6-21-2024

Exploring the Relationship between Partner Boundary Flexibility Congruence and Well-Being Outcomes While Work from Home During Covid: The Mediation of Dyadic Empathy

Huaying Li
Loyola University of Chicago Graduate School

LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

EXPLORING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTNER BOUNDARY FLEXIBILITY CONGRUENCE AND WELL-BEING OUTCOMES WHILE WORK FROM HOME DURING COVID: THE MEDIATION OF DYADIC EMPATHY

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO

THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

PROGRAM IN COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

BY

HUAYING LI

CHICAGO, IL

MAY 2024

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, I wish to express my deepest gratitude to the dedicated professors in the Counseling Department at Loyola University Chicago, without whom this dissertation would not have come to fruition. I am really appreciated to Dr. Millier Matthew, who graciously stepped into the role of my committee chair during an unexpected change and offered valuable guidance and unwavering support throughout my dissertation journey. I am thankful to Dr. Yoon for the insightful feedback during my proposal defense and for illuminating my understanding with diverse multicultural perspectives. I also extend my appreciation to Dr. Vera for joining my committee during a transition and to Dr. Hui Xu for imparting essential research skills.

In memory of my father, Zhijian Xia, who now watches over from the heavens, this dissertation is a tribute to him. His understanding, protection, and unwavering belief in me continue to be my guiding force and source of strength. I am eternally grateful for the constant love and support from my family. My mother, Jing Li, shouldered family responsibilities to ensure my journey was smooth, and my daughter, Evelyn, demonstrated immense patience and understanding during the countless hours I dedicated to this work. Lastly, I cannot thank my partner, Xin Huang, enough for being my pillar of support during challenging times.

This journey would not have been possible without the collective effort, love, and support of everyone mentioned and many more who stood by me.

For my father, Zhijian Xia,
and my daughter, Evelyn Huang

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background

COVID-19 has radically changed our lives. Employees had been compelled to work from home, and children had been transitioned to remote learning to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 suddenly without any prior preparation or experience. Work environments had been relocated at home and include numerous non-work-related tasks. People needed to switch flexibly between multiple roles—such as worker, caregiver, partner, tutor, cook, and housekeeper. Additionally, they need to establish new boundaries between work and family life and to collaborate with partners in adapting to these changes.

The phenomenon of working from home leads to a highly blurred and permeable work-family boundary, which has been viewed as a double-edged sword in prior research. Work-family integration can have either positive or negative consequences for workers (Hill et al., 1996). On the positive side, it can offer employees better opportunities for work-family balance, increased productivity, and greater flexibility (Sullivan, 2012; Anderson & Kelliher, 2020, Sandoval-Reye et al., 2021). Conversely, it may lead to work-family conflicts, stressful experiences, overworking and complex time management challenges (Prasad et al., 2020; Como et al., 2021; Sandoval-Reye et al., 2021). Therefore, it is crucial to investigate how to enlarge the positive outcome (i.e., marital satisfaction and work performance) of working from home.

Previous research has primarily focused on individual's work/family boundary management preferences and work-family interactions to further explore the influence of working from home. Similar to the findings on working from home, research results regarding boundary management preferences also indicated mixed positive and negative influences. For instance, studies have found that people with high flexibility in boundary management may experience low work-family conflict (Clark, 2002; Bulger et al., 2007). However, Allen et al. (2020) revealed the preference for segmenting work and family domains was associated with a greater work-nonwork balance. This suggests that the preference for integrating or segmenting work and family domains alone may not fully explain well-being outcomes, implying that other significant factors might be involved. For example, the interplay between an individual's needs and their environment could significantly influence their well-being. Therefore, this study adopts a person-environment fit (PE-fit) approach to deepen the understanding of the role of boundary management in this context.

According to the person-fit approach, scholars have examined the influence of the fit between employees' boundary management preferences and the boundaries facilitated by their organization. The results indicated that a "good fit" predicts favorable well-being outcomes. Specifically, the congruence between employees' preference for segmenting domains and the support provided by their employers' work environment was associated with greater job satisfaction, low stress (Kreiner, 2002) and improved work and family satisfaction, as well as reduced anxiety and depression (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999). Jansen & Kristof-Brown (2006) extended the concept of PE-fit into multidimensions, and noted the fit can also occur on an individual level and proposed a dimension of person-person fit (PP-fit), which focuses on the

compatibility between particular pairs of individuals within an environment (e.g., supervisor and supervisee; between two coworkers). Research in this area found that the PP-fit between subordinates and supervisors positively correlated to organizational commitment (Van Vianen, 2000) and work-to-family enrichment (Sublett et al., 2021).

However, previous studies have predominantly examined the fit within an organization's environment, where employees could distinguish work and non-work tasks by different locations, distinct co-workers, and clear distinctions between on and off times. However, during the pandemic, employees working from home are not solely operating in the context of their organization with colleagues and supervisors. Instead, they are simultaneously embedded in a family environment, co-working with their partners to negotiate and manage daily responsibilities of both work and family. Spouse forms a unique pair within this shared environment. Drawing on the PP-fit approach, the dyadic fit between partners is likely to play a significant role in work-family related positive outcomes (i.e., marital satisfaction, job satisfaction and work performance). Additionally, spousal relationship is unique because of its irreplaceable and equal nature (Wilkie et al., 1988), differing significantly from other employment and professional relationships. Therefore, understanding how the compatibility of work family boundary preferences between partners influences positive outcomes is crucial.

This study aims to explore how the congruence of boundary management preference between spouses impacts their well-being outcomes (i.e., marital satisfaction and job performance**)** when working from home during the pandemic**.** It seeks to enhance our understanding of how to improve well-being outcomes by considering the management of boundaries within a couple as a joint endeavor. Additionally, this study examined the mediating

effect of dyadic empathy for the partners between boundary flexibility congruence and well-being outcomes. Prior research in romantic relationships suggests that congruence between spouses leads to marriage satisfaction (Russel & Wells, 1991) and increases the duration of marriage (Rammstedt & Schupp, 2008). Studies also indicate that shared experiences can heighten empathy (Eklund et al., 2009; Hodges et al., 2010; Batson et al., 1996). It is highly possible that the greater similarity in the experiences of balancing work-home tasks between a spouse lead to their boundaries management preference is more congruent, thereby fostering increased empathy towards each other. Hence, I propose that empathy mediates the effect of boundary management congruence on marital satisfaction and work performance.

Key Definitions

Remote Working and Work Performance

The concept of "work from home" has gained widespread prevalence during the pandemic, representing a subset of the broader phenomenon of remote work. Remote work itself includes diverse modalities such as home-based work, operations from satellite offices, teleworking, utilization of telecenters, and engaging in mobile or nomadic work practices. Sullivan (2003) characterized remote work as a practice that relies on information and communication technologies. The pandemic has popularized working from home, either partially or entirely. This form of work can encompass the entirety or a fraction of an individual's work hours. Consequently, for the purposes of this study, the term 'remote work' specifically refers to the practice of working from home.

The prevalence of working from home experienced a marked increase during the pandemic, signaling a potential trend towards its continued popularity in the future. According to

the Current Population Survey (CPS, January 25, 2021), approximately 35% of the employed workforce, or 48.7 million people, were working from home as of May 2020. Moreover, research conducted by Upwork forecasts that by 2025, about 22% of employees (36.2 million Americans) will be working remotely. This number highlighted the importance of examining the interplay between remote working and individual well-being outcomes.

Individual responses to remote working can vary significantly, influenced by factors such as personal preferences, personality traits, behaviors, and the interaction with occupational and family dynamics (Kramer & Kramer, 2020). The impact of remote working on work-family interactions has yielded mixed findings. Studies indicate that remote work can lead to both positive and negative consequences (Sullivan & Lewis, 2006). On the positive side, it offers improved work-family balance, higher productivity, and increased flexibility (Sullivan, 2012; Anderson & Kelliher, 2020; Sandoval-Reye et al., 2021). Conversely, it can also lead to work-family conflicts, stressful experiences, tendencies to overwork, and challenges in time management (Prasad et al., 2020; Como et al., 2021; Sandoval-Reye et al.2021).

Considering these dynamics, our study will explore how employees navigate their boundary between work and family life in the context of remote working, with a specific emphasis on accounting for their partner's boundary flexibility. This approach is particularly significant when working from home where the lines between professional and personal spheres are blurred for both partners.

Boundary

Boundary is one of the most popular and significant topics in our personal and professional life. Boundary Theory guided us to understand the meaning of different skills and

preference of managing our time and responsibility and has been adopted in wealth research regarding work-family boundaries.

A boundary has been denoted as the point of contact between systems originating from systems theory and was conceptualized to vary in the degree they allow for flow between systems (Matthews et al., 2010). Nippert-Eng (1996) applied boundaries to the work and personal life interface, focusing on the work domain, family domain, and other personal life domains. She proposed that individuals are active organizations of themselves in creating their work - nonwork boundaries. Some individuals contrast their boundaries to make certain domains are segment (segmentation), while others construct their boundaries are not that strong so their domains are integrated (integration). In addition, she also suggested that the construction of a boundary (i.e., segmentation or integration) can be influenced by various factors including job type, colleagues, family members, and individual preference.

Clark (2000) further developed Nippert-Eng's boundary concept and proposed a concept of border focused only on work and family domains. Border theory involves the components of the nature (i.e., enactive rather than reactive) and strength (i.e., flexibility and permeability) of the border between work and family, and other characteristics of domains that influence the ability to balance work and family. Ashforth et al. (2000) separated the boundary theory and addressed the transition between roles held within and between work-family domains. Both Clark and Ashforth et al. suggested individuals are more enactive than reactive in defining and constructing boundaries in each domain. In other words, individuals have a preference for boundary management.

Boundary Flexibility and Permeability/Transitions

The capacity to permit or restrict flow between domains has been named boundary strength (Matthews, Barnes-Farrell, and Bulger, 2010). Both Clark (2000) and Ashforth et al. (2000) suggested that the strength of a boundary can be characterized by permeability and flexibility. Permeability refers to elements from one domain that are readily found in the other domain (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000), which represents a situation where a person is physically located in one domain but psychologically or behaviorally engaged in the other domain (Ashforth et al., 2000). Permeability might involve actual interruptions or intrusions from one domain into the other, over which the employee may have little control (Bulger et al., 2007). Clark (2000) defined boundary permeability as being physically located in one domain but actually behaviorally responding to the other domain. For instance, the work boundary is permeable if an employee is contacted by family while working. Permeability is defined as the transition between work and family domains by Matthews and Barnes-Farrell (2010). Current study will use their approach to understanding permeability to align their measurement tool to assess this transition.

Flexibility denotes that it could be relaxed to meet the demands of the other domain hypothetically (Clark, 2000, Ashforth et al., 2000). For example, a work boundary is flexible if the employee perceives that they could leave work to attend to a family matter. Therefore, the permeability is more on a behavioral level and real situations. Flexibility is for the potential ability or attitude of being flexible.

Boundary- Ability and Boundary-Willingness

Matthews and Barnes-Farrell (2010) further refined boundary flexibility by separating an individual's willingness and ability to leave one domain to attend to the demands of the other domain. Clark (2002), flexibility entails the perceived capacity to strengthen or weaken a boundary. Thus, boundary strength has been demonstrated as a function of flexibility-ability, flexibility-willingness, and permeability. Flexibility-ability is conceptualized as how individuals perceive they can move easily between domains. It will be influenced by organizational policy and norms regarding which movements are "permitted" rather than one's direct control (Kossek et al., 2006). For example, the organizations' policies about telecommuting available should contribute to perceptions of high work flexibility-ability (Kossek et al., 2006). Flexibility-willingness is a motivationally oriented individual difference variable contributing to actual domain segmentation-integration levels. For instance, employees who have low work flexibility-willingness may not fully utilize telecommuting opportunities. Permeability is how an individual allows elements from one domain to enter the other domain. Segmentation and integration are viewed as opposite ends of the same continuum (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner, 2006). Daniel and Sonnentag (2016) found a positive relationship between employees' permeability preferences and job satisfaction, which is linked by work-family enrichment.

Boundary and Well-being

According to Boundary theory, there are four ways to improve employees' well-being: 1. The characteristics of workers (e.g., time management skills); 2. The idiosyncratic meanings they attached to work and family (e.g., the extent to which they see the roles are similar); 3. Their preference for integration (i.e. high flexibility with high permeability) versus segmentation (i.e.,

low flexibility with low permeability), and contextual factors (e.g., "family-friendly" workplace norms, support from); and 4. The fit between their preferences and the boundaries allowed by their social context (Clark, 2000; Ashforth et al., 2000, Kreiner, 2002; Nippert-Eng, 1996). In order to explore the influence of working from home, research has focused on examining the relationships between individual boundary management preferences and work-family interactions. Results suggest that flexibility is a crucial factor. Research founds that high flexibility was associated with low work-family conflict while the permeability might be low or high (Clark, 2002; Bulger et al., 2007). Vaziri and colleagues (2020) proposed that individuals with high segmentation (low flexibility & low permeability) were more likely to experience low job satisfaction and job performance during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, Allen and colleagues (2020) found that the preference for segmentation was associated with a greater work-nonwork balance. Paustian-Underdahl and colleagues (2016) suggested a mixed positive and negative influence (e.g., high family involvement & less supervisor-rated promotability) of an integrating boundary (high flexibility & high permeability) management preference for employees.

Person-Environment Fit

Person-Environment Fit Theory (P-E fit) assumes that people have an innate need to fit their environments because they generally prefer consistency to exert control over life, reduce uncertainty, and have a need to belong, obtain happiness and life satisfaction (Yu, 2013). Employees need to adjust the home environment and make it match their personal preference to the maximum level when working from home.

The person-environment fit (P-E fit) approach has been generally defined as the compatibility between individuals and their environment, achieved when their characteristics are well-matched, explaining the importance of congruence between individual and the environment (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Fit theories are based on three basic principles. First, Scheider (1987) proposed that fit can predict individual outcomes (e.g., job performance, job satisfaction) better than either of person or environment along. Second, Fit theories claim that individual results are most optimal if personal attributes (e.g., need, values, and abilities) are compatible with the environment characteristics (e.g., demands, supplies, and values), disregarding the level of these attributes. For instance, employees with high, medium, or low needs are expected to respond similarly when fit occurs. Third, fit theories suggest misfits between person and environment reduce positive outcomes regardless of the direction of the discrepancies. For example, employees with high, medium, or low needs are supposed to respond similarly and negatively when misfit occurs, regardless of whether the environment offers more or less than the employee's needs (van Vianen, 2018). Thus, achieving the "fit" between individuals and the environment is saliant for enlarging the positive individual outcomes.

More scholars found the consistent results and suggested that a good fit between an individual and an environment produces positive outcomes (e.g., engagement, job satisfaction) (Kristof, 1996; Edwards, 1991), while the misfit leads to psychological and behavioral strains (e.g., dissatisfaction, burnout; Edwards & Shipp, 2007; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Rau and Hyland (2002) suggested that the relationship between boundary characteristics and work-family conflict may vary with employees' boundary preferences. Edwards and Rothbard (1999) found that a "good fit" between actual and preferred segmentation predicted well-being outcomes (i.e.,

work and family satisfaction, anxiety and depression). Kreiner's (2002) study also suggested that a good fit between employees' preferences for segmentation and their employers' work environment supplies was associated with greater job satisfaction and lower stress. Chen et al. (2009) suggested greater congruence was associated with lower work-to-family conflict and higher work-to-family positive spillover.

Multidimensions of Fit

This basic "fit" concept has been further developed as multidimensional: (1) person-job (P-J) fit (i.e., the compatibility between employee's skills and the demands of the job); (2) person-group (P-G) fit (i.e., the compatibility between individual's characteristics and the workgroup); (3) person-organization (P-O) fit (i.e., the compatibility between characteristics of employees and the culture, policies of their organization); (4) person-person (P-P) fit (i.e., the compatibility between two individual's perceptions and characteristics in a work environment, such as an applicant and an interviewer, supervisor, and subordinate, and mentor and protégé; Edwards & Billsberry, 2010; Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006). A great quantity of research related to well-being outcomes emphasized on P-O fit level. Organizations can offer family-friendly policies and benefits (e.g., flextime, leaves of absence, & onsite childcare) to meet employee's needs and achieve "the good fit "(Frye & Breaugh, 2004; Allen, 2001; Grandey, 2001; Lapierre & Allen, 2006; Cazan et al., 2019). A family-supportive supervisor can distribute family-friendly benefits, maintaining control over scheduling and give emotional support to help employees reduce work-family conflict (Greenhaus et al., 2012; Kossek et al., 2011).

Only a few research studied the "fit" on the interpersonal level, such as between coworkers, applicants and recruiters, and mentors and proteges, and the most well-researched

area is the match between supervisors and subordinates. Jansen and Kristof-Brown (2006) defined the person-person fit (P-P fit) dimension as the compatibility between particular pairs of individuals within an environment. Antonioni and Park (2001) found the positive association between peers' similarity in conscientiousness and peer ratings. Russel and Werbel (1994) noted that the work values congruence between recruiter and applicant significantly contributed to the prediction of recruiter's judgments of general employability and organization-specific fit. Graves and Powell (1995) suggested that the perceived similarity has mediating effects on the relationship between sex similarity and assessments of applicant's qualification for female recruiters. Consequently, research supported the congruence between pairs of individuals within an environment may have effects on one person's opinion or judgment of another. Research from Adkins, Van Vianen (2000) found that the P-P fit between newcomers and their supervisors was positively related to organizational commitment and turnover intentions. Sublett et al. (2021) suggested that the congruence between subordinates and their supervisor positively predicted work-to-family enrichment. Thus, the fit that occurs on the interpersonal level may predict positive outcomes (i.e., marital satisfaction, job satisfaction and work performance).

This study adopted the concept of "fit" from previous research, emphasizing the compatibility/congruence of boundary management preferences between spouses within an environment. It is highly possible that employees' well-being will increase if they achieve the "fit" with their partners during work from home, according to the P-E fit theory. Additionally, all the above studies only examined the dyadic fit in the organization's environment. During the pandemic, employees do not only work with their colleagues and supervisors when working from home. Instead, they are simultaneously nested in a family environment, co-working and

forming a particular pair with their spouses. Partners need to negotiate and manage daily responsibilities. The dyadic fit between partners is highly likely to play a role in work-family related outcomes (i.e., marital satisfaction, job satisfaction and work performance). Moreover, the spousal relationship is significantly different from any employment relationships because of its irreplaceable and equal characteristics (Wilkie, Ferree & Ratcliff, 1988). Therefore, the present study explores the relationship between the congruence of spouses' boundary management preferences (i.e., flexibility-ability, flexibility-willingness, and permeability) and the well-being outcomes (i.e., marital satisfaction, job satisfaction & work performance) when working from home during COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we will explore in what way congruence influences the well-being outcomes.

