The blurred work-family boundary: A study on overtime work and working from home

Zhaoli Song*
Pei-Chuan Wu
Yew Kwan Tong
National University of Singapore

Yongli Wang
Sun Yet-Sen University

Author’s Note: Correspondence regarding this article should be addressed to Zhaoli Song,
Department of Management and Organization, National University of Singapore, 1 Business
Link 1, Singapore 117592. Electronic mail address: bizszl@nus.edu.sg. Phone: (65) 6516-5739.
Fax: (65) 6775-5571.
ABSTRACT

Work can intrude into the family domain across the work-family boundary in the forms of overtime work and working from home. Guided by role theory, identity theory, and boundary theory, the current study examined antecedents and consequence of these two boundary crossing behaviors based on reports from 433 workers. Work overload was found to be positively correlated with overtime work. Role identities and desire for segregation were also found to be significantly correlated with both overtime work and working from home. Overtime work was found to be positively related to work-to-family interference. Our current study has extended the work-family literature by jointly examining both the time and space markers of the work-family boundary.
Globalization, mobile technology and virtual workplaces have caused momentous change in the way we live and work. An important change is the inadvertent encroachment of work on non-work aspects of life, which challenges traditional notions that the two should or can be kept separate (Kanter, 1977). Indeed, the customary platitude to “put in an honest day's work” is surely becoming ambivalent and antiquated: what constitutes a day’s work when we bring work back home to do beyond mandated office hours? Traditional role-based activities of each domain of work and home are therefore becoming increasingly compromised as individuals juggle to meet multifaceted expectations. This cross-domain management of home and work tasks has been discussed in terms of corporate work-family policies (Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005), psychological correlates (e.g. role identity: Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000), fit perspectives (person-environment fit: Kreiner, 2006; fit between employee preference and corporate policy: Rothbard et al., 2005), the facilitative use of technology (Chesley, 2005), and formal teleworking programs (Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006; Shumate & Fulk, 2004).

The work-family boundary is the subjective, socially-constructed line of demarcation between the realms of work and non-work (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Typically, time serves as one major boundary marker: work and family activities extend over socially expected durations which are entrained with a personal clock schedule differentiating between public and private time (Zerubavel, 1981). Space, another boundary marker, interrelates with time to jointly determine the structure of human activity patterns. Activities that are temporally and/or spatially “fixed”, therefore, act as “pegs” in the daily time-space trajectory of the individual (Kwan, 1999). In traditional work settings, work activities are engaged in within the time-space context.
of work (i.e., at the workplace during work hours). Individuals engage in family and other social functions at home after office hours. There is thus a clear separation of work and family/personal life along the boundary of time and space.

However, the boundary between work and family lives has become much more blurred in modern society. Two particularly salient indications of the blurring work-family boundary are overtime work and working from home. Firstly, working increasingly long hours has been a relentless trend since the early 1970s (Schor, 1991), with professionals and managers now easily topping 60 hours per workweek (Hewlett & Luce, 2007; Brett & Stroh, 2003). This escalation in work time, almost inevitably at expense of family, exemplifies the problematic clash between the institutions of work and family as portended by Kanter (1977) and Hochschild (1997). Secondly, with the increase of flexibility and portability of work, workers can request to work from home instead of at their office. The most well-studied issue in the literature on work location is telecommuting or telework, defined as work conducted from home that is supported by telecommunications technology and organizational formal policy (Kossek et al., 2006). Employees can also work from home on an informal basis, in which case it is not counted as regular work and will not get compensated for. As one of the flexible work practices, working from home is viewed as a partial solution to ameliorate the clash between work and family demands (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001). Overtime work and working from home indicate that work has permeated the work-family boundary into the individual’s non work domain. To recover a lagging work schedule, employees may stay overtime at the office, therefore borrowing from home time; alternatively, he or she may take the uncompleted work back home to do, thereby allowing work to invade home space.
Despite the significant roles that time and location play in shaping the work-family boundary, not many empirical studies have examined overtime work and working from home in the work-family context (Major, Klein, & Ehrhart, 2002) and no study we are aware of has examined both phenomenons together. To fill in this gap, the present paper attempted to explore how employees engage in work activities across the work-family boundary in the forms of overtime work and working from home, and their antecedents and consequence.

