not in any way influence your performance evaluations.

The study should take you around 5-10 minutes to complete. You have the right to withdraw at any point during the study, for any reason, and without any prejudice. If you would like to contact the researcher, please e-mail Amanda Conlin at aconlin1@niu.edu

By clicking the button below, you acknowledge that your participation in the study is voluntary, you are 18 years of age, and that you are aware that you may choose to terminate your participation in the study at any time.

(1) I consent, begin the study

(2) I do not consent, I do not wish to participate
APPENDIX D

ARCHIVAL EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY
The following variables are tracked by the Human Resources team at the client organization.

- Employee ID
- Supervisor ID
- Group
- Department
- Employee age
- Employee gender
- Number of dependents
- Marital status
APPENDIX E

WORK-LIFE BALANCE SURVEY
Work-Life Balance Survey

Family Supportive Supervisor Behaviors (Hammer, Kossek, et al., 2009)

1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

1. Your supervisor makes you feel comfortable talking to him/her about your conflicts between work and non-work.
2. Your supervisor demonstrates effective behaviors in how to juggle work and non-work issues.
3. Your supervisor works effectively with employees to creatively solve conflicts between work and non-work.
4. Your supervisor organizes the work in your department or unit to jointly benefit employees and the company.

Work-life balance Effectiveness (Carlson & Grywacz, 2009)

1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

5. I am able to negotiate and accomplish what is expected of me at work and in my family.
6. I do a good job of meeting the role expectations of critical people in my work and family life.
7. People who are close to me would say that I do a good job of balancing work and family.
8. I am able to accomplish the expectations that my supervisors and my family have for me.
9. My co-workers and members of my family would say that I am meeting their expectations.
10. It is clear to me, based on feedback from co-workers and family members, that I am accomplishing both my work and family responsibilities.

Team Task Cohesion (Widmeyer, Brawley, & Carron, 1985)

Instructions: For the questions on this page, your “team” refers to those who report to your same supervisor or peers at your level you are exposed to the most.

To what extent do you agree with the following?

1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree

11. Our team is united in trying to reach its goals for performance.
12. We all take responsibility for any loss or poor performance by our team.
13. Our team members communicate freely about each of our personal responsibilities in getting projects done.

Life Role Values (Stoner et al., 1991; Carlson & Kacmar, 2000)

1 = not at all important to 5 = extremely important

14. How important and significant is work in your total life?
15. How important and significant is family in your total life?
Segmentation Preferences (Kreiner, 2006)

1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree

16. I don’t like to have to think about work while I’m at home.
17. I prefer to keep work life at work.
18. I don’t like work issues creeping into my home life.
19. I like to be able to leave work behind when I go home.

Other items

20. How many hours do you actually work per week?

Total survey est. time: ~7.5 min
APPENDIX F

EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE RATING
## Supervisor Performance Ratings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall Performance Rating</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Needs improvement</td>
<td>Does not meet expectations</td>
<td>Solid / skilled performer</td>
<td>Talented / high performer</td>
<td>Outstanding / exceptional performer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>