Congruence in People- environmental Fit

Congruence is commonly defined and measured through difference scores, including algebraic difference, absolute difference, and squared difference. Profile similarity indices (PSIs) are utilized less frequently when measuring congruence. PSIs encompass methods such as the summation of absolute differences, summation of squared differences, and square root of the summation of squared differences across items (Cheung, 2007). However, relying on difference scores can lead to issues of low reliability, and PSIs suffer from ambiguous conceptualization. They also present problems associated with concealing the contributions of individual components, imposing restrictive constraints on estimates, and overlooking the importance of measurement equivalence (Cheung, 2007).

To address these issues, I employ the Latent Congruence Model (LCM), which considers both the level (mean) and congruence (difference) of two interdependent observed variables,

defining congruence as the difference when using the partner's score to subtract the participant's score. In this manner, congruence is positive when the partner demonstrates greater flexibility than the participant, and negative when the partner exhibits lower flexibility.

Building upon the people-environment fit theories and research discussed previously, especially the PP fit, the partner's boundary flexibility or transition between domains can be equated to the environment supply. Consequently, positive d should lead to increased participant well-being and happiness due to the greater environmental supplies, the greater partner's boundary flexibility or more flexible transition. Conversely, negative congruence is expected to negatively predict participants' well-being.

Empathy

Empathy has been generally perceived as an ability to understand and even feel the emotions, needs and situations of others (Beavan, 1987). Researchers have identified empathy as one of the effective factors for maintaining the happiness of marriage. Gottman (1999) believed that happy couples are "intimately familiar with each other's world" (p. 48) and indicated that they provide empathy generously to the other partners. Empathy will make couples understand each other better and provide effective help and emotional support to each other (Simpson et al., 2003; Verhofstadt et al., 2008; Haugen et al., 2008). Therefore, empathy has constantly attracted many researchers' attention, especially when it is related to relationship satisfaction.

Davis (1994) defined empathy as a multifaceted construct involving three primary components: (a) a cognitive component (i.e., perspective taking), which refers to the ability to understand another person's point of view; (b) an emotional component (i.e., empathic concern), which refers to one's emotional reaction as a result of another person's experience; and (c) a

personal distress component, which refers to the tendency to experience distress as a result of others' suffering. Like general empathy, dyadic empathy has been regarded as a multidimensional construct consisting of both cognitive and emotional experiences (Péloquin & Lafontaine, 2010). Dyadic empathy encompasses perspective taking and empathic concern because it is "other-oriented," in contrast to a self-oriented response (e.g., personal distress; Péloquin & Lafontaine, 2010). Current study adopted the cognitive component and emotional component (i.e., perspective taking and empathic concern) of dyadic empathy between couples.

The idea that having a similar experience with another person will increase the empathy for that person is widely believed among philosophers and psychologists (Eklund et al., 2009). They believe that if you have had children, you can adopt a parent's perspective; if you had a spouse relationship, you could understand the challenges and conflicts in marriage. Hume (1957) suggested that people can vicariously experience the same feelings as another person when they recall the experience of being in similar situations. Hoffman (2000) also argued that similar worries arouse the same emotions even across cultures, contributing to a sense of oneness and empathy.

Having the same boundary management preference will elicit a similar experience of balancing work and family. Especially when both partners work from home, one partner may have difficulty adjusting another's boundary management strategies and cause more conflicts and negotiation. Additionally, the responsibility may not be shared "fairly" because of the misfit boundary management preference, which may increase physical and emotional stress for at least one person in the marital relationship. Therefore, the present study proposes a positive relationship between the congruence of the boundary management preference and empathy.

Dyadic empathy increases the likelihood of cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses that facilitate romantic relationship quality for both partners (Davis & Oathout, 1987; Reis & Shaver, 1988). In particular, dyadic empathy may enhance relationships by allowing an individual to feel understood and validated by their partner, or by promoting prosocial behaviors such as displays of affection, thus serving to maintain their bond and enhancing satisfaction with the relationship (Rosen et al., 2017). The research found that general and dyadic empathy does have a significant positive influence on relationship quality and functioning (Davis & Oathout, 1987; Fields, 1983; Busby & Gardner, 2008).

Marital Satisfaction and Job Satisfaction

Marital satisfaction has been defined as the extent to which needs, expectations, and desires have been met in marriage (Bahr et al., 1983). Couples had difficulty adjusting because their needs and expectations were different, and each person expected their spouse's needs to be similar to their own (Harley, 1986). Satisfied couples understand and accept the other person's views and needs (Lauer et al., 1990). Fields (1983) suggested that satisfied couples were flexible to adapt to their partner's changing needs; being understanding and accepting in the context of relationships with others requires empathy. Kimmes et al., (2014) indicated that the sum of self and partner-reported perceived dyadic empathy and perceived dyadic empathic congruity were significant predictors of relationship satisfaction. In contrast, a lack of dyadic empathy may convey disinterest, potentially resulting in feelings of being misunderstood or unimportant to the partner or engaging in insensitive behaviors, which would cause negative consequences for both partners (Davis & Oathout, 1987).

Dyadic empathy also influences employees' job satisfaction and performance. Research suggested a strong influence that specific individuals may have on another's work experience (e.g., Turban & Jones, 1988; Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006). Some research explored one partner's influence on the other's job-related outcomes (e.g., work engagement, job satisfaction and performance) from a family-work enrichment perspective. This means an individual's job-related outcomes are facilitated by what has happened at home. Chen, Allen and Hou (2020) found that an actor's empathic concern positively relates to the partner's work-to-family enrichment and work-to-family balance based on the actor-partner interdependence model. Empathy has been found to increase helping and cooperative behaviors (Kamdar et al., 2006). Therefore, dyadic empathy can be helpful when spouses negotiate work and family responsibilities because empathic partners are more likely to use cooperative communication strategies (Pruitt & Lewis, 1975) to successfully achieve their role expectations of both work and family. Westman (2001) suggested that couples can influence each other when they mutually cope with work-family situations. Regarding the work-to-family balance, which has been defined as the accomplishment of role-related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and his/her role-related partners in the work and family domains". In other words, work-to-family balance requires the meeting of the couple mutually agree upon core requirements in both work and family roles (Grzywacz & Carlson's, 2007). To achieve mutual agreement, dyadic empathy plays a significant role by providing helpful and cooperative behaviors during the negotiation process. Thus, we propose that perceived dyadic empathy, both cognitive and emotional components, are positively related to an individual's job performance.

Hypotheses

The current study will investigate the relationship between spouses' congruence on their boundary flexibility and well-being outcomes from a person-environment fit perspective. Moreover, we are extending our exploration to include the role of empathy in the relationship between spouse congruence on their work/family boundary flexibility and well-being outcomes. Specifically, we will examine how empathic concern and perspective-taking function as mediators in this dynamic. This approach aligns with the person-environment fit perspective, offering a comprehensive view of how individual differences in empathy might influence the effects of congruence between couples on their well-being.

The methodology adopted for this study is the Latent Congruence Modeling (LCM) as proposed by Cheung in 2002. This model is particularly suited for our research as it evaluates congruence through the differences between paired data while controlling the mean of their scores. In this context, congruence in current study is defined as difference by subtracting the participant's score from their partner's score. Therefore, a greater congruence suggests that the partner's score exceeds the individual's, and it can indicate either a closer similarity or a greater divergence in the couple's boundary flexibility.

Specifically, congruence is conceptualized as the inconsistency between couples, considering the partner's boundary flexibility as context or environment. Consequently, we consider congruence to be positive and greater when the partner demonstrates greater flexibility compared to the participant. Conversely, the congruence is negative or smaller when the participant exhibits less flexibility than their partner. This definition of congruence expands our understanding beyond a simple measure of similarity or difference between partners. It positions

congruence as a dynamic factor that aligns well with the person-environment fit approach while considering the meaning of the couple's scores. By adopting this approach, we can explore the complexities of how congruence influences well-being outcomes, offering a more holistic understanding of the interplay between individual preferences, empathy, and the shared environment in relationships.

The relationship between the congruence of boundary management preference and well-being outcomes

Regarding the person-environment fit approach, people have an innate need to fit their environments because they generally prefer consistency to exert control over life, reduce uncertainty, and have a need to belong, obtain happiness and life satisfaction (Yu, 2013). Rothbard et al. (2005) found the congruence between employees' boundary management preference and the organization policy is positively related to individual satisfaction/commitment. The spouse relationship is one of the person-person fits (P-P level), which refers to the compatibility between two individuals' perceptions and characteristics in an environment. Employees' well-being will be enlarged if the partners are "fit" regarding the boundary management strategies during work from home. Accordingly, research on the P-P level suggests a strong influence that specific individuals may have on another's work experience (e.g., Turban & Jones, 1988; Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006). Vieira et al. (2018) proposed that the dissimilar work-family balance experiences of partners imply detrimental effects on both of them. Previous research revealed that match or similarity between an individual with an working environment or with another person may have positive effects on well-being outcomes. Therefore, I propose that the congruence of spouses' boundary is negatively related to the

participants' well-being outcomes, where congruence is defined as the partner's score minus the participant's score. Furthermore, this study differentiates between boundary flexibility and permeability (transition), in line with the conceptualization Matthews and Barnes-Farrell (2010), thus retaining both variables as separate predictors in the analysis. Fig.1 presents the primary model with boundary flexibility/transition as predictors, marital satisfaction and task performance as outcomes and dyadic empathy as the mediator.

Hypothesis 1a. The congruence (difference) of family boundary flexibility between partners is negatively related to marital satisfaction and task performance.

Hypothesis 1b. The congruence (difference) of family to work transition between partners is negatively related to marital satisfaction and task performance.

Hypothesis 1c. The congruence (difference) of work boundary flexibility between partners is negatively related to marital satisfaction and task performance.

Hypothesis 1d. The congruence (difference) of work to family transition between partners is negatively related to marital satisfaction and task performance.

The relationship between the congruence of boundary management preference and dyadic empathy

Eklund et al. (2009) believes that having similar experiences with another person will increase empathy for that person. Batson et al. (1996) found that prior experience increased empathy among women but not among men. Regarding perspective taking, Gerace et al., (2015) suggested that similar past experiences predicted ease of perspective taking, with the relationship influenced by reflection on experience. In the context of empathy development, Eklund et al. (2009) proposed that similar experiences may be an important situational antecedent for feeling

empathy for another person. Additionally, a similar experience of balancing work and family can be produced by the congruent boundary management preference between spouses. In other words, the smaller the congruence is, the greater the understanding and empathy should have. Thus, I propose a negative relationship between the spouses' congruence of boundary management preference and dyadic empathy.

Hypothesis 2a. The congruence (difference) of family boundary flexibility between partners is negatively related to their dyadic empathy.

Hypothesis 2b. The congruence (difference) of family to work transition between partners is negatively related to their dyadic empathy.

Hypothesis 2c. The congruence (difference) of work boundary flexibility between partners is negatively related to their dyadic empathy.

Hypothesis 2d. The congruence (difference) of work to family transition between partners is negatively related to their dyadic empathy.

The relationship between empathy and well-being outcomes

Dyadic empathy increases the likelihood of emotional and behavioral responses and facilitates positive spouse relationships for other partners (Davis & Oathout, 1987; Reis & Shaver, 1988). The research (O'Brien et al, 2009) indicates a link between marital adjustment and the use of empathic responding for both husbands and wives within couples. Cohen et al. (2012) found that the perceived empathic effort was more strongly linked with both partners' relationship satisfaction than empathic accuracy. Rosen, Mooney & Kuise (2017) believed a positive relationship between new parents' dyadic empathy and relationship adjustment. Kimmes and Colleague (2014) suggested that total perceived dyadic empathy for self and partner

significantly predicts relationship yisatisfaction. Based on these results, I proposed a positive relationship between dyadic empathy and well-being outcomes.

Hypothesis 3a. Dyadic empathy has a positive effect on marital satisfaction.

Hypothesis 3b. Dyadic empathy has a positive effect on work performance.

Indirect effects

Hypotheses 2 and 3 suggest indirect effects. First, Hypothesis 2 proposes a negative relationship between congruence of boundary flexibility between partners and dyadic empathy, indicating that as congruence decreases, dyadic empathy increases. Then, Hypothesis 3 hypothesizes a positive relationship between dyadic empathy and well-being outcomes, suggesting that higher levels of dyadic empathy lead to better well-being outcomes. Therefore, when linking Hypotheses 2 and 3, I propose an indirect effect of boundary flexibility congruence on well-being outcomes mediated by dyadic empathy. Specifically, lower congruence leads to higher dyadic empathy, which in turn enhances well-being outcomes.

Hypothesis 4a. The congruence of spouses' boundary flexibility is indirectly related to well-being outcomes via dyadic empathy.

Hypothesis 4b. The congruence of spouses' boundary transition is indirectly related to well-being outcomes via dyadic empathy.

Fig. 1 demonstrated the hypothesized model.

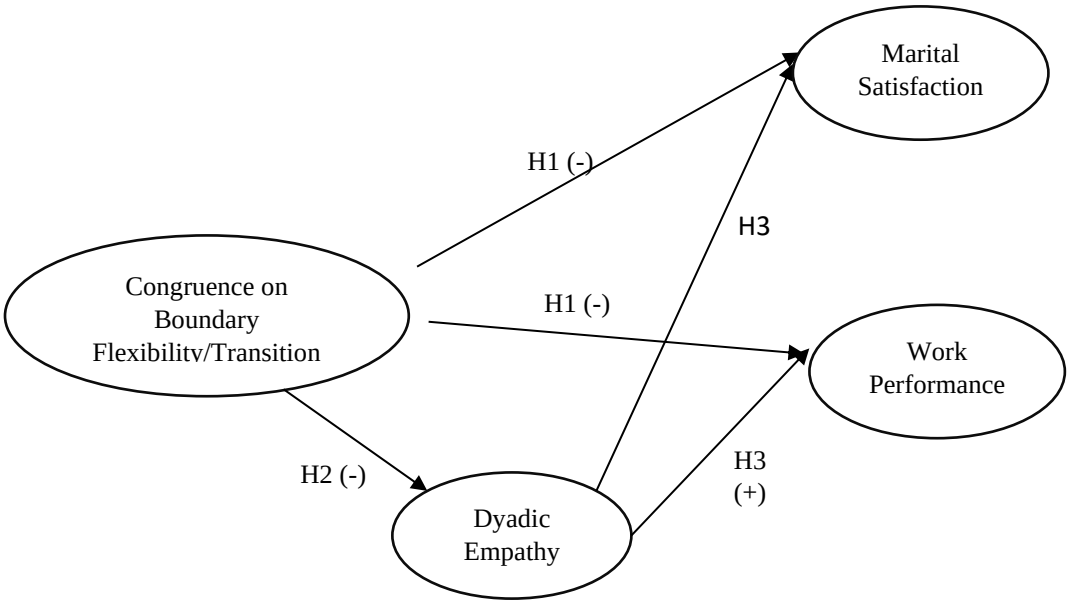

Fig. 1. Hypothesized Model.

CHEPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theories and Research

The literature review chapter will concentrate on reviewing both theoretical and empirical literature that is related to the factors selected for the study. This chapter is divided into six sections. The work-family boundary management preference, the relationship between the boundary management strategy and the well-being outcomes, and remote worker boundary management preference. The next section is to explore the importance of the congruence of couples and the work-family boundary between pairs and how it influences the well-being outcomes. The last section will review the potential mediators between couple's congruence and their well-being. Although the study's purpose is focusing on the couple's congruence of their work-family boundaries management, the congruence of particular pairs of individuals within an environment (e.g., supervisor and supervisee; between two coworkers) and the important influent factors of their well-being will also be reviewed, including Boundary theory, work from home, Covid-19, work-family boundary management preference, empathy to partner and the well-being outcomes among US employees. The literature presented provides the foundation for the factors selected for use in the study and guides the hypotheses the study proposed.

Boundary Theories and the Fit

Boundaries are pivotal in both personal and professional aspects of our lives, shaping the dynamics of work and family interactions. Research over the years has explored the nuance

functions, and impacts of these boundaries. Specifically, boundary theory offers a critical lens to examine the interplay between inter-role conflicts and flexible work arrangements (Allen et al., 2014). This perspective is instrumental in our current study for understanding how individuals balance their work and family commitments. This literature review presented here integrates major discoveries, shedding light on the characteristics, categorization, and significance of managing boundaries.

In the early phase, Zerubavel (1991) introduced the idea that boundaries are not innate constructs but rather are socially conceived. He emphasized the nature of these boundaries as artificial and arbitrary, underscoring the societal role in their creation. Building on this, Nippert-Eng (1996) posited that humans, in their quest for order, impose boundaries on nearly every facet of existence. This imposition is a countermeasure to the natural chaos or "non-order" of things. These boundaries, while mentally conceptualized, can manifest a key aspect of boundary theory is the dynamic nature of these constructs. Contrary to being fixed, boundaries are constantly evolving, influenced by individual interactions and broader social contexts (Nippert-Eng, 1996). This perspective has spurred extensive research into how different environments, both immediate and extended, shape the dynamics of boundaries. Particularly noteworthy is the exploration of work-related boundaries, examining how the boundaries align or misalign between personal preferences and organization requirement, especially given the recent shifts in workplace norms and the increasing overlap of work with personal life. These implied that boundaries are creations of society or management, indicating that humans have learned to establish and adapt to these boundaries based on the environment requirement.

In the context of work and family, Nippert-Eng (1996) identified various forms in which these boundaries appear, categorizing them into cognitive, physical, temporal, and behavioral facets. The relationship between these delineations can be viewed along a continuum ranging from segmentation to integration. Segmentation refers to a scenario where personal and professional lives are distinctly separate. Conversely, integration describes a scenario where these two domains are so intertwined that distinctions blur (Ammons, 2013). While theoretically, any individual can find themselves anywhere on this spectrum, most find themselves navigating the middle ground. This in-between stance is largely attributed to societal structures and the inherent expectations tied to both the personal and professional realms (Ammons, 2013).