**Antecedents of work overtime and working from home**

In the current study, we rely on three theoretical perspectives, role theory, identity theory and boundary theory, to identify antecedents of work overtime and working from home.

In modern societies, individuals often play multiple roles (i.e. as a professional worker, a father/mother, or a husband/wife, etc.). The notion that multiple roles may lead to incompatibility and conflict in a person’s life comes from role theory (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964). Kahn et al. described situations when work and family roles conflict with each other: “demands from role senders on the job for overtime or take-home work may conflict with pressures from one’s wife to give attention to family affairs during evening hours. The conflict arises between the role of the focal person as worker and his role as husband and father (p. 20).” Participating in one role (e.g., work role) makes it more difficult to participate in another role (e.g., family role) as individuals only have limited time and energy to utilize. As modern workers spend longer hours on their job around the clock (in the office or at home), the tensions and interrole conflict may be further escalated.

Role theory suggests that role demand may pressure people to behaviorally more engage in certain role. The demand-inducing effect of work overload has been extensively studied in the work-family literature (Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997), occupational health literature
(Karasek, 1979, 1998) and the coping literature (e.g. Tyler & Cushway, 1992, 1995). As one attempts to cope with the demands of increased workload, change in behavioral patterns is likely to occur. More time may be spent at work leading to increased work hours. Previous research has found work overload to be positively linked with long working hours (Frone et al., 1997; Major et al., 2002). As suggested by Frone et al. (1997), work overload occurs when workers have too many things to accomplish and yet have not enough time to work on them. They believe that “overload in a given role may lead to an increased time commitment to that role” (p. 150). It is therefore reasonable to expect that increased demands at work will trigger overtime work.

**H1:** Work overload is positively associated with overtime work.

In the family domain, family demands may pressure workers to change work patterns too. Individuals, especially those who have with young children and elderly dependents, may need to make extra effort in attending to family needs. High demands from the family domain may necessitate more flexible work arrangements to accommodate work and family requirements. For many employed parents or those individuals with more intense demands from their family roles, it is possible that individuals may intentionally or unintentionally juggle work and family responsibilities. Working from home represents a supporting mechanism provided by employers for those employees with high family overload. Therefore, we propose:

**H2:** Family overload is positively associated with working from home.

In a similar vein, identity theory suggests that individuals have multiple role identities derived from different life domains. An individual’s identification towards his or her work or family role can shape the temporal and spatial boundary of work and family. Reflexively derived through interaction with one’s social structure, the role set is cognitively internalized as role identity (McCall & Simmons, 1978; Stryker & Serpe, 1982). While an array of role identities
define the multifaceted self and one’s behavioral repertoire (Thoits, 1986), they are not of equal valence: rather, the identities occupy a “salience hierarchy” (Stryker, 1980) which orders their relative centrality and importance. The identity perspective (Craves, Ohlott, & Ruderman, 2007; Rothbard and Edward, 2003) suggests that people tend to invest more time and energy into a role that they value and commit to. Through investment in the role with stronger identity, individuals seek to increase their self-worth, self esteem, and self actualization. In the work-family domain, the two most salient role identities are work role identity (derived from the social structure of work) and family role identity (derived from the social structure of family) (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964).

Olson-Buchanan and Boswell (2006) found that work role identification made the work-family boundary more permeable such that psychological and behavioral elements from the work domain could more easily pass into the home domain. Ashforth et al.(2001) noted that the stronger the work role identification, the more quickly and completely one is able to enter the work role. A stronger work role identity promotes stronger commitment towards one’s work. Workers are willing to put extra effort into their work. An individual who is highly involved in his or her job views the job as central to his or her self-concept or sense of identity (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1995; Kanungo, 1982). Frone and Rice (1987) had suggested that high involvement in the work role may be associated with an increase in the amount of time devoted to work. Recently, Rothbard and Edwards (2003) found supporting evidence that work identity was positively related to the amount of time invested in work. We therefore considered that highly involved managers might choose to work extra hours.

*H3: Work identity is positively associated with overtime work*
On the other hand, family duties and responsibilities become more important and central in a person’s hierarchical order for those with high levels of family role commitment. They are expected to devote more time and energy to the family role. Managers or professionals with high involvement in a family role may be reluctant to spend too much time away from their family. For them, working from home becomes a solution to handle work demands while being able to readily shift attention towards family needs. Therefore, we propose:

**H4: Family identity is positively associated with working from home**

In addition, boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000) and work-family border theory (Clark, 2000) both suggest that an individual’s work or family roles define his or her subjective experience of work and home life, and daily transitions between these two domains. According to boundary theory, people differ in their preference for how role boundaries should be set up. Personal strategies for controlling the interaction between work and nonwork domains can theoretically be arrayed along a continuum from integration to segmentation (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kossek, Noe, & Demarr, 1999; Nippert-Eng, 1996). Integration refers to the overlap of work and nonwork time, artifacts, and activities, while segmentation refers to their separation (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Employees with the desire for integration prefer to multi-task across work and family domains. They believe that greater integration may facilitate the accommodation of multiple role demands from both work and family sides. On the other hand, some employees prefer to segment work and family domains by specifying a clear divide between the two. Greater segmentation may reduce interruptions; as such, people may find it easier to focus on certain role and task requirements without the interference from a different role.

Notably, Edwards and Rothbard operationalized the continuum as an individual’s desire for segmentation versus integration (Bagozzi & Edwards, 1998; Edwards & Rothbard, 1999;
Rothbard, et al., 2005). As suggested by Nippert-Eng (1995), integrators might bring extra work home and continue to work from home whereas segmentors would prefer to complete or finish their daily work within the confines of the office. Moreover, segmentors might be less likely to work overtime as their primary goal is to reduce the tensions inherent in carrying out multiple roles at the same time. Working overtime is going to reduce the amount of time they can spend with their families. Further, working from home enables employees to integrate rather than distinguish between where they are required to perform their work duties from where they are required to perform their nonwork duties. Therefore, a person who desires segmentation may not want to be interrupted by his or her job duties in the home location. Thus,

\[ H5: \text{Desire for segmentation will be negatively correlated with overtime work} \]

\[ H6: \text{Desire for segmentation will be negatively correlated with working from home} \]

**Consequence of work overtime and working from home**

Since overtime work and working from home represent situations when work enters into the family domain, they can impact the individual’s adjustment at home, which is most often conceptualized and studied as the interference of family by work. Work-to-family interference, often called work-family conflict, occurs when participation in a work activity interferes with participation in a competing family activity or when work stress has a negative effect on behavior within the family domain (Greenhaus & Powell, 2003). Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) recognized that long and inflexible work hours precipitated work-to-family interference in two ways: by a direct curtailment of family time (time-based conflict), or indirectly by imposing strain on the person which in turn delimited his or her participation and performance in family activities (strain-based conflict). Essentially then, work and family were seen as part of a zero-sum game in which both domains competed for the individual’s fixed reserve of time and energy,
thereby creating work-family conflict (Marks, 1977). This scarcity hypothesis predicted that the demands of multiple roles would deplete resources to the point of strain (Goode, 1960). Major et al. (2002) found that work time was positively related to perceived work interference with family. In the same way, we hypothesize,

\[ H7: \text{The amount of overtime work will be positively correlated with work-to-family interference.} \]