Kossek and Lautsch (2008) found three boundary strategies, including Integrators, Separators and Alternating. Integrators refers to the individuals who integrated work and family domains completely. Separators denotes people who separated their work and family domains completely. Alternating refers people who engaged in both integration and segmentation strategy over time. They also argued the variation in individual enacted boundary management styles (e.g., integration, separation, and alternating) are influenced by individual preferences for boundary-crossing (e.g., flexibility, permeability, symmetry and direction), the centrality of their work-family role identity, and the organizational work-family climate for customization. Their model also suggested that an individual's perceived control over enact boundary management styles, which aligns with their boundary-crossing preferences and their role identity, directly influences their perception of work-family conflict, and moderates the relationship between enacted boundary management styles and W-F conflict across organizational contexts.

Ammons (2013) included directional nuances from work-to family and/or family -to - work, separated preferences from enactments, and proposed four distinct boundary strategies emerged from a research data, including 1) protecting family, 2) above and beyond, 3) enhancing family, and 4) holistic. The "protecting family" strategy maintains a clear separation between work and family domains, aligning closely with the segmentation end of the continuum from Nippert-Eng's idea. The next two strategies for managing work-family boundaries fall in the middle of this spectrum. The "Above and Beyond" approach permits the intrusion of work into life domains but ensures that family and personal matters remain distinct. Conversely, the "Enhance Family" strategy allows family and personal aspects to permeate the work domain, while keeping work-related issues confined. At the opposite end of the spectrum lies the "Holistic" boundary strategy, characterized by highly fluid work and life domains with minimal, if any, boundaries between them, embodying the essence of integration.

However, extensive research has uncovered the intricate nature of the influence exerted by boundary management strategies. Scholars posit that the permeability or integration of these boundaries may yield benefits in one domain while simultaneously exerting adverse effects in another. Furthermore, the alignment between an employee's core role identity and the contextual supports, coupled with their sense of professional calling, is pivotal in determining the outcomes related to their well-being. This complexity underscores the need for a nuanced understanding of boundary management dynamics in organizational settings.

Furtado et al. (2016) found that demands in one domain can reduce the boundary strength (i.e., permeability and flexibility) around another domain, facilitating a drain of resources from the latter domain, subsequently escalating the conflict experienced within it. The findings also

indicate that a work identity further intensifies this weakening of home boundary strength caused by increased work demands.

Choi et al. (2018) found that individuals with a strong sense of professional calling derived more psychological capital from their jobs. This enhanced capital, in turn, bolstered work-to-family enrichment and overall life satisfaction. They also find that the positive relationship between a professional calling and work-to-family enrichment was amplified for those who preferred distinct boundaries between work and family (i.e., separators) compared to those who leaned towards integrating the domains.

Wepfer et al. (2018) found that employees with high levels of work-to-life integration enactment engage in fewer recovery activities. This diminished participation in recovery activities leads to greater exhaustion and a reduced sense of work-life balance.

The study from Hunter et al. (2019) revealed that boundary violations contribute to perceptions of work-family conflict both directly and indirectly. This indirect influence is mediated through cognitive appraisals of thwarted goals and, specifically in the work domain, through negative affective reactions. Additionally, boundary violations are linked to satisfaction via goal appraisal. The research also identifies a positive aspect of boundary violations: they can lead to enhanced positive affect resulting due to facilitated goals in the interrupting domain.

The research further delves into the impact of the congruence between an employee's personal preferences for boundary management and the existing organizational rules and norms. This area of study emphasizes the significance of alignment between individual boundary management styles and the broader organizational context. The degree of this fit is posited to

play a crucial role in influencing employee satisfaction, engagement, and overall work-life balance.

Ammons (2013) proposed that there is a constant shift in these boundaries when individuals are granted more control over their work-related demarcations. Additionally, Ammos found that men and parents of young children have a better congruence between their preferred and enacted boundaries as compared to women and those not saddled with such caregiving responsibilities, which also resonates with the importance of the centrality of work-family role and perceived control on boundary management styles based on underlying societal and gender norms.

Bogaerts et al. (2018) underscored the significance of managing work-nonwork boundaries in relation to employee well-being, notably in areas of stress and work-life conflict. Their study affirmed the role of work-nonwork boundary management fit in determining employee well-being, independent of other influential factors like workload and work interrupting nonwork behaviors. This highlights the need for organizational culture and work-family policies to be considerate and supportive in helping employees achieve the boundary management fit.

The interplay of employees' permeability (psychological boundary) and flexibility (physical boundary) and how these align with their workplace offerings was the focus of the research by Daniel and Sonnentag (2016). Their findings from regression analysis highlighted a strong correlation between an employee's permeability preferences, work-to-family enrichment, and job satisfaction. Work-to-family enrichment served as a mediator in the relationship between preferences for permeability and job satisfaction. Additionally, it also mediated the relationship

between the perception of flexibility provisions and job satisfaction. The results stress the influence of boundary management styles on positive outcomes.

Chen et al. (2009) embarked on an exploration of latent congruence in work-to-family dynamics using survey data. The results noted that congruence reduced time-based and strain-based work-to-family conflicts, while it was unexpectedly found to have a negative association with positive spillover in the affective domain of work-to-family dynamics.

Chu, Creed and Conlon's (2021) model put forth an intricate interplay between family support, workplace backing, and well-being. Interestingly, the relationship between these factors was mediated by boundary congruence and varied based on individual proactivity levels.

In conclusion, the existing literature underscores the intricate and multifaceted nature of work-related boundaries and their implications on employee well-being. The studies collectively indicate that achieving a harmony between individual preferences and workplace provisions, understanding the differential management of boundaries across demographics, and grasping the nuanced effects of boundary violations are pivotal in promoting employee well-being and optimal work-life balance.

Work-from Home

A survey conducted by Upwork, which included responses from 1,500 hiring managers, has illuminated significant shifts in workplace dynamics as a consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic. This survey revealed that 61.9% of the surveyed companies intend to augment remote work opportunities in the current scenario and continue to do so in the foreseeable future. As approximately 70% of full-time employees transitioned to remote working arrangements. The enduring impact of this transition is underscored by post-pandemic work expectations; survey

data indicates that 92% of the respondents expect to continue working from home for at least one day per week, and 80% foresee working remotely for a minimum of three days per week.

The shift to remote work has conferred various benefits. For instance, small companies have experienced cost savings through reduced office rent. Moreover, the geographical constraints in hiring have been significantly diminished, leading to a broader talent pool. Environmental benefits have also been noted, particularly in the form of a reduced carbon footprint. For employees, remote working has resulted in saved commuting time, increased flexibility in work schedules, and an enhanced work-life balance.

However, this evolution in work arrangements has not been without its challenges. The ascent of remote work, coupled with flexible working hours and technology-mediated communication, has led to an increasingly blurred line between professional and personal life. The rapid proliferation of teleworking poses both challenges and opportunities in defining work-home boundaries. As employees across various sectors navigate these blurred boundaries, understanding their coping strategies and the impact on their well-being becomes imperative. A key aspect of this adaptation is boundary flexibility, which refers to the degree to which these work-home boundaries can be modified to suit individual and organizational needs. This phenomenon necessitates a nuanced understanding of the evolving work-life paradigm in the context of contemporary organizational behavior.

Gajendran and Harrison (2007) proposed telecommuting demonstrates predominantly positive impacts, particularly on proximal outcomes like enhanced perceived autonomy and reduced work-family conflict. Furthermore, telecommuting positively influences more distant

outcomes, including job satisfaction, performance, intent to leave, and role stress. These positive effects seem to be partially mediated through the increased perception of autonomy.

Breaugh and Farabee (2012) indicated telecommuting and flextime are helpful for employees to balance the competing demands of their work and nonwork lives.

Basile and Geauregard (2016) delved into the strategies that teleworkers employ to delineate their work and personal spaces. They underscored that just as there are physical boundaries in traditional office environments, teleworkers strive to replicate similar demarcations in their home workspace. Such boundaries were found to manifest in diverse forms, from physical and temporal to behavioral and communicative strategies. Interestingly, while most teleworkers could fashion strategies that catered to their preferred work-home integration or segmentation, those with heightened job autonomy and control fared better in this endeavor. This raises pertinent questions about the role of facilitating effective boundary management for remote employees.

Giménez-Nadal et al. (2020) discovered that teleworkers dedicate considerably less time to their official tasks compared to their commuting counterparts. Moreover, the conventional concept of "regular hours" sees a significant shift, with a reduced proportion of teleworkers adhering to traditional work hours. Leveraging well-being data from 2012 and 2013, a striking gender difference emerges. Male teleworkers, it was found, experienced diminished negative feelings during work when compared to commuters, a finding that begs further exploration into the differential impacts of teleworking on diverse demographics.

Eddleston and Mulki (2017) research provides a complementary perspective, highlighting the unique challenges remote workers face when their work realm becomes intertwined with

their family domain. Their qualitative study revealed that efforts to minimize integration seemed to alleviate work–family conflict. The survey-based study supported that by showing the high integration increases the WFC (work-family conflict) and FWC (family-work conflict) of remote workers. WFC is a more significant problem compared with FWC for remote workers. They also revealed the unique experience of boundary management between men and women, indicating that male remote workers benefit from a high segmentation of work and family roles to minimize WFC. Moreover, continuous engagement in work does not exacerbate WFC for men. In contrast, female remote workers do not experience as severe WFC from integrating work and family roles as their male counterparts do. However, the difficulty in disengaging from notably increased WFC among women. Gendered nuances emerge, with male remote workers finding the extensive work-family integration more detrimental, while female counterparts grapple more with the challenges arising from their inability to mentally detach from work.

Together, these studies provide a mosaic of the complexities inherent in remote work. As the work landscape continues to evolve, these insights underscore the pressing need to understand, and more importantly, address the multi-dimensional challenges and opportunities presented by remote work. Not only do they shed light on the strategies teleworkers employ to navigate these blurred boundaries, but they also raise essential questions about the role of employers, job design, and societal norms in shaping these experiences.

Boundary Research during COVID -19

In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared a global pandemic in response to the widespread outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 virus (World Health Organization, 2020). This declaration marked the beginning of an unparalleled shift in the work

environment, as a significant number of employees transitioned to teleworking. This shift has blurred the boundaries between work and home life, particularly for those with children. Consequently, research on work-life balance has increasingly focused on the concept of boundary violations and their impact on both work and family satisfaction. A study by Kerman et al. (2022) highlights this issue, with participants reporting, "At the end of the day, I realized I did not focus enough on work but also wasn't fully present in my private life. (p.785)" Their research identified a domain-specific relationship between boundary violations and domain satisfaction, cross-domain effects received limited empirical support. Moreover, no support was found for an anticipated moderating role of segmentation preferences. Interestingly, they highlighted the work and home boundary violations related to an increase in unfinished tasks in both domains. They also suggested that the indirect effects showed the home-related unfinished tasks can negatively impact satisfaction in both work and personal life domains. However, work-related unfinished tasks may adversely impact work satisfaction but not home-related satisfaction.

Mandeville et al (2022) merging the domains of crisis management and boundary theory to furnish insights into the challenges confronting working parents amidst abrupt transitions to remote work and school closures. They uncovered the early experience of boundary violations and job insecurity impact work-family balance self-efficacy, subsequently steering job performance through effects on parents' subjective well-being.

Adisa et al (2022) argued that 'flexible' working arrangements, working from home, might lead to reduced flexibility when it is mandated, particularly the essential support systems, such as childcare and physical social interaction are unavailable. These scenarios intensified parent’s workloads, increased employer monitoring, social isolation, and blurred boundaries,

then generate the reduction of parent's perceived flexibility ability. These experiences might be significant negative for parents who have separation boundary management preference. To navigate these challenges, employees exhibited resilience by creating 'micro-borders' and resorting to time-management techniques to foster a 'controlled integration'.

Mellner et al (2021) distinguish the complex interrelations between enacted boundaries, preferred boundaries, and control over work-nonwork boundaries in relation to work-life conflict. Based on their findings, it can be concluded that work-life conflict is influenced variably by the type and degree of boundary congruence. Specifically, the actual enactment of, or preference for, work-life integration may present more challenges in terms of work-life conflict, rather than just incongruence. Furthermore, boundary control is a crucial factor in mitigating work-life conflict, particularly for the individuals who practice integration but inherently prefer segmentation in work-family balance. Collectively, they highlighted the importance of valuing different types and levels of boundary congruence, which are associated with different levels of work-life conflict and are moderated by boundary control.

Haun et al. (2022) embarked on an examination of the strategies teleworkers employed during this period. With data gathered from a sample who predominantly worked from home, they discovered that utilizing temporal boundaries was linked to enhanced psychological detachment, a sense of control, and diminished exhaustion. In contrast, technological boundary strategies were affiliated with heightened psychological detachment. Their findings provided valuable insights into the recovery processes of teleworkers, offering actionable strategies for ensuring sustainable mental and emotional well-being.

In conclusion, these studies emphasize the critical factors of real flexibility and control on boundary management, and the importance of the congruence between individual's preference and enactment when work from home during COVID-19.

The Congruence of Couples and the Work-Family Boundary between Pairs and the Influence on Well-being Outcomes

In the contemporary study of interpersonal dynamics, a significant emphasis has been placed on understanding the interplay between personal goals, presence of a partner, and the consequent perceived well-being. Gere et al (2011) proposed that the alignment between individual goals and those of their partners in shared activities can significantly influence affective well-being. Using data collected from both married individuals and those in dating relationships, their research underscored a pivotal finding: the highest affective well-being was observed when partners jointly partook in activities that catered to the goals of both individuals. Moreover, feelings of closeness emerged as a significant mediator, indicating that shared goal fulfillment, beyond its direct impact, also facilitates enhanced affective well-being through fostering closeness.

Transitioning from intimate relationships to professional settings, Paustian-Underadhl et al (2013) delve into the intricate nexus between family involvement and its ramifications in the workplace. Specifically, their study posited that employees harness resources from their family roles, a phenomenon they termed as family-to-work enrichment (FWE). This transfer of resources, as demonstrated among registered nurses and their supervisors, yielded intriguing outcomes; a surge in FWE led to a favorable impression of the employee's potential for promotion. However, this relationship was contingent upon individual boundary management

preferences, with integrating preferences enhancing the positive effects of family involvement on FWE, but simultaneously attenuating the FWE-promotability association.

Supplementing this exploration of workplace dynamics, Sublett et al (2021) cast light on the pivotal role of value congruence between employees and their organizational milieu in fostering work-to-family enrichment (WFE). Drawing from a diverse cohort of American employees, their findings accentuated that when subordinates perceived their values as aligned with those of their organization or supervisor, there was a heightened sense of WFE. This relationship was substantially mediated by family-supportive supervisor behaviors. By amalgamating insights from spillover theory, person-environment fit theory, and boundary theory, Sublett et al offer a comprehensive framework elucidating the development of WFE in the backdrop of congruent segmentation styles at work.

Regarding the perspective of viewing couples as pairs, Russo et al.'s (2018) study indicate that women reported higher levels of relationship satisfaction compared to men when their partners exhibited increased family-interrupting work behaviors, such as responding to a call from the partner during work hours. Interestingly, this relationship was found to be more pronounced in cases where partners shared perceptual congruence regarding the primary responsibility for caregiving arrangements within the family. This suggests that when both partners have a mutual understanding and agreement about caregiving roles, women's relationship satisfaction is positively influenced by their partner's engagement in behaviors that interrupt work for family matters.

Junker and Dick (2020) proposed five preferences: work-centric (i.e., prioritizing work over family), family-centric (i.e., prioritizing family over work), and three dual-centric

preferences (i.e., emphasizing both roles to a similar extent). The different degree of blend their work and family roles, resulting in merging, integrating, or segmenting preferences. The research findings provide empirical support for the notion that the congruence between an employee's own preferences and their spouse's expectations about balancing work and family roles is closely linked to the employee's satisfaction with their work-family balance and their perceptions of spousal support.

Dyadic Empathy as a Mediator between Couple's Flexibility Congruence and Their Well-being

The potential mediators between couples' flexibility congruence and their well-being can be deeply understood through the lens of attachment and relational theories. Attachment theory posits that an individual's ability to respond to their partner's distress signals is contingent on the security of their own attachment system. This theory underscores the relationship between dyadic empathy and relationship satisfaction, suggesting that caregiving responses are activated when an individual feels securely attached (Davis, 1980).

Relational theory further supports this by asserting that empathy is crucial for maintaining personal relationships (Waldinger et al., 2004). Empathy enables partners to feel understood and validated, thus strengthening the bonds and intimacy between them (Péloquin & Lafontaine, 2010). Conversely, a lack of empathy can erode closeness and lead to the dissolution of the relationship, as partners may feel misunderstood and unimportant (Long, 1993).

Empathy has been conceptualized as encompassing both cognitive and emotional components. The cognitive aspect, as defined by Hogan (1969), involves understanding another's perspective without necessarily sharing their emotions. The emotional component,

outlined by Davis (1983), refers to an individual's emotional response to another's experience. Cohen and Strayer (1996) integrate these views, defining empathy as the capacity to understand and share in the emotions of others.

Dyadic empathy, distinct from general empathy, specifically refers to empathy expressed towards a romantic partner. Péloquin and Lafontaine (2010) developed this concept further into two components: empathy concerns (emotional reaction) and perspective taking (cognitive reaction). The study of dyadic empathy has branched into two main directions. The first explores empathic accuracy, focusing on the accurate cognitive understanding of a partner's feelings and thoughts during specific interactions (Ickes, 2001). The second direction views empathy as a global quality, assessed through self-reported measures, and has found significant relationships between empathy and relationship satisfaction (Péloquin & Lafontaine, 2010).

Research also indicates that perceived dyadic empathy and its congruence significantly predict relationship satisfaction. Kimmes et al., (2014) explored the relationships between self/ other rating of dyadic empathy and relationship satisfaction and suggested total perceived dyadic empathy and the congruence of perceived dyadic empathy significantly predict the relationship satisfaction. Rosen et al. (2016) also believed dyadic empathy helped new parents transition to parenthood and promoted relationship well-being. Cahill et al. (2020) suggested a significant association between trait perspective taking and romantic relationship satisfaction and noted gender, self/other rated to their own perspective taking or general or specific partner perspective taking did not very significantly.

The study of dyadic empathy has branched into two main directions. The first explores empathic accuracy, focusing on the accurate cognitive understanding of a partner's feelings and

thoughts during specific interactions (Ickes, 2001). The second direction views empathy as a global quality, assessed through self-reported measures, and has found significant relationships between empathy and relationship satisfaction (Péloquin & Lafontaine, 2010).

Therefore, both theory and research provide a robust foundation for the mediating effects of dyadic empathy as a mediator between couple's boundary flexibility congruence and their well-being. Attachment and relational theories offer a theoretical framework that highlights the importance of empathy in responding to a partner's emotional states, suggesting that the security of one's attachment system is key to fostering empathetic responses. This is particularly relevant in the context of flexibility congruence, where the ability of partners to adapt to each other's needs and distress signals can significantly impact the well-being of the relationship. Research further supports the mediating effects of dyadic empathy by suggesting both cognitive understanding and emotional sharing strengthen relationship satisfaction. Thus, current research propose dyadic empathy as a mediator in the relationship between couple's boundary flexibility difference and their well-being.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Sampling Procedure and Samples

After obtaining IRB approval, I recruited participants from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk). MTurk is a popular crowdsourcing platform in social science because it enables researchers to access diverse populations relatively affordable and shows similar data quality compared with convenience samples such as college students (Buhrmester et al., 2011). Research has also shown that Amazon MTurk can serve as a valuable data collection resource for vocational psychology research (Phan & Rounds, 2018). However, there are also critiques of collecting data on MTurk, including the representativeness of its participant pool, the quality and reliability of the data obtained, the ethical considerations (Sharpe et al., 2017).

Current research used different strategies to increase the validity of the data. I added four attention check questions, such as “Please choose ‘Satisfied’”, through the survey to ensure respondents are paying attention and following instructions rather than randomly selecting answers. Only the survey answering all the four attention check questions will be utilized in this study. Moreover, I also involved the length of the time of answering questions. Less than 9 mins’s questionnaire answers has been ruled out due to the length of the survey. Most of the participants who answered four attention check questions used more than 9 minutes. These strategies enhanced the reliability of the survey data. I also identified outliers and evaluated the normality of the data to guarantee the validity of the analysis. In this process, I detected two

univariate outliers and two multivariate outliers based on Z scores, with all other variables falling within a range of -3 to 3. I decided to eliminate the multivariate outliers from the dataset and adjusted the values of the univariate outliers to their nearest extreme scores. The above strategies minimize the weakness of the data collecting from MTurk and make sure the quality and reliability of the data utilized. Regarding the ethical considerations, all participants are voluntary. Responses remained anonymous and confidential throughout the study. Participants can leave the survey whenever they want.

I received 280 responses from employee participants on Mturk, and 222 (79%) of them completed and valid and meet the inclusion criteria. Research showed the consensus about the flexibility and importance of sample size. Studies have indicated that SEM can yield acceptable outcomes even with sample sizes smaller than 200 (Gerbing & Anderson, 1985) or when the count is just over 100 (Boomsma, 1985). Regarding inclusion criteria, participants need to be in a marital relationship and living together with a partner for at least two years. In addition, both participants and their partners need to work from home full-time (>30 hours per week) and lived with their partner during the pandemic. There is no requirement for participants' age other than being 18 years old or older. The volunteers who were not eligible for any one of the criteria will be excluded at the beginning of the survey.

The survey includes two parts, the demographic information and survey questions. Employee participants were asked to answer the survey items based on their demography and the reflection of their work-family experience during the pandemic (See Appendix A for the survey). Demographics were measured with five multiple-choice items and seven close questions: gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, social class, annual household income, age, jobs, job titles,

years of working, numbers of children, years of marriage, and percentage of remote work. In the second part of survey, participants need to fill out the boundary flexibility both for themselves and their partners. They ranged in age from 22 to 72 years (M = 36.64, SD = 11.00). Of the sample, 59.5% were male (n = 132), 39.6% were female (n = 88), and 0.9% were self-identified as transgender (n = 2). In terms of race/ethnicity, 79.3% (n =176) were Caucasian/White, 7.2% (n = 16) were Asian/Asian American, 3.6% (n =8) were African American/Black, 3.6% (n =8) were multiracial, 1.8% (n = 4) were Latino(a)/Hispanic. Of the sample, 65.8% (n=146) of them have a bachelor's degree, 18.5% (n=41) have graduate degree, 7.7% (n= 17) some college, 4.5% (n=10) associate degree, 3.6% (n= 8) high school and others. Regarding the number of their children, 24.8% of them do not have children, 35.6% of them have one child, 29.7% of them have two children, and 10% of them have 3 or more children. In terms of class, 0.5% (n=1) of them was from lower class, 17.1% (n=38) of them were from working class, 56.3% (n=125) of them were from middle class, 24.8 % (n=55) of them were from upper-middle class, 1.4% (n=3) were from upper class.

Measures

The Boundary Flexibility Scale

Participants completed revised version of The Boundary Flexibility Scale (BFS, Matthews & Barnes-Farrell, 2010) to assess both their own and perceived their partners' boundary flexibility – willingness, flexibility-ability, and permeability in both work and family domains. BFS was developed based on the boundary theory to measure work and family domain boundary flexibility with a total of 24 items are rated on a 7- point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater boundary

flexibility. The measure contains six subscales separated into two domains, family and work domains, with each domain including three subscales. In the family domain, the 5-item Family Flexibility-Ability (FFA) Scale measures the degree of employees moving from family to work (e.g., “From a family and personal life standpoint, there is no reason why I cannot rearrange my schedule to meet the demands of my work”); The 6-item Family Flexibility-Willingness (FFW) Scale assesses the employees’ willingness to move from family to work (e.g., “I am willing to change plans with my friends and family so that I can finish a job assignment.”); The 5-item Family Permeability (FP) Scale measure the degree of the elements formwork are readily found in family (e.g., “I have work related items at my home”). In Work Domain, the 4-item Work Flexibility-Ability (WFA) Scale measures the degree of employees moving from work to family (e.g., “If the need arose, I could leave work early to attend to family related issues”); The 6-item Work Flexibility-Willingness (WFW) Scale assesses the employees’ willingness to move from work to family (e.g., “I am not willing to take time off from work to deal with my family and personal life responsibilities.”) The 4-item Work Permeability (WP) Scale measure the degree of the elements form work are readily found in family (e.g., “I have work related items at my home”). Matthews & Barnes-Farrell (2010) reported the internal reliabilities as .83, .74, .77, .86, .78, and .75 for WFA, WFW, FFA, FFW, WP and FP subscales respectively.

For current study, I adopted the WFA, WFW, 3 items from FFA, 4 items from FFW, 5 items from WP and 4 items from FP based on the item reliability. I also modified the items to fit the work-from-home situation. For instance, I revised the item “While at home, I do not mind stopping what I am working on to complete a work-related responsibility” to “While in non-working hours at home, I do not mind stopping what I am doing to complete a work-related

responsibility" to add clarity. In order to test participants' partners' boundary flexibility – willingness, flexibility-ability, and permeability, we will change the referent from "I" to "my partner." An example item is "If the need arose, my partner could leave work early to attend to family-related issues." view form 1. The current study revealed alpha coefficients as .784, .743, .717, .836, .905, and .876 for WFW, FFA, FFW, WP and FP. The alpha coefficients for the partner-report scale as .855, .798, .777, .869, .921 and .905 for WFA, WFW, FFA, FFW, WP and FP.

Interpersonal Reactivity Index for Couples

Participants' dyadic empathy was assessed by the Interpersonal Reactivity Index for Couples (IRIC, Péloquin & Lafontaine, 2010), which consists of 13 questions that ask about empathic concern (emotional empathy) and perspective taking (cognitive empathy) in the context of their relationship. Example items include "I try to look at my partner's side of a disagreement before I make a decision" and "I often have tender, concerned feelings for my partner when he/she is less fortunate than me." Items are scored on a 5-point scale from 0 (does not describe me well) to 4 (describes me well). Higher total scores on the IRIC indicate higher levels of dyadic empathy toward one's partner. Cronbach's alphas are .87 and .88 for women and men (Rosen, Mooney & Muise, 2017).

Current study adopted 3 items from the empathic concern scale and 4 items from the perspective taking scale. Cronbach's alphas were revealed by current study as .87 and .82 for the empathic concerns and perspective taking scales.

Marital Satisfaction

The 15 items ENRICH Marital Satisfaction Scale (EMS, Fowers and Olson, 1993) are answered on a five-point scale (between 1 = Strongly Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Agree) and include two dimensions: marital satisfaction (MS) (e.g., "I am not happy about our communication and feel my partner does not understand me"), and idealized distortion (ID) (e.g., "Our relationship is a perfect success"). Each of the 10 Marital satisfaction items assesses one area of the marital relationship (e.g., communication or equalitarian roles); Idealized distortion is a dimension to control the social desirability in the assessment of the marital relationship satisfaction. For instance, it will correct the degree of marital relationship scores in which respondents described marriage in an unrealistically positive way. EMS Scale comprises two of the subscales of the ENRICH Inventory (Fowers & Olson, 1989), which includes 12 category scales (e.g., idealistic distortion, marital satisfaction conflict resolution, financial management, etc.) The total score of the EMS scale is calculated by using the following formula: EMS = MS − [(MS) × (correlation between MS and ID)2 × (ID × 0.01)]. The higher scores represent higher levels of marital satisfaction. Cronbach's alpha revealed an internal reliability of .86 (Fowers and Olson, 1993).

Current study adopted 5 items from the MS scales to assess their marital satisfaction. Current study revealed the alpha reliability as .87.

Job Performance

Job performance was assessed based on individuals' perceived efficiency in performing job tasks by 5-item Task Performance scale (TP) of the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (IWPQ, Koopmans, et al., 2014). IWPQ was developed to assess individual and

group-level job performance based on a generic working population. It consists of 3 scales (i.e., Task Performance, Contextual performance, and Counterproductive Work Behavior) with a total of 18 items. Task Performance scale was developed to produce comparable measures based on self-reported perceived efficiency in performing tasks across different types of jobs (Koopmans et al., 2012; Koopmans et al., 2014a). We adopt Task performance scale to focus on work efficiency. In addition, the Contextual performance subscale and Counterproductive Work Behavior subscale include overlapping facets with job satisfaction (e.g., creativity and communication). Task Performance scale will be rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "Seldom" (0) to "always" (4), with higher scores reflecting higher task performance. Example items include: "I managed to plan my work so that it was done on time" and "I was able to perform my work well with minimal time and effort." The Cronbach alpha of the task performance scale is 0.85 (Koopmans et al., 2013; Van Der Lippe & Lippényi, 2020). Current study revealed the alpha ecoefficiency as .80.

Covariates

In this study, six variables will be controlled as covariates to ensure a comprehensive analysis: (1) Gender: some research suggests women and men have different work-family experiences (Shockley et al, 2017; Nsair & Piszczek, 2021). (2) Number of dependent children under the age of 18: The presence and the number of children may influence the people's workload and family boundary flexibility due to the family demands. (3) Years of relationship: The length of a relationship can shape participants' understanding and congruence with their partner, as well as their overall well-being. (4) Age: Different life stages may affect individuals' central identity and their relationship dynamics. (5) Level of education: Educational attainment may have

implications for work-family balance and associated stressors. (6) Annual income: Income levels can influence the work-family interface by affecting resources available for managing work and family demands. Therefore, these variables have been controlled to ensure a more accurate and comprehensive analysis of the work-family interface in this study.

Data Analysis Procedures

Analytical Approach

I employed SPSS Statistics 26 to compute descriptive statistics, such as means, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations. I also utilized Mplus 8 for structural equation modeling analysis.

In terms of data distribution, I began by examining outliers and assessing the data's normality to ensure a valid analysis. Through this, I identified two univariate and two multivariate outliers within the Z scores and the remaining variables were confined to an interval between -3 and 3. I chose to remove the multivariate outliers and adjusted the univariate outliers to the closest extreme score. Given that the absolute values of skewness and kurtosis for all variables fell below 2, it suggested a normal distribution of the variables (Weston & Gore, 2006). Subsequently, I delved into both the measurement and structural analyses using Mplus 8.

The analytical approach I adopted comprised a three-step procedure, integrating confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), latent congruence modeling (LCM) and latent variable Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The first step involved assessing the measurement model through Mplus 8, ensuring the item reliability, composite reliability, and convergent validity were satisfactory. This phase also saw the application of CFA to the measurement model. Following this, I conducted latent congruence modeling (LCM) to evaluate the proposed hypotheses. The second step engaged with Structural Equation Modeling in Mplus 8, examining the alignment of spouses' boundary management preferences concerning mediators and outcome

variables. The final step investigated the mediators' partial mediation effects on the relationships between independent and dependent variables using Mplus 8.

To test the fit of the hypothesized model, I adhered to well-established criteria, evaluating the Chi-square, the root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA; Steiger, 1990), the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR), and the confirmatory fit index (CFI; Bentler, 1990). Chi-squared value, SRMR, and CFI are prevalently reported in SEM literature (Kline, 2010). Specifically, the Chi-Square value, a traditional measure for evaluating overall model fit, tests the discrepancy between the sample and fitted covariance matrices (Hu & Bentler, 1999). An acceptable fit is defined by $\chi 2/df < 3$. The RMSEA offers insights into how well a model, with optimally determined parameter estimates, would align with the population's covariance matrix (Byrne, 1998). An RMSEA value of less than 0.08 signifies an acceptable fit (MacCallum et al., 1996). The SRMR measures the standardized variance between observed and predicted covariance, with values below 0.10 indicating an acceptable fit and those under 0.08 denoting excellence (Hu & Bentler, 1999). Lastly, CFI, as proposed by Hu and Bentler (1999), offers the finest approximation of the population value for a model. A CFI value of 0.90 or above is deemed acceptable, and 0.95 or above is considered excellent.

Therefore, current study adopted the criteria as follows: Comparative Fit Index (CFI) should be greater than 0.90, Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) should be less than 0.06, and Standardized Root-Mean-Square Residual (SRMR) should be less than 0.1.

Computing Congruence of Boundary Management Preference between Couples

The current study used latent congruence modeling (LCM; explained below) to measure the boundary management congruence. LCM is a variation of structural equation modeling that can directly test the effects of congruence, and it has been widely used in person-environment fit research after its introduction.

Besides LCM, congruence (agreement, fit, and similarity) is most frequently operationalized as difference scores, profile similarity indices (PSIs), and polynomial regression (PR) in previous research (Edward, 1993). However, difference scores or PSIs simply use subtracted or combined two sets of raw data of measures, or profiles, from corresponding entities (e.g., the person and organization, supervisor and subordinate, organization and environment) into a single score intended to represent their overall congruence (Edward, 1993). These two operationalizations discarded important information (i.e., the relative contribution of the two entities, the absolute level of both entities, & the direction of the difference) (Chueng, 2009). As for PR, Edwards (1993,1994) proposed using polynomial regression analysis in congruence research to examine the joint effect of the components instead of the congruence construct per se. However, Kristof-Brown et al. (2005) found that only about 20% of person-environment fit research has employed the PR approach since its introduction, which indicated that researchers might be more interested in studying the concept of congruence than its components.

The LCM approach is appropriate for the present study for both theoretical and statistical reasons while resolving the problem with different scores and profile similarity indices (PSIs) (Cheung, 2009). Theoretically, LCM creates a separate congruence variable and then directly examines the effect of congruence on the dependent variables (Cheung, 2009). Thus, it is easier to interpret and in line with the person-environment fit theory over than other statistical approaches (Cheung, 2009). Statistically, unlike other statistical approaches assuming measurement errors do not exist, LCM controls and removes measurement errors (Cheung, 2009). LCM employs second-order factors (i.e., the level variable and the congruence variable, to be explained below) to partial out the measurement errors associated with observed variables.

In addition, LCM assesses measurement equivalence straightforwardly by testing whether the conceptualization, manifestation, and intercepts of the same items are similar across the pair data.

Specifically, LCM includes two mean levels of the two components: Level and Congruence. Level refers to the means of the two components, while Congruence refers to their difference. In the current study, Level represents the average boundary management preference between couples; Congruence represents their agreement, fit, and similarity (Cheung, 2009). Partner boundary management preference has been represented as Partner. The latent factor for level is created by fixing loadings for both participants and partner at one. The latent factor for congruence is created by fixing the loading for participants at .5 and the loading for partners at -.5. As a result, we have the following two equations:

$$Participants = Level - 0.5Congruence$$
$$Partners = Level + 0.5Congruence$$

Adding Equations (1) and (2) and rearranging the terms yields the following equation:

$$Level = \frac{Participants + Partner}{2}$$

Subtracting Equation (1) from Equation (2) and rearranging the terms yields the following equation:

$$Congruence = Partner - Participants$$

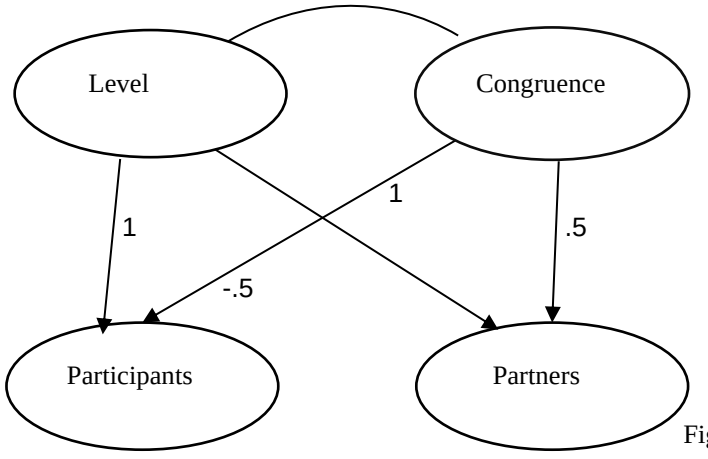

Fig 2 . Congruence Model.

I tested the latent congruence model in Fig. 2 by using the two second-order latent variables (level and congruence) with level serving as a control variable and congruence as a predictor variable. The variance of the residuals and the intercepts for the second-order SEM equations were constrained to zero (Cheung, 2009).

Mediating effect

I examined the hypothesized mediation model by SEM bias-corrected bootstrapping approach (n = 1,000) of mediation, which will enable us to examine the structural relationships with error-free variables, thereby increasing the statistical power. I followed the criterion for evaluating mediation effects from Cheung and Lau (2008): The mediation effect is significant at the alpha level of .5 if the 95% confidence intervals do not contain zero. See figure 3.

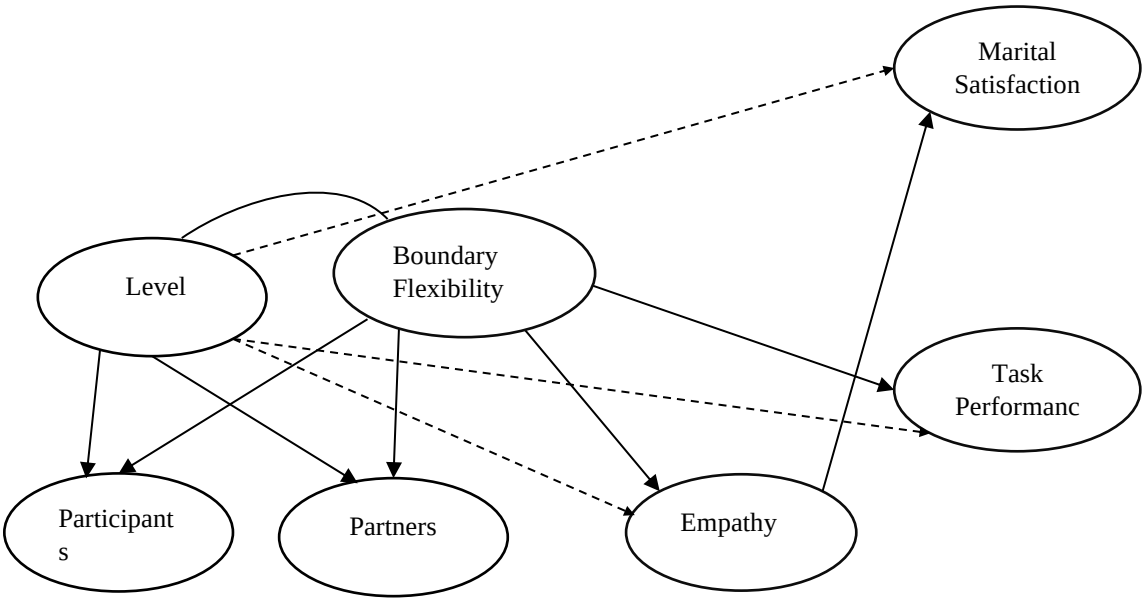

Fig 3 . Hypothesized Model.

CHAPTER FOUR:

RESULTS

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Bivariate Correlations

Table 1 presents the mean values, standard deviations, and bivariate correlations among all variables of the study, as well as the covariances. Six variables were included in current analysis as covariates. I calculated Pearson's correlation among all the variables using SPSS. The study revealed significant positive correlations between partners' work domains and family domain boundary flexibility (both ability and willingness), with one exception: the relationship between one partner's willingness for family flexibility and the other partner's willingness for work flexibility did not follow this trend. These findings suggest that generally, when an individual's boundary flexibility increases, their partner's boundary flexibility tends to increase as well. However, this pattern does not apply to the the relationship between willingness for family flexibility in one partner and willingness for work flexibility in the other. Moreover, it is interesting to note the high coefficients, ranging from .70 to .78, which signify a strong positive relationship in the actual transitions between partners. Regarding the covariates, it is noteworthy that gender does not exhibit a significant association with the other variables, suggesting gender is not a significant factor for the variables examined in the study (e.g., work/family boundary flexibility, marital satisfaction, empathic concern). This is consistent with the previous research from Frone, Russell, & Cooper (1992). Age shows a negative correlation with the transitions between work-to-family and family-to-work, which could suggest that the frequency of

transitions between work and family decreases with greater experience in managing both domains. Annual general income is inversely related to these transitions, implying that higher-income roles may necessitate fewer work-family transitions. The duration of a relationship exhibits a positive correlation with both empathy and marital satisfaction, but not with perspective-taking. The number of children is positively associated with work-family transitions while showing a negative correlation with empathy and marital satisfaction.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.WFA	20.61	4.02	1.00									
2.WFW	21.47	3.63	.65**	1.00								
3.FFA	15.41	3.02	.52**	.47**	1.00							
4.FFW	18.96	5.07	.21**	.01	.41**	1.00						
5.WFTR	9.78	5.67	-.02	-.12	.06	.34**	1.00					
6.FWTR	7.94	4.89	-.18**	-.23**	.05	.45**	.80**	1.00				
7.EMPACON	6.14	3.82	.06	.20**	-.11	-.47**	-.61**	-.55**	1.00			
8.PERSPE	11.79	2.78	.12	.23**	.24**	.07	-.27**	-.19**	.19**	1.00		
9.MARSAT	14.62	5.37	.02	.06	-.19**	-.41**	-.52**	-.50**	.73**	.14*	1.00	
10.TASKPER	12.94	3.82	.35**	.41**	.25**	-.12	-.30**	-.25**	.48**	.30**	.30**	1.00
11.PAWFA	20.24	4.48	.40**	.49**	.39**	.01	.01	-.05	-.08	.08	-.17*	.17*
12.PAWFW	20.40	4.16	.38**	.54**	.35**	.03	-.06	-.13*	.006	.27**	-.05	.27**
13.PAFFA	15.14	3.33	.42**	.32**	.43**	.24**	.07	.05	-.17*	.02	-.22**	.09
14.PAFFW	18.81	5.43	.18**	.002	.34**	.72**	.34**	.41**	-.46**	.07	-.43**	-.12
15.PAWFTR	9.78	6.01	-.02	-.11	.12	.30**	.78**	.70**	-.58**	-.13*	-.52**	-.25**
16.PAFWTR	8.18	5.26	-.08	-.16*	.05	.43**	.72**	.78**	-.55**	-.12	-.51**	-.14*
Covariates:												
17.Age	36.64	11.00	.12	.07	-.03	-.18**	-.35**	-.26**	.34**	.09	.27**	.21**
18.Gender	1.41	0.51	-.05	.01	-.13	-.07	-.11	-.06	.04	-.05	.03	.07
19.Edulevel	4.88	0.92	-.01	-.15*	.08	.18**	.19**	.15*	-.22**	.05	-.22**	-.18**
20.Social class	3.09	0.70	.03	.01	.07	.02	.06	.10	-.11	-.01	-.10	.06
21.Income	3.93	1.85	.11	.08	.01	-.27**	-.21**	-.25**	.39**	.10	.41**	.24**
22.Relayear	10.05	9.99	.06	.04	-.06	-.26**	-.37**	-.33**	.39**	.08	.33**	.24**
23.Children	1.28	1.02	-.06	-.04	-.10	.05	.18**	.14*	-.19**	-.08	-.19**	-.09

	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
11.PAWFA	1.00											
12.PAWFW	.73**	1.00										
13.PAFFA	.43**	.40**	1.00									
14.PAFFW	.11	.07	.37**	1.00								
15.PAWFTR	.16*	.07	.18**	.32**	1.00							
16.PAFWTR	-.06	-.15*	.06	.47**	.73**	1.00						
Covariates:												
17.Age	.10	.05	.13	-.16*	-.27**	-.29**	1.00					
18.Gender	-.11	-.10	-.10	-.04	-.13*	-.10	-.06	1.00				
19.Edulevel	-.04	-.05	.08	.11	.18**	.20**	-.10	-.17*	1.00			
20.Social class	.02	-.01	.16*	.03	.14*	.13*	.11	-.16*	.27**	1.00		
21.Income	-.12	-.07	.06	-.19**	-.24**	-.19**	.26**	-.05	.19**	.26**	1.00	
22.Relayear	.05	.04	.09	-.22**	-.30**	-.34**	.84**	.02	-.15*	.06	.28**	1.00
23.Children	.002	-.02	.13	.06	.20**	.11	.09	-.09	.13	.14*	-.07	.06

Note. N=222. WFA=work flexibility-ability; WFW=work flexibility-willingness; FFA= family flexibility- ability; FFW= family flexibility willingness; WFTR= work-to-family transition; FWTR= family-to-work transition; EMPACON=empathic concern; PERSTAK= perspective taking; MARSAT= marital satisfaction; TASKPER= task performance; PA=Partner. Coding was as follows: gender: 1=male, 2=female, 3=transgender; Edulevel= education level: 1= less than high school education level, 2=high school, 3=some college, 4=associates degree, 5= bachelor degree, 6= graduate degree; social class: 1=lower class, 2=working class, 3=middle class, 4=upper-middle class, 5= upper class; income=annual household income: 1=less than $25,000, 2= $25,000 to less than $50,000, 3= $50,000 to less than $75,000, 4= $75,000 to less than $100,000 5= $100,000 to less than $125,000, 6= $125,000 to less than $150,000 7= $150,000 to less than $175,000, 8= $175,000 to less than $200,000, 9=$200,000 or more. * p<.05. ** p<.01.

Test of Reliability and Validity

Table 2 displays the item reliability, composite reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. I assessed and confirmed the reliability and validity by conducting a series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) in SEM for each latent variable. I began by evaluating a measurement model with 10 observed measures using CFA. These measures encompass Work Flexibility-Ability (WFA with 4 indicators), Work Flexibility-Willingness (WFW with 4 indicators), Family Flexibility-Ability (FFA with 3 indicators), Family Flexibility-Willingness (FFW with 4 indicators), Work-to-Family Transition (WFTR with 5 indicators), Family-to-Work Transition (FWTR with 4 indicators), Empathic Concern (EMPATHY with 3 indicators), Perspective Taking (PERSPECT with 4 indicators), Marital Satisfaction (MARISATIS with 5 indicators), and Task Performance (TASKPERF with 5 indicators).

The 10-factor model demonstrated acceptable fit shown by the values of $\chi 2/df$ (1135.92/734), RMSEA (0.050), SRMR (0.060), and CFI (0.917). All item loading estimates are significant, and the associated variances are positive and significant, which implies there are no offending estimates present. Standardized factor loadings are deemed acceptable if greater than 0.6, ideal if they exceed 0.7, and exploratory if they are above 0.5. As per the data in Table 2, these standardized loadings range from 0.6 to 0.9. Composite reliability values for all factors surpass the threshold of 0.7. Convergent validity, as denoted by Average Variance Extracted (AVE), is greater than 0.42 for all measures, and values above 0.36 are considered acceptable. In accordance with the guidelines set forth by Fornell and Larcker in 1981, the matrix diagonal represents the square roots of the AVE values, while the lower triangle displays the Pearson correlations between the dimensions. The square roots of the AVE values exceed the inter-dimension correlations, confirming the presence of discriminant validity.

Table 2**.** Item Reliability, Composite Reliability, Convergent Validity, and Discriminant Validity

DIM	ITEM RELIABILITY	COMPOSITE RELIABILITY	CONVERGENT VALIDITY	DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY							
	STD. LOADING	CR	AVE	WFTR	FWTR	EMPCN	PSPTK	MRTSTS	TSKPERF	WKFLX	FMLFLX
WFTR	0.774-0.836	0.905	0.656	**0.810**							
FWTR	0.719-0.846	0.876	0.639	0.905	**0.799**						
EMPCN	0.775-0.882	0.868	0.687	-0.693	-0.642	**0.829**					
PSPTK	0.614-0.786	0.818	0.531	-0.310	-0.211	0.222	**0.729**				
MRTSTS	0.716-0.822	0.872	0.579	-0.574	-0.578	0.818	0.158	**0.761**			
TSKPERF	0.620-0.772	0.808	0.457	-0.357	-0.314	0.581	0.360	0.343	**0.676**		
WKFLX	0.635-0.747	0.766	0.792	-0.076	-0.248	0.143	0.206	0.062	0.495	**0.890**	
FMLFLX	0.592-0.890	0.776	0.480	0.403	0.514	-0.579	0.247	-0.563	0.040	0.555	**0.693**

Note. Diagonal in bold represents the square root of AVE values, and the lower triangle represents Pearson correlation between dimensions. WKFLX=Work to Family Flexibility. FMLFLX= Family to Work Flexibility

Next, I delineated boundary flexibility into two models: family domain and work domain, to decrease the count of independent variables in the model, thereby simplifying and clarifying the model. In family domains I included family flexibility (family flexibility-ability and family flexibility-willingness) and family to work transition. Similar to family domain, work domain includes work flexibility (work flexibility-ability and work flexibility-willingness) and work-to-family transition.

Moreover, I conducted the second-order EFA on these work and family flexibility factors did not yield an acceptable fit $\chi 2/df$ (1370/758), RMSEA (.060), SRMR (.159), and CFI (.849). This result aligns with the notion that boundary flexibility, as presented by Matthews and Barnes-Farrell (2010), encapsulates ability, willingness, and transitions in both work-to-family and family-to-work domains, suggesting they shouldn't be amalgamated into a singular factor. Based on the definition of work and family flexibility from Matthews and Barnes-Farrell (2010), which also consistent with the Survey. I assigned the work-to-family ability and willingness into work flexibility to deal with the highly correlated relationships between work-to-family ability and willingness.

Consequently, I executed a measurement model on work flexibility (Fig. 4) utilizing CFA with 7 observed measures: work flexibility-ability (WFA, 4 indicators), work flexibility-willingness (WFW, 4 indicators), work-to-family transition (WFTR, 5 indicators), empathic concern (EMPATHY, 3 indicators), perspective taking (PERSPECT, 4 indicators), marital satisfaction (MARISATIS, 5 indicators), and task performance (TASKPERF, 5 indicators). The fit for this model was deemed perfect $\chi 2/df$ (550/384), RMSEA (.044), SRMR (.052), and CFI (.948).

Additionally, a measurement model for the family-to-work domain was developed (Fig.5) and included family flexibility-ability (FFA, 3 indicators), family flexibility-willingness (FFW, 4 indicators), family-to-work transition (FWTR, 4 indicators), empathic concern (EMPATHY, 3 indicators), perspective taking (PERSPECT, 4 indicators), marital satisfaction (MARISATIS, 5 indicators), and task performance (TASKPERF, 5 indicators). This model also showed an acceptable fit $\chi 2/df$ (534/329), RMSEA (.053), SRMR (.060), and CFI (.932).

The separate work flexibility and family flexibility model were better the one model with the 10 observed measures: $\chi 2/df$ (1135.92/734), RMSEA (0.050), SRMR (0.060), and CFI (0.917). Moreover, the separated model did make the models become simpler and clearer. Thus, current study decided to use the separated family and work domain models shows as.

Fig. 4 & Fig.5 showed the proposed models were in work flexibility domain and family flexibility domain.

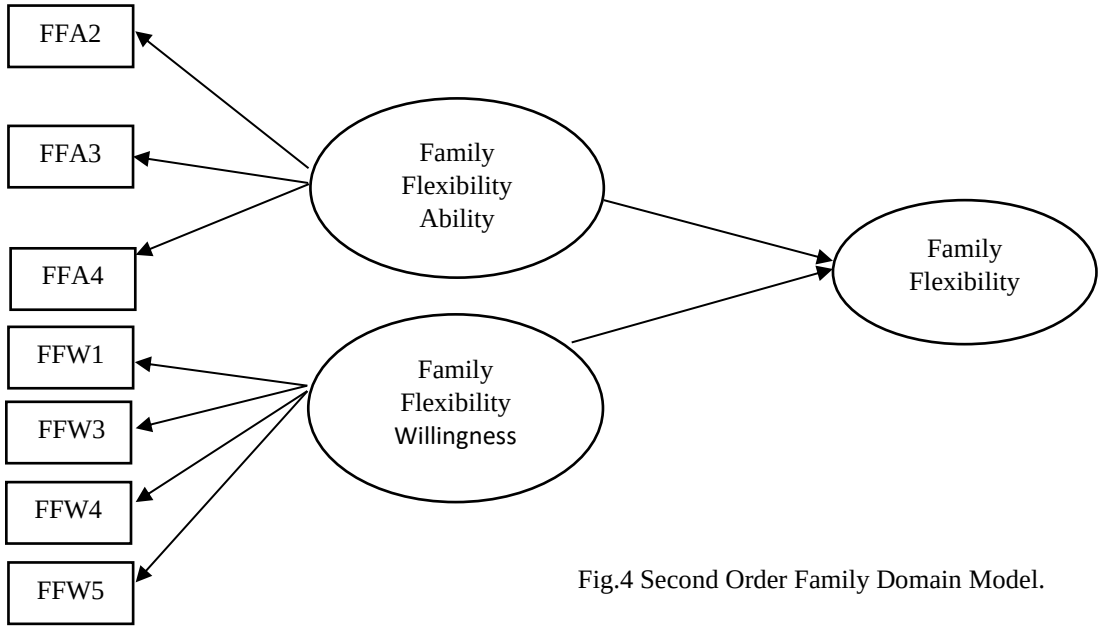

Fig.4 Second Order Family Domain Model.

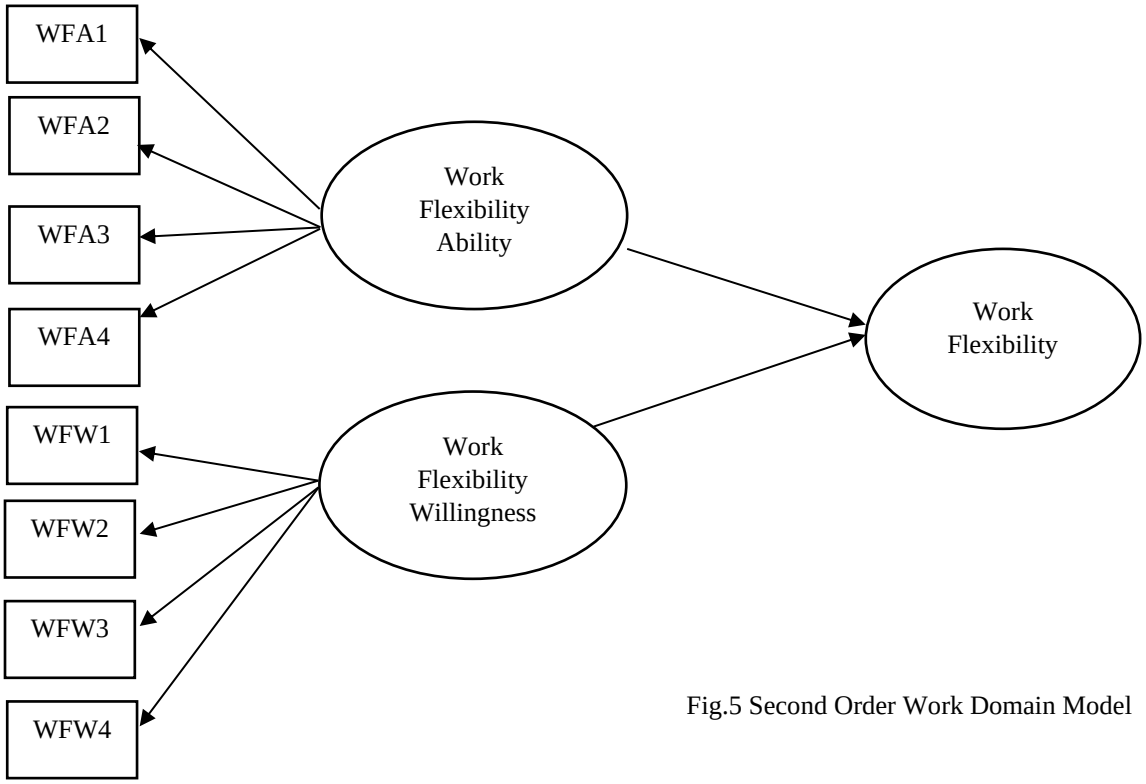

Fig.5 Second Order Work Domain Model

Measurement Equivalence

Measurement equivalence is essential in quantitative research, especially in psychometrics and cross-cultural studies. It refers to the degree to which a particular measure reliably assesses the same construct across different groups or contexts. This concept is vital to ensure that comparisons between groups (such as different cultures, genders, or time periods) are valid and meaningful. Vandenberg & Lance (2000) identify three primary conditions required for achieving measurement equivalence for comparisons between groups, including configural equivalence, metric equivalence and scalar equivalence. I tested these three types of measurement equivalence before proceeding with latent congruence modeling based on the recommendation from Vandenberg & Lance (2000) and Cheung (2007).

Configural equivalence

Configural equivalence, also known as configural invariance, is the basic level of measurement invariance testing. It assesses whether the same conceptual framework (i.e., same factors and the number of factors) holds across different groups (i.e., participants and their partners) (Cheung, 2007). Current study results supporting the existence of configural equivalence between participants and their partners on boundary flexibilities and transitions by revealed an acceptable fit of the model to the data $\chi 2/df$ (1676/1014), RMSEA (.054), SRMR (.058), and CFI (.903).

Metric Equivalence

Metric equivalence was tested to determine whether the relationship or "weight" between the observed items and their underlying latent constructs is the same across the group of participants and partners. Testing metric equivalence involves constraining the factor loading to be equal across groups, while the factor means are allowed to differ (i.e., WFAitem1=WFAPartneritem1, WFAitem2=WFAPartneritem2 and etc.). As shown by the value of $\chi 2/df$ (1702.413/1038), RMSEA (.054), SRMR (.060), CFI (.900) and p=ns, indicating the metric equivalence has been established.

Scalar Equivalence

Scalar equivalence entails both the factor loadings, and the intercepts of the observed variables are equivalent in the groups of participants and partners, which ensure the group differences in latent factor means are meaningful. ml: ($\chi 2/df$ (1751/1062), RMSEA (.054), SRMR (.061), and CFI (.899) and $p<0.001$, all the partial scalar equivalence did not improve the fit of the model, which indicated that the scalar equivalence was not met. Vandenberg and Lance (2000) noted that it is highly restrictive of scalar equivalence to test whether item intercepts are equivalence across groups and is least frequently conducted methods of measurement equivalence. Moreover, in the study of Chen, Powell, and Greenhaus, the scalar equivalence was also not met across groups. Therefore, I proceeded the latent congruence modeling although the

scalar equivalence condition was not met. Table 3 presented the results of measurement equivalence.

Table 3. Measurement Equivalence

	c2	***df***	**Δc^2**	**Δdf**	**RMSEA**	**CFI**	**SRMR**
Configural equivalence	1676	1014			.054	.903	.058
Metric equivalence	1702	1038	26	24	.054	.900	.060
Scalar equivalence	1751	1062	49	24	.054	.899	.061

Latent Congruence Modeling

Then, I added the congruence model (fig.2) into the family domain model and work domain model and developed the latent congruence modeling presented in Fig. 6 and Fig.7 . In this model, the level and congruence of work and family flexibility, and the level and congruence of family to work/work to family transitions serve as the primary predictors. These elements are used to anticipate changes in two key outcome variables: marital satisfaction and task performance. Central to this model are two mediators. The first mediator, empathic concerns (EMPATHY, measured by 3 indicators), and the second mediator, perspective taking (PERSPECT, measured by 4 indicators), serve to bridge the relationship between the predictors and the outcomes. The model suggests that the level and congruence of work and family flexibility influence marital satisfaction and task performance indirectly, through their effects on empathic concern and perspective taking. The covariates include level of family domain flexibility, level of family transition, age, gender, relationship years, number of children, income,

and education level. The family flexibility model (Fig. 6) demonstrated good fit ($\chi 2/df$ = 1152/857, CFI = .920, RMSEA = .039, SRMR = .066), and the work flexibility model (Fig. 7) also demonstrated perfect fit ($\chi 2/df$ = 1247/1039, CFI = .949, RMSEA = .030, SRMR = .052). Moreover, I constrained the path from family flexibility congruence with marital satisfaction and task performance, the family model demonstrated a little bit worse fit $\chi 2/df$ = 1156/859, CFI = .919, RMSEA = .039, SRMR = .066, $\Delta \chi^2 = 4$, $p > 0.05$. The work flexibility model is same $\chi 2/df$ = 1250/1041, CFI = .949, RMSEA = .030, SRMR = .052, $\Delta \chi^2 = 3$, $p > 0.05$, indicating that the fully constrained model was better than the constrained model. Table 4 shows the congruence and level path coefficients on empathic concerns, perspective taking, marital satisfaction and task performance.

Table 4. Congruence and Level results of LCM

		Empathic Concerns	**Perspective Taking**	**Marital Satisfaction**	**Task Performance**
Family Flexibility	Congruence	-.172*	-.334**	-.019	-.139
	Level	-.147**	.150**	.015	0.03
Family to work Transition	Congruence	.041	.203*	-.030	0.234**
	Level	-.432***	-.243**	-.110	.207*
Work Flexibility	Congruence	-.131	-.126	.017	-.139
	Level	.067	.289***	-.093*	.334***
Work to family Transition	Congruence	.102	.303***	-.041	.015
	Level	-.550***	-.273***	-.038	.147

Results in Family Flexibility

The term “congruence” is a key word in current study, we adopted the concept from LCM and defined congruence as the partners’ score deduct the participants’ scores, where a larger congruence indicates a greater boundary flexibility or transition in partners compared to participants.

Additionally, it is important to distinguish between boundary flexibility and transition. Boundary flexibility is defined as the capacity and willingness to be adaptable, assessing the extent to which an individual can transition between work and family domains. Transition, on the other hand, measures the permeability of these domains, indicating how elements from one domain can be found in the other, which may represent a behavioral level transition.

The evaluation of family flexibility in this study, indicated by a robust fit index ($\chi 2/df$ = 1152/857, CFI = .920, RMSEA = .039, SRMR = .066), unveiled several noteworthy relationships among the variables under consideration. However, against the expectations of Hypothesis 1b, the congruence of family to work transition showed a significant positive rather than negative correlation with task performance ($\beta = .234$, $p < 0.01$). No positive relationship was observed between the congruence of family to work transition/family boundary and marital satisfaction, failing to support Hypothesis 1a.

In the realm of dyadic empathy, the congruence of family flexibility was found to negatively predict empathic concerns ($\beta = - .172$, $p < 0.05$) and perspective taking ($\beta = - .334$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that as an individual's ability and willingness to transition from family to work surpasses their partner's, the partner's empathic concerns and perspective taking decrease, supporting Hypothesis 2a.

Contrary to Hypothesis 2b, the congruence of family to work transitions was positively correlated with perspective taking ($\beta = .203$, $p < 0.05$), indicating improved perspective taking in

participants when congruence increases. However, the study did not find supportive evidence for a positive relationship between this congruence and empathic concerns.

Empathic concerns were positively related to both marital satisfaction ($\beta = .671$, $p < 0.001$) and task performance ($\beta = .609$, $p < 0.001$), reinforcing the significance of emotional understanding and support in marital relationships, thus supporting Hypothesis 3a. Additionally, a positive relationship between perspective taking and task performance ($\beta = .208$, $p < 0.01$) was observed, partially supporting Hypothesis 3b. This implies that high task performance is associated with greater empathy and perspective taking, facilitating a more balanced integration of family and work life. However, no relationship was found between perspective taking and marital satisfaction.

Additionally, the 'level' variable, previously noted as the average of participants and their partner's core, was incorporated as a control variable in the analysis. The level of family flexibility was found to significantly predict empathic concerns negatively ($\beta = -.147$, $p < 0.01$), and perspective taking positively ($\beta = .150$, $p < 0.01$). Moreover, a significant negative relationship emerged between the level of family to work transition and both empathic concerns ($\beta = -.432$, $p < 0.001$) and perspective taking ($\beta = -.243$, $p < 0.01$).

Other significant covariates identified in the study include the relationship between empathy and annual income ($\beta = .274$, $p < 0.001$), as well as the impact of educational level ($\beta = -.151$, $p < 0.01$). Additionally, marital satisfaction demonstrated a significant relationship with annual income ($\beta = .153$, $p < 0.01$), and task performance was significantly related to educational level ($\beta = -.185$, $p < 0.01$). These findings highlight the intricate interplay of personal and professional factors in influencing emotional and cognitive aspects of family dynamics.

Figure 6 offers a visual representation of these significant relationships, providing a comprehensive overview of the interplay of these variables in the context of family flexibility.

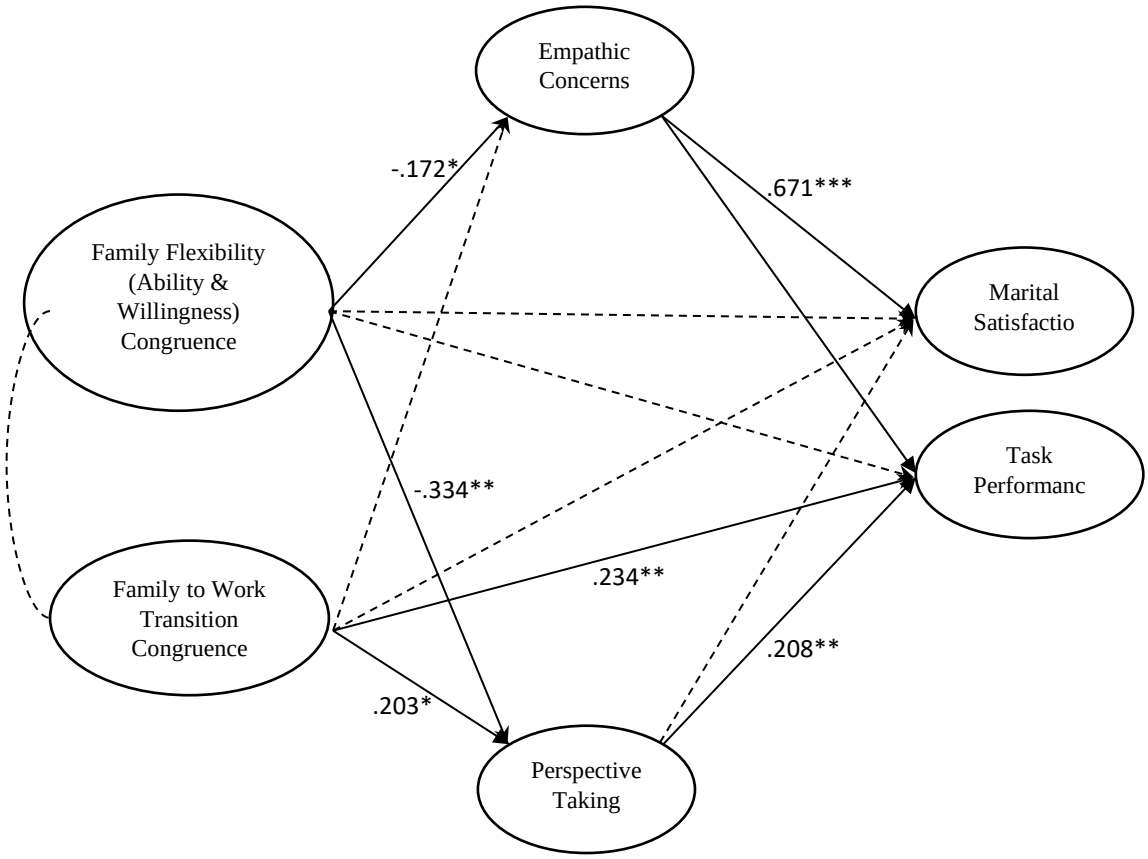

Fig. 6. Family Domain Structural Model.

Results in Work Domain Flexibility

In the assessment of work flexibility, as demonstrated by the fit indices ($\chi 2/df$ = 1247/1039, CFI = .949, RMSEA = .030, SRMR = .052), several significant relationships among the variables were revealed. Notably, a correlation between work flexibility congruence and transition congruence was identified, albeit with a low coefficient (β = .399). This low

coefficient suggests that, despite their correlation, each variable contributes uniquely to the model. Consequently, I retained both variables as separate predictors.

As opposed to Hypothesis 2d, the congruence of work to family transition was found to significantly predict perspective taking ($\beta = .303$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that when an individual exhibits greater flexibility in transitioning from work to family compared to their partner, it leads to increased perspective taking by the partner. However, no supportive evidence was found for Hypotheses 1c, 1d, or 2c, indicating no significant relationship between the congruence of work flexibility and well-being outcomes or dyadic empathy.

In terms of the relationship between dyadic empathy and outcomes, the results indicated stronger and more significant correlations in the work flexibility model compared to the family flexibility model. Empathic concerns were strongly positively correlated with both marital satisfaction ($\beta = 0.718$, $p < 0.001$) and task performance ($\beta = .541$, $p < 0.001$), affirming Hypothesis 3a. This implies that empathic concerns enhance both marital satisfaction and task performance. Additionally, perspective taking was positively linked to task performance ($\beta = .334$, $p < .05$), partially supporting Hypothesis 3b.

As a control variable, higher levels of work flexibility positively affected perspective taking ($\beta = .289$, $p < 0.001$) and task performance ($\beta = .334$, $p < 0.001$), but had a negative effect on marital satisfaction ($\beta = -.093$, $p < 0.05$). Furthermore, high levels of work to family transition were negatively associated with empathic concerns ($\beta = -.550$, $p < 0.001$) and perspective taking ($\beta = -.273$, $p < 0.001$).

Other key covariates included significant relationships between empathy and both income ($\beta = 0.253$, $p < 0.001$) and education level ($\beta = -.13$, $p < 0.05$). Marital satisfaction also showed

significant associations with income ($\beta = .141$, $p < 0.05$) and education level ($\beta = -.1$, $p < 0.05$). Additionally, perspective taking was notably related to education level ($\beta = .14$, $p < 0.05$).

Figure 8 visually illustrates these significant relationships, highlighting the complex interplay between work flexibility, dyadic empathy, marital satisfaction, and task performance. This comprehensive analysis underscores the multifaceted nature of these interactions and their implications for both work and family life.

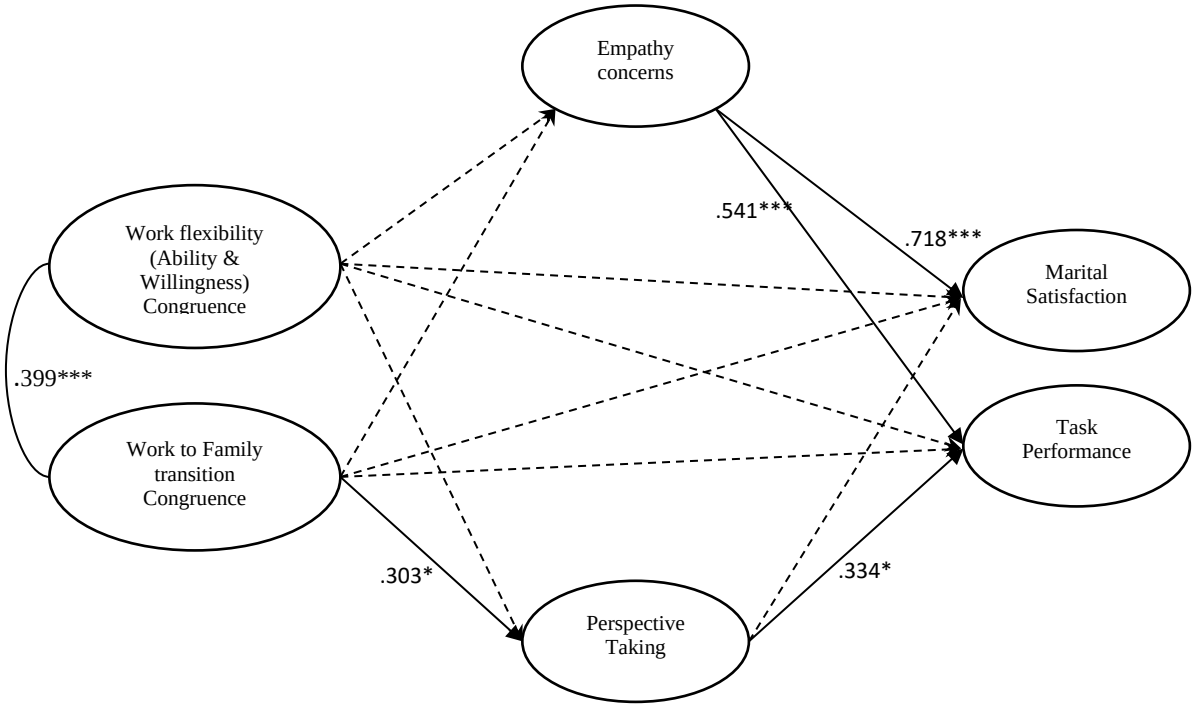

Fig. 7. Work Domain Structural Model.

Absolute Differences

The current study adheres to the criteria for using absolute difference scores as a measure of congruence, in line with the approach suggested by Edwards (1994). Edwards highlighted the importance of a balanced distribution of positive and negative scores in congruence measurements. In our study, the distribution of congruence scores is approximately 56/44, closely aligning with the recommended 50/50 split. Consequently, the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was also conducted using absolute difference scores as a measure of congruence.

The SEM results reveal that absolute differences in work flexibility between couples are significantly associated with marital satisfaction ($\beta = -.129$, $p < 0.05$) and task performance ($\beta = 0.241$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that larger differences in work flexibility between partners predict lower marital satisfaction but higher task performance. Additionally, the discrepancy in work-to-family transitions between couples positively affects perspective taking ($\beta = .282$, $p < 0.001$).

In the realm of family flexibility, the study finds that differences in the transition from family to work between spouses positively influence task performance ($\beta = .188$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that greater disparity in the ability to transition from family to work tasks between spouses is associated with improved task performance. These findings provide valuable insights into the complex dynamics of work and family flexibility and their impact on marital satisfaction, perspective taking, and task performance.

Mediating Effects

The results from the study suggest that empathic concerns may serve as a potential mediator in the relationship between family flexibility and outcomes such as marital satisfaction and task performance. Similarly, perspective taking is hypothesized to mediate the relationship between both family flexibility/transition and work transition to task performance. To gain a deeper understanding of these mediating effects, the study separately examined boundary flexibility in terms of ability and willingness within both family and work domains, treating these as distinct independent variables. This approach is illustrated in Figures 4 and 5, eschewing the amalgamation of ability and willingness into a singular flexibility construct.

Table 5 in the study delineates the outcomes of the SEM bias-corrected bootstrapping analysis, with a specific focus on the mediation effects exerted by empathic concern and perspective taking. The analysis, underpinned by 95% confidence intervals, uncovers that empathic concerns significantly and negatively mediate the relationship between the congruence of work-to-family flexibility willingness and both marital satisfaction [-.993, -.051] and task performance [-.404, -.029]. This substantial mediation effect lends robust support to Hypothesis 4a. In addition to these findings, perspective taking is observed to negatively mediate the relationship between the congruence of family-to-work ability and task performance [-.17, -.012], providing partial support for Hypothesis 4a. This indicates that variations in the ability to transition from family to work may affect task performance through changes in perspective taking. Furthermore, perspective taking positively mediates the relationship between the congruence of work-to-family transition and task performance [.031, .468]. This mediation is indicative of a beneficial impact on task performance when there is an increase in perspective

taking, as a result of the congruence in transitioning from work to family, thereby partially supporting Hypothesis 4b.

The results indicate that when an individual has lesser family flexibility ability compared to their partner, which implies that the partner is more adept at integrating work activities within family domains, a greater difference (or higher congruence) can lead to reduced perspective taking and lower task performance in the individual.

While controlling for the level scores of the independent variables and covariates, the findings suggest that couples with higher level scores in work transition tend to exhibit lower empathy towards their partners, potentially leading to decreased marital satisfaction. Similarly, higher level scores in family flexibility ability, willingness, and transition from family to work are associated with lower empathy and reduced task performance. The current study did not find evidence for the mediation effect of empathy or perspective taking on the relationship between other facets of boundary management and marital satisfaction or task performance.

The choice of bootstrap CI is justified as it accounts for potential non-normality in the sampling distribution of the direct effect. However, the p-values for mediation are not significant due to the non-normal distribution in the sample of difference. Therefore, the bootstrap CI is relied upon for its accuracy and consistency, as also noted by other researchers in the field.

Table 5. The SEM bias-corrected Bootstrapping Test of the Mediation Effect of congruence of independent variables.

Congruence of Independent Variables	**Mediator Variable**	**Dependent Variables**	**Estimate**	**95% Confidence Interval**
Family-to-work Flexibility Ability	Perspective Taking	Task Performance	-0.062	[-0.171, -.012]
Work-to family Flexibility Willingness	Empathic Concerns	Marital Satisfaction	-.228	[-.993, -.051]
Work-to family Flexibility Willingness	Empathic Concerns	Task Performance	-.101	[-.404, -.029]
Work-to Family Transition	Perspective Taking	Task Performance	.134	[.031, .468]

CHAPTER FIVE:

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to explore how couples' congruence in managing their family and work responsibilities influence their well-being while working from home during COVID-19 pandemic. It examined how the difference of work and family boundary management preferences between spouses affects their dyadic empathy, marital satisfaction, and job performance, using the frameworks of person-environment fit theory and boundary theory. Additionally, it explored the roles of dyadic empathic concern and perspective-taking within couples, examining their mediating effects on the relationship between the congruence of boundaries and overall well-being outcomes.

Results from the present study revealed that the congruence between couples' work and family flexibility has significant negative effect on empathic concerns and perspective taking, though it has a less direct effect on marital satisfaction and task performance. Specifically, congruence on family flexibility between couples negatively related to empathic concerns and perspective taking. For instance, when an individual's ability and willingness to transition from family to work domain surpasses their partner's, the partner's dyadic empathy towards the individual decreased. Controversy, in the real transition from family to work, the difference between couples was positively related to perspective taking. That is saying when an individual transits from family to work increased more than their partner, the partner may have increased perspective taking to

the individual. It is highly possible that a person whose job requests more responsibility needs their partner to engage in more perspective taking of the person's job needs to better accept the real situation. Thus, the results highlighted the contrary effects between the cognitive level and the behavioral transitions on their partner's empathic concerns and perspective taking in family domain model. The results consistent with the research from Gere et al. (2011) that the alignment between couple's goals in shared activities can significantly influence affective well-being.

In the work domain models, only the congruence from work to family transition had a positive effect on perspective taking. This result suggests that when an individual transitions from work to family increased more than their partner, the partner will take more the individual's perspective to balance the family dynamic or to reduce potential conflicts. This finding is consistent with results observed in the family domains.

In the models for both family and work domains, the results highlight that congruence between couples can lead to opposing effects on the partner's perspective taking and empathic concerns between cognitive perceptions and actual behavioral transitions. Specifically, a smaller congruence in flexibility ability and willingness between partners may enhance empathic concerns and perspective thinking, more significantly in family domain. This result is resonant with the findings from Ogolsky et al. (2014), which suggest a negative relationship between the discrepancy in spouses' views on cognitive egalitarianism and their marital quality. Conversely, in practical scenarios, increased differences in the actual transitions between couples in work and family roles positively impact the perspective taking of the partner.

In summary, the results suggest that similarity in cognitive perception will benefit the dyadic empathy (Empathic concerns and perspective taking) significantly in family domains. Moreover, in the behavioral level, partners whose transition increased more than the other, will cause the other people's perspective taking increased in both family and work domain. If integrated into practical application, it might be beneficial for individuals to align their flexibility ability and willingness with their partner's. A smaller disparity in flexibility between partners can lead to enhanced task performance and increased marital satisfaction by increasing dyadic empathy. Additionally, regarding actual transitions between domains, it may be advantageous for individuals to increase the discrepancy between partners to enhance their well-being by increasing empathy. This approach highlighted the importance of consistency of thoughts between couples and the significance of the flexibility of their actions. Moreover, it offered more guidance for individuals to increase their well-being by adjusting their boundaries between family and work while considering their partner's boundary management strategies.

The results from examining the absolute scores as difference between spouses, suggesting that discrepancies in work flexibility between a couple exert a detrimental impact on their marital satisfaction, while having a positive influence on their task performance. This suggests that when couples exhibit congruence in their capacity and willingness to balance family responsibilities during work hours, it is likely to result in heightened marital satisfaction. However, achieving such agreement on their willingness and ability on work flexibility might inversely affect task performance. In the family domain, when the disparity between spouse real behaviors to take work roles after work hours, it may increase the spouse task performance. This suggests the absolute differences exert a more significant effects on well-being results than dyadic empathy,

attributed to the lack of directional specificity in the difference. The absolute scores provided some research insights; however, it did not furnish adequate information for applying these insights to real-world scenarios, particularly in terms of adjusting boundaries to improve well-being. This is due to the necessity of considering the strategies of the other party involved in the adjustment process.

The results regarding the covariates revealed interesting patterns. In both family and work domain models, income demonstrated a positive correlation with empathic concerns and marital satisfaction. Conversely, educational level exhibited a negative association with empathic concerns and task performance in the family domain model. In the work domain model, however, educational level was negatively correlated with marital satisfaction and positively associated with perspective-taking. Gender, number of children, relationship years, and class level did not significantly impact the primary variables of interest.

In the examination of mediators, it was discovered that empathic concern negatively mediates the relationship between work to family flexibility willingness with marital satisfaction and with task performance. This indicates that individuals seeking to enhance their partner's task performance or marital satisfaction might need to reconsider their own flexibility willingness in transitioning from work to family roles. Reducing their own willingness of transition to decrease congruence, lead to an increase in the partner's empathic concern, then improve their task performance and marital satisfaction. By adopting this strategy, an individual can effectively encourage their partner's increased participation in family responsibilities, which, in turn, may amplify the partner's empathic concern towards the individual and lead to improved perceptions of well-being. If the goal is to enhance one's own task performance or marital satisfaction,

individuals can augment their willingness to assume additional family roles while working, thereby decreasing congruence with their partner. This method necessitates individuals to voluntarily increase their commitment to family duties, aiming to enhance their empathic concern for their partner, thereby contributing to improvements in their own both marital satisfaction and task performance.

Perspective taking has been found to negatively mediate the relationship between an individual's family flexibility ability congruence with their partner and task performance. Thus, to positively impact a partner's perspective taking and task performance, the individual could consider reducing their own family flexibility ability when the partner's family flexibility ability remains constant. This could involve communicating to their partners about individual's decreased capacity for working beyond regular hours to improve partners' perspective taking, then could foster an improvement in the partners' task performance. If the goal is to boost individual's own task performance, the individual can increase their ability to work after official hours to increase their own perspective taking, which will benefit their task performance. Implementing this change may require modifying family rules or routines to accommodate and modify the ability to work outside of official hours.

In the context of actual transitions between work and family roles, perspective taking serves as a positive mediator between the congruence of work-to-family transitions between spouse and their task performance. For individuals aiming to enhance their own task performance, an effective strategy involves improving their perspective taking by reducing their own work-to-family transition activities. Conversely, to augment a partner's perspective taking and task performance, an individual could increase their engagement in work-to-family

transitions if the partner's own transitions between these domains are stable at that time. The fundamental rule might be that managing family obligations demands at least one partner to step forward, which calls for the flexibility and the difference between the couples' domain transitions. This approach aligns with the Family System theory (Bowen, 1993), which emphasizes the interconnectedness of family members' behaviors and the systemic nature of change within family dynamics. According to this theory, an individual's behavior change, such as taking on more responsibility in managing work-to-family transitions, can lead to adjustments in the behaviors of other family members. These adjustments are aimed at maintaining or restoring stability within the relationship. This approach not only caters to the needs of one partner but also promotes a stronger bond and mutual understanding within the relationship by adjusting action flexibility accordingly.

The research underscores the importance of couples' similarity on the cognitive level, and the flexibility/difference on their behavioral level, taking into account their partner's abilities/willingness and needs. Such adjustments are key to enhancing dyadic empathy, which subsequently leads to improved task performance and greater marital satisfaction. The results present an actionable and proactive approach for modifying relationship dynamics by altering one's own boundary management strategies. This can lead to improvements in both personal well-being and that of the partner. The research offers valuable insights into the benefits of viewing a couple's boundary management collectively, as a unified approach, thereby enhancing overall well-being outcomes.

Contributions

This dissertation represents several contributions to the literature on boundary flexibility, particularly in the context of couples working from home. The research builds upon and expands the model proposed by Chen, Powell, & Greenhaus (2006), integrating it with critical insights from the works of Jansen & Kristof-Brown (2006), Arbour et al., (2014), and Cheung (2007). This approach offers a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how the congruence in boundary flexibility between spouses relates to their overall well-being. By doing so, first, the study departs from the conventional person-person (p-p) fit model commonly used in work environment studies, by instead focusing on spouses as distinct dyadic units that interact within both family and work spheres. This perspective has become increasingly relevant due to the growing intersection of family and work domains, a trend that has been accelerated by the shift towards remote work during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Secondly, this research provides valuable insights into the increasingly popular work-from-home context, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era. It enhances our understanding of the work-from-home environment by exploring dyadic data and examining the congruence in boundary flexibility between couples. This approach reveals insights that extend beyond those that could be derived from examining individual data alone, and offers practical and actionable guidance for couples, focusing on how to effectively calibrate their boundary flexibility to adjust their relationship dynamics. This calibration is crucial for enhancing not only the task performance and marital satisfaction of individuals but also for nurturing the overall health and well-being of the relationship. By acknowledging and addressing the unique dynamics that

couples face when working from home, the study provides valuable strategies for maintaining a healthy balance between professional responsibilities and personal relationships.

Moreover, the research supports the person-environment fit theory by demonstrating that congruence (difference) in boundary flexibility negatively influences dyadic empathy. This finding underscores the significance of alignment in partners' flexibility preferences and strategies for fostering mutual understanding and empathy within the relationship.

Another key contribution of this research is to reveal contrasting effects of boundary flexibility (comprising both the ability and willingness to be flexible) and actual transitions (permeability) in the family and work domains. These findings highlight the important distinction between cognitive boundary flexibility and the physical act of transitioning between domains, underscoring the necessity for individuals to align their boundary management strategies with those of their partners. Individuals tailor to similar with their partner on boundary ability and willingness and being flexible on the actions and allow the difference between spouse on the real transition between domains. This alignment is crucial for enhancing empathy and perspective-taking within the relationship.

Methodologically, the study adopted Latent Congruence Models (LCM) to goes beyond simply considering the means and differences as interdependent predictors. This approach is particularly in considering both the mean and the difference of paired data for interdependent predictors. By employing LCM, the study effectively mitigates potential problems associated with traditional methods of solely relying on difference scores for congruence, which can result in issues like low reliability and vague conceptual clarity. LCM addresses these issues by defining congruence specifically as the difference derived from subtracting the participant’s

score from their partner’s score, while simultaneously controlling for the mean of the spouses' scores. This methodological choice enhances the study's ability to accurately capture and interpret the complex dynamics of interdependent relationships and provides a more reliable and conceptually clear framework for understanding how congruence between partners in terms of boundary management strategies influences outcomes like empathy, perspective-taking, and task performance. This nuanced approach also aligns with the definitions of congruence found in person-environment fit theories. By doing so, LCM allows for a more refined view of the participants' partners as contextual variables within the dyadic relationship.

Lastly, the research identifies the mediating effects of empathic concerns on the relationship between work flexibility willingness and well-being outcomes, and the mediating effect of perspective taking on family flexibility ability/work to family transition and task performance. This finding offers further guidance for individuals on how to adjust their boundary flexibility and transitions to achieve positive outcomes. These results broaden the practical applications of the study, providing valuable guidance for individuals seeking to optimize their boundary flexibility and transitions in a way that promotes positive outcomes both in their professional and personal lives.

Limitations

The current study, while offering valuable insights into boundary flexibility and its implications for well-being in remote work contexts, is subject to several limitations that merit consideration.

One significant limitation pertains to the methodology used to assess partners' boundary flexibility. The study relied on participants reporting their perceptions of their partners' boundary flexibility and transitions, rather than obtaining direct self-reports from the partners. While this

approach may mitigate the impact of social desirability bias regarding partners' boundary preferences, it also introduces the risk of subjective bias. Though the accuracy of these reports could be influenced by personal perceptions and attitudes, current study addressed on explored the perceived boundary flexibility and transition of participants' partners, and the effect on participant's well-being.

Another limitation is the reliance on self-reported data, collected through an online platform. This approach raises concerns about potential common method variance, as the data for all study variables were gathered from a single source. Such a method could potentially inflate the relationships among variables. Although the presence of common method bias does not necessarily invalidate research outcomes, it cannot be completely disregarded. However, the discriminant validity of the study measures, as supported by confirmatory factor analyses, suggests a level of methodological robustness in distinguishing between the constructs assessed.

The timing of the data collection also presents a limitation. The study was conducted in May 2023, a period when many individuals were transitioning back to on-site work. Participants were asked to recall their work-from-home experiences during the pandemic when filling out the research surveys, potentially introducing recall bias that could compromise data reliability. Memories of past experiences can vary in accuracy and are often subject to distortion over time.

Another limitation of this study lies in its lack of exploration into the sustainability and long-term implications of role adjustments within the family system. While the research outlines a pathway for families to achieve a new equilibrium by modifying one partner's boundary management strategies, it inadequately addresses a critical issue that may arise from such adjustments: the potential dysfunction due to a partner's inability to sustain an enhanced or

overachieving role over time. This gap highlights the need for a more comprehensive analysis and the development of strategies to mitigate the risks associated with prolonged role strain, ensuring that any shift towards a new family equilibrium is both sustainable and supportive of all family members' well-being.

The cross-sectional design of the study limits the ability to establish causality between the variables examined. While the correlations observed suggest potential links, they do not provide a basis for causal inference. The absence of longitudinal data precludes firm conclusions about the directionality or temporal sequencing of the relationships.

Additionally, while the study controlled for certain demographic variables like marital status and number of children, it did not account for all aspects of family dynamics that might impact the constructs of interest. Notably, the study overlooked the influence of responsibilities such as caring for elderly dependents or other unique family obligations. This omission may restrict the generalizability of the findings to a broader range of family situations.

Future direction

Building on the groundwork established by the current study, future research in the realm of boundary management within dyadic relationships presents several promising directions in understanding its impact on well-being in both family and work contexts.

One intriguing direction for future research is to collect and compare data from both members of a couple regarding their preferences for boundary management and their respective well-being outcomes. This dual-perspective approach could significantly enhance the reliability of the data concerning partners and yield richer insights into the congruence of boundary

management within couples, providing a more nuanced understanding of its influence on family and work well-being.

Furthermore, it would be valuable for subsequent studies to examine additional sources of congruence within the family unit, especially in diverse family structures and cultural contexts, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how different families navigate changes and challenges. These could include couple's shared values, central identities between spouses, the presence of dependent elders, the use of babysitting services, as these factors may have a significant influence on the dynamics of boundary management.

Future research also should aim to fill the gaps identified by exploring the sustainability and long-term implications of role adjustments within family systems. Specifically, studies should investigate strategies that families can employ to prevent dysfunction when one partner takes on an enhanced or overachieving role. This includes examining the psychological, emotional, and relational impacts of such role changes and identifying mechanisms that support individuals in these roles without compromising their well-being or the family's stability.

Moreover, there is a need to identify other potential mediators that could influence the relationship between boundary management and well-being. These mediators could include family conflicts, communication skills, and clear family responsibilities, which may affect the extent to which individuals can transition between work and family roles and maintain flexibility.

Additionally, research should consider how other certain characteristics of a couple may affect their well-being, especially when both partners are engaged in remote work. In the wake of COVID-19, with an increasing trend towards hybrid and work-from-home arrangements,

understanding these dynamics is crucial. The current study's exploration of the correlation between a couple's boundary flexibility and well-being, particularly through the lens of empathy—a vital factor in marital relationships—provides a foundational framework for addressing similar future scenarios.

In sum, the path forward for research in this area is rich with opportunities to expand our knowledge and to offer practical strategies for couples striving to balance the complexities of work and family life in our constantly changing society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research addresses a relatively unexplored area in the domain of work-family studies: the person-person fit between spouses who work from home. Focusing on the period of the pandemic lockdown, a time when the boundaries between family and work domains were particularly blurred, this study adopts a person-environment fit approach to explore boundary management preferences. It reveals that the congruence in partners' flexibility in terms of ability and willingness is negatively related to dyadic empathy, while also uncovering some positive effects of congruence in transitions between domains on dyadic empathy.

Another intriguing finding of this study is the contrasting impact on well-being between ability/willingness to be flexible and actual behavioral transitions. The research suggests that when one partner can be more flexible to meet family needs, especially in a work-from-home setting, it may enable the other partner to better meet work requirements, leading to enhanced well-being. The mediation effects of perspective taking and empathic concerns further underscore the importance of considering the partner's perspective and needs.

Overall, the study suggests that if individuals can align with their partner's perspective and show empathy, and if at least one partner demonstrates flexibility in meeting family needs, this can lead to increased well-being. This finding extends Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) work-family enrichment model by delving deeper into the theoretical relationship between boundary flexibility and well-being outcomes, with a particular focus on congruence in boundary management preferences.

Thus, this research not only contributes to our understanding of how work-from-home arrangements affect marital dynamics and individual well-being but also offers practical insights for couples navigating the complexities of balancing professional and personal responsibilities in a shared living and working space.

REFERENCE LIST

Adkins, C. L., Russell, C. J., & Werbel, J. D. (1994). Judgments of fit in the selection process: The role of work value congruence. *Personnel Psychology,* 47(3), 605-623.

Allen, T. D. (2001). Family-supportive environments: The role of organizational perceptions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 58, 414-435.

Allen, T. D., Cho, E., & Meier, L. L. (2014). Work-family boundary dynamics. *Annu. Rev. Organ. Psychol. Organ. Behav.*, 1(1), 99-121.

Antonioni, D., & Park, H. (2001). The effects of personality similarity on peer ratings of contextual work behaviors. *Personnel Psychology*, 54(2), 331-360.

Ashforth, B. E., Kreiner, G. E., & Fugate, M. (2000). All in a day's work: Boundaries and micro role transitions. *Academy of Management Review*, 25, 472–491.

Beauregard, T., and Henry, L. (2009). Making the link between work-home balance practices and organizational performance. *Hum. Resour. Manag. Rev.* 19, 9–22.

Beavan, G. (1987). *'WISP'a simple radioactive waste management computer program* (No. DOE-RW--87.103). Department of the Environment.

Bogaerts, Y., De Cooman, R., & De Gieter, S. (2018). Getting the work-nonwork interface you are looking for: The relevance of work-nonwork boundary management fit. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 1158.

Boomsma, A. (1985). Nonconvergence, improper solutions, and starting values in LISREL maximum likelihood estimation. *Psychometrika,* 50, 229-242.

Brown, S. M., Doom, J. R., Lechuga-Peña, S., Watamura, S. E., & Koppels, T. (2020). Stress and parenting during the global COVID-19 pandemic. *Child abuse & neglect*, 104699.

Byrne D, Clore GL, Smeaton G. 1986. The attraction hypothesis: do similar attitudes affect anything? *J. Personal. Soc. Psychol.* 51:1167–70

Bulger, C. A., Matthews, R. A., & Hoffman, M. E. (2007). Work and personal life boundary management: Boundary strength, work/personal life balance, and the segmentation-integration continuum. *Journal of occupational health psychology,* 12(4), 365.

Busby, D. M., & Gardner, B. C. (2008). How do I analyze thee? Let me count the ways: Considering empathy in couple relationships using self and partner ratings. *Family Process*, 47(2), 229-242.

Cahill, V. A., Malouff, J. M., Little, C. W., & Schutte, N. S. (2020). Trait perspective taking and romantic relationship satisfaction: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 34(8), 1025.

Chandrasekar, K. (2011). Workplace environment and its impact on organizational performance in public sector organizations. *International journal of enterprise computing and business systems, 1*(1), 1-19.

Charalampous, M., Grant, C. A., Tramontano, C., & Michailidis, E. (2019). Systematically reviewing remote e-workers' well-being at work: a multidimensional approach. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, *28*(1), 51-73.

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.

Chen, Z., & Powell, G. N. (2012). No pain, no gain? A resource-based model of work-to-family enrichment and conflict. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 81(1), 89-98.

Cheung, G. W. (2009). Introducing the latent congruence model for improving the assessment of similarity, agreement, and fit in organizational research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 12(1), 6-33.

Clark, S. C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, 53, 747–770.

Clark, S. C. (2002, August). Borders between work and home, and work/family conflict. In *annual meeting of the Academy of Management, Denver, CO* (pp. 9-14).

Daniel, S., & Sonnentag, S. (2016). Crossing the borders: The relationship between boundary management, work–family enrichment and job satisfaction. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 27(4), 407-426.

Dartey-Baah, K., & Amoako, G. K. (2011). Application of Frederick Herzberg's Two-Factor theory in assessing and understanding employee motivation at work: a Ghanaian Perspective. *European Journal of Business and Management*, *3*(9), 1-8.

Du, D., Bakker, A. B., & Derks, D. (2020). Capitalization on positive family events and task performance: A perspective from the work–home resources model. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*.

Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2000). A model of burnout and life satisfaction amongst nurses. *Journal of advanced nursing*, *32*(2), 454-464.

Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). The job demands resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *86*, 499-512.

Demerouti, E., Derks, D., Ten Brummelhuis, L. L., & Bakker, A. B. (2014). New ways of working: Impact on working conditions, work–family balance, and well-being. *The impact of ICT on quality of working life*, 123-141.

Delanoeije, 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.

Eddleston, K. A., & Mulki, J. (2017). Toward understanding remote workers' management of work–family boundaries: The complexity of workplace embeddedness. *Group & Organization Management*, *42*(3), 346-387.

Edwards, J. R. (1993). Problems with the use of profile similarity indices in the study of congruence in organizational research. *Personnel psychology*, 46(3), 641-665.

Edwards, J. R. (2008). 4 person–environment fit in organizations: An assessment of theoretical progress. *The academy of management annals*, 2(1), 167-230.

Edwards, J. A., & Billsberry, J. (2010). Testing a multidimensional theory of person-environment fit. *Journal of managerial issues*, 476-493.

Edwards, J. R., & Cable, D. M. (2009). The value of value congruence. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 94:654–7

Festinger L. 1954. A theory of social comparison processes. *Hum. Relat.* 7:117–40

Fisher, J., Languilaire, J.-C., Lawthom, R., Nieuwenhuis, R., Petts, R. J., Runswick-Cole, K., & Yerkes, M. A. (2020). Community, work, and family in times of COVID-19. *Community Work & Family*, 23, 247–252.

Gerbing, D. W., & Anderson, J. C. (1985). The effects of sampling error and model characteristics on parameter estimation for maximum likelihood confirmatory factor analysis. *Multivariate behavioral research*, 20(3), 255-271.

Global Workplace Analytics. (2020, June 08). How many people could work-from-home. Retrieved October 26, 2020

Golden, L. (2006). The role of relationships in understanding telecommuter satisfaction. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, *27* , 319–340.

Gottman, J. (2018). *The seven principles for making marriage work*. Hachette UK.

Graves, L. M., & Powell, G. N. (1995). The effects of sex similarity on recruiter's evaluations of factual applicants: a test of the similarity-attraction paradigm. *Personnel Psychology*, 48(1), 85-98.

Greenhaus, J. H., & Beutell, N. J. (1985). Sources of conflict between work and family roles. *Academy of management review*, 10(1), 76-88.

Greenhaus, J. H., & Powell, G. N. (2006). When work and family are allies: A theory of work-family enrichment. *Academy of management review*, 31(1), 72-92.

Grzywacz, J. G., & Carlson, D. S. (2007). Conceptualizing work—family balance: Implications for practice and research. *Advances in developing human resources*, 9(4), 455-471.

Goode, W. J. (1960). A theory of role strain. *American sociological review*, 483-496.

Hall, D. T., & Richter, J. (1988). Balancing work life and home life: What can organizations do to help?. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 2(3), 213-223.

Haugen, P. T., Welsh, D. P., & McNulty, J. K. (2008). Empathic accuracy and adolescent romantic relationships. *Journal of adolescence*, 31(6), 709-727.

Heider, F. (2013). The psychology of interpersonal relations. Psychology Press.

Hogg, M. A. (2000). Subjective uncertainty reduction through self-categorization: A motivational theory of social identity processes. *European review of social psychology*, 11(1), 223-255.

Painter, G. (2017). *An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis Examining How Remote Employees Make Sense of Their Work Environment* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of the Rockies).

Jansen, K. J., & Kristof-Brown, A. (2006). Toward a multidimensional theory of person-environment fit. *Journal of Managerial issues*, 193-212.

Kamdar, D., McAllister, D. J., & Turban, D. B. (2006). " All in a day's work": how follower individual differences and justice perceptions predict OCB role definitions and behavior. *Journal of applied psychology*, 91(4), 841.

Kelly, E., Kossek, E., Hammer, L., Durham, M., Bray, J., Chermack, K., et al. (2008). Getting there from here: research on the effects of work-family initiatives on work-family conflict and business outcomes. *Acad. Manag. Ann.* 2, 305–349.

Kiburz, K. M. (2016). *A closer look into remote work: examining resources within remote work arrangements with outcomes of job performance and work-family conflict* (Doctoral dissertation, University of South Florida)..

Kimmes, J. G., Edwards, A. B., Wetchler, J. L., & Bercik, J. (2014). Self and other ratings of dyadic empathy as predictors of relationship satisfaction. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 42(5), 426-437.

Kossek, E. E., Lautsch, B., & Eaton, S. C. (2006). Telecommuting, control, and boundary management: Correlates of policy use and practice, job control, and work family effectiveness. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 68, 347–367.

Koopmans, L., Bernaards, C., Hildebrandt, V., Van Buuren, S., Van der Beek, A. J., & De Vet, H. C. (2012). Development of an individual work performance questionnaire. *International journal of productivity and performance management*, 62(1), 6-28.

Kramer, A., & Kramer, K. Z. (2020). The potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on occupational status, work from home, and occupational mobility. Journal of vocational behavior, 119, 103442.

Kristof-Brown, A. L., Zimmerman, R. D., & Johnson, E. C. (2005). Consequences of individuals' fit at work: A meta-analysis OF person–job, person–organization, person–group, and person–supervisor fit. *Personnel psychology*, *58*(2), 281-342.

Lapierre, L. M., & Allen, T. D. (2006). Work-supportive family, family-supportive supervision, use of organizational benefits, and problem-focused coping: Implications for work-family conflict and employee well-being. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 11 (2), 169–181.

Lecky, P. (1968). The theory of self-consistency. Ch. Gordon and KJ Gergen (Eds.), *The Self in Social Interaction. Vol. I: Classic and Contemporary Perspectives*, New York (John Wiley & Sons) 1968, pp. 297-298.

Marks, S. R. (1977). Multiple roles and role strain: Some notes on human energy, time and commitment. American sociological review, 921-936.

MA, H., SHEN, C., YANG, J., TANG, H., & XIE, J. (2014). Boundary flexibility and work-family conflict and enrichment: From person-environment fit perspective. *Acta Psychologica Sinica*, 46(4), 540.

Matthews, R. A., & Barnes-Farrell, J. L. (2010). Development and initial evaluation of an enhanced measure of boundary flexibility for the work and family domains. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 15(3), 330.

Mikulincer, M., Gillath, O., Halevy, V., Avihou, N., Avidan, S., & Eshkoli, N. (2001). Attachment theory and reactions to others' needs: Evidence that activiation of the sense of attachment security promotes empathic responses. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 81(6), 1205.

Musson, G., & Tietze, S. (2004). Feelin' groovy: Appropriating time in home-based work. *Culture and Organization, 10* (3), 251–264.

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.

Nippert-Eng, C. E. (1996*). Home and work.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Ogolsky, B. G., Dennison, R. P., & Monk, J. K. (2014). The role of couple discrepancies in cognitive and behavioral egalitarianism in marital quality. *Sex Roles*, 70, 329-342.

Ornell, F., Schuch, J. B., Sordi, A. O., & Kessler, F. H. P. (2020). "Pandemic fear" and COVID-19: mental health burden and strategies. *Brazilian Journal of Psychiatry, 42*(3), 232-235.

Peters, P., den Dulk, L., & van der Lippe, T. (2009). The effects of time-spatial fl exibility and new working conditions on employees' work-life balance: The Dutch case. *Community, Work & Family, 12* (3), 279–297.

Péloquin, K., & Lafontaine, M. F. (2010). Measuring empathy in couples: Validity and reliability of the interpersonal reactivity index for couples. *Journal of personality assessment*, *92*(2), 146-157.

Pruitt, D. G., & Lewis, S. A. (1975). Development of integrative solutions in bilateral negotiation. *Journal of Personality and Social psychology*, 31(4), 621.

Rammstedt, B., & Schupp, J. (2008). Only the congruent survive–Personality similarities in couples. *Personality and individual differences*, 45(6), 533-535.

Raziq, A., & Maulabakhsh, R. (2015). Impact of working environment on job satisfaction. *Procedia Economics and Finance*, *23*, 717-725.

Remote work before, during, and after the pandemic quarterly economics briefing–Q4 2020. Remote Work Before, During, and After the Pandemic. (n.d.). Retrieved April 11, 2022, from https://www.ncci.com/SecureDocuments/QEB/QEB_Q4_2020_RemoteWork.html#:~:text=Before%20the%20pandemic%2C%20three%2Dquarters,not%20have%20done%20so%20otherwise.

Rosen, N. O., Mooney, K., & Muise, A. (2017). Dyadic empathy predicts sexual and relationship well-being in couples transitioning to parenthood. *Journal of sex & marital therapy*, *43*(6), 543-559.

Rubino, C., Perry, S. J., Milam, A. C., Spitzmueller, C., & Zapf, D. (2012). Demand–control–person: Integrating the demand–control and conservation of resources models to test an expanded stressor–strain model. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *17*(4), 456.

Russell, R. J., & Wells, P. A. (1991). Personality similarity and quality of marriage. *Personality and Individual Differences,* 12(5), 407-412.

Schroffel, A. (1999). How does clinical supervision affect job satisfaction? *The Clinical Supervisor*, *18*(2), 91-105.

Simpson, J.A., Ori?A, M.M., Ickes, W., 2003. When accuracy hurts, and when it helps: a test of the empathic accuracy model in marital interactions. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* 85 (5), 881–893.

Staples, D. S. (2001). A study of remote workers and their differences from non-remote workers. *Journal of Organizational and End User Computing (JOEUC)*, *13*(2), 3-14.

Steele CM. 1988. The psychology of self-affirmation: sustaining the integrity of the self. *Adv. Exp. Soc. Psychol.* 21:261–302

Sharpe Wessling, K., Huber, J., & Netzer, O. (2017). MTurk character misrepresentation: Assessment and solutions. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44(1), 211-230.

Shockley, K., and Allen, T. (2015). Deciding between work and family: an episodic approach. *Pers. Psychol.* 68, 283–318.

Shockley, K. M., Shen, W., DeNunzio, M. M., Arvan, M. L., & Knudsen, E. A. (2017). Disentangling the relationship between gender and work–family conflict: An integration of theoretical perspectives using meta-analytic methods. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 102(12), 1601.

Siu, O. L., Lu, J. F., Brough, P., Lu, C. Q., Bakker, A. B., Kalliath, T., ... & Sit, C. (2010). Role resources and work–family enrichment: The role of work engagement. *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* 77(3), 470-480.

Sullivan, C., & Lewis, S. (2001). Home-based telework, gender, and the synchronisation of work and family: Perspectives of teleworkers and their co-residents. *Gender, Work and Organization,* 8 (2), 123–145.

Sullivan, C. (2003). What's in a name? Definitions and conceptualizations of teleworking and homeworking. *New Technology, Work & Employment,* 18 (3), 158–165.

Sullivan, C. (2012). *Remote working and work-life balance.* In N. P. Reilly, M. J. Sirgy, & C. A. Gorman (Eds.), *International handbooks of quality-of-life. Work and quality of life: Ethical practices in organizations* (p. 275–290). Springer Science + Business Media.

Schieman, S., & Young, M. (2010). Is there a downside to schedule control for the work-family interface?. *Journal of Family Issues*, *31*(10), 1391-1414.

Ten Brummelhuis, L. L., & Bakker, A. B. (2012). A resource perspective on the work–home interface: The work–home resources model. *American psychologist,* 67(7), 545.

Turban, D. B., & Jones, A. P. (1988). Supervisor-subordinate similarity: types, effects, and mechanisms. *Journal of applied psychology*, 73(2), 228.

Upwork study finds 22% of American workforce will be remote by 2025: Upwork. RSS. (n.d.). Retrieved April 11, 2022,

van Vianen, A. E. (2018). Person–environment fit: A review of its basic tenets. *Annual Review of Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior*, *5*, 75-101.

Van Der Lippe, T., & Lippényi, Z. (2020). Co-workers working from home and individual and team performance. *New Technology, Work and Employment,* 35(1), 60-79.

Verhofstadt, L. L., Buysse, A., Ickes, W., Davis, M., & Devoldre, I. (2008). Support provision in marriage: the role of emotional similarity and empathic accuracy. *Emotion,* 8(6), 792.

Westman, M. (2001). Stress and strain crossover. Human relations, 54(6), 717-751.

Wilkie, J. R., Ferree, M. M., & Ratcliff, K. S. (1998). Gender and fairness: Marital satisfaction in two-earner couples. *Journal of Marriage and the Family*, 577-594.

Yu, K. Y. (2013). A motivational model of person-environment fit: Psychological motives as drivers of change. *Organizational fit: Key issues and new directions,* 246, 21-49.

VITA

Dr. Huaying Li attended Purdue University in Lafayette, Indiana, and gained a Master of Science in School Counseling between 2006 to 2008. At Loyola University Chicago in Chicago, Illinois, Dr. Li received a Doctoral of Philosophy in Counseling Psychology in 2024.

Publications by Dr. Li focus on topics ranging from career assessment to the integration of cultural beliefs in counseling. In 2020, Dr. Li explored the operationalization of interest congruence, published in the Journal of Career Assessment. That same year, Dr. Li was also involved in the research of developing and initially validating the Therapist Hope for Clients Scale, a tool designed to measure therapists' hope for their clients. The results of the study were published in The Counseling Psychologist. In 2021, Dr. Li and colleagues presented a study on integrating cultural beliefs about illness in counseling with refugees which was published in the Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology. Earlier, in 2019, Dr. Li was part of a research team that investigated the meaning of therapists' hope for their clients through a phenomenological study. The findings were published in the Journal of Counseling Psychology.

Presently, Dr. Li work as a counseling staff at Mental Health Counseling and Psychiatry Services at the University of Vermont, where she continues to apply her knowledge and experience in counseling psychology to support and develop mental health care practices.