The relationship between working from home and work-to-family interference is not as clear cut as that of overtime work. From one perspective, Kossek, Lautsch, & Raton (2005) have suggested that “place-based” conflict could happen when the worker, unnecessarily tied to the material workplace, is prevented from attending to home tasks requiring his or her physical presence. The inflexible spatial boundary between work and family thus can create stress at home. Telecommuters, those who engage in work tasks at home instead of at the workplace, have been found to suffer less from work-to-family conflict (Golden, Veiga, & Simsek, 2006) and enjoy higher levels of work-life balance (Hill, Ferris, & Martinson, 2003; Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001). Doing work at home rather than at the office is deemed as an attempt to integrate work and family for minimizing work-family structural mismatch, and should also serve to attenuate work-family conflict.

From another perspective, doing work at home rather than at the office was deemed to result from a negative spillover effect of work overload. Working from home after the end of the official workday, individuals may still be liable to answer client phone calls, or attend teleconferences with global business partners located in a different time zone. Such situations of “blurred boundaries” have been theorized to generate a sense of inter-role conflict or role juggling in the employee (Williams, Suls, Alliger, Learner, & Wan, 1991). In effect, working
from home can restrict the individual’s ability to fulfill the demands of his or her family role. As suggested by Golden et al. (2006), telecommuters or those individuals working from home, may have to coordinate family-related activities while on job duties. By accommodating multiple roles and multiple duties, individuals make themselves available as and when their family members need assistance. It is possible that individuals my feel distracted by those demanding duties and may have difficulty juggling work and family roles. Thus working from home should also exacerbate work-family conflict.

We conducted the study in China, where flexible work arrangement or telecommuting is not often adopted as a formal policy by companies. Thus, working from home is less likely taken by workers as a method to achieve balance between work and family. From the culture perspective, Chinese societies strongly value work. Priority is often given to work instead of family. Work has been viewed in Chinese societies as a means to bring honor and affluence to the family. Under this culture norm, it is legitimate to allow work to disrupt personal life temporarily for the long term benefits of the family (Yang, Chen, Choi, & Zhou, 2000). Given these arguments, we deem working from home to be a strategy taken to fulfill work demands in China. It will more likely interfere rather than preserve family routine. We thus propose:

\[ H8: \text{The extent of working from home will be positively correlated with work-to-family interference.} \]

**Method**

*Sample and Procedure*

A survey questionnaire was distributed to 433 employees from three companies in southern China. These three companies were from different industries (i.e., manufacturing, pharmaceutical, and telecommuting industries respectively) and had different ownership types
(One company was a joint-venture between a state-owned enterprise and a foreign company, and the other two were state-owned enterprises). The questionnaire was designed in English, translated into simplified Chinese, and then checked for accuracy following the conventional back-translation process.

The respondents averaged 29.11 years of age ($SD = 6.56$) and 26.79% were female. On average, they had been holding their current job position for the past 4.28 years. 52.42% were married. About 38.11% had children. About 21.71% had education level equivalent or lower than senior high school, 19.17% has Associate, 35.33% had Bachelor, and 23.79% had post graduate education. The average family income level was between 4000 to 8000 RMB. The mean hours worked per week was 50.12 ($SD = 8.81$, including time spent working from home and at additional jobs), which is beyond the legal maximum of 44 hours per week and the organizational norm of 40 hours per week in China. Participants worked overtime for 8.76 hours ($SD=7.69$) weekly. They also reported working at home for an average of 4.41 hours ($SD=6.19$) weekly.

**Measures**

Each measure described below used a 5-point Likert response scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

*Work overload.* We used the 3-item role overload scale from Bolino and Turnley (2005). Sample items are “I never seem to have enough time to get everything done at work,” and “It often seems like I have too much work for one person to do.” The reliability coefficient of work overload was .83.

*Family overload.* Family overload was represented by the same 3-item scale measuring work overload except that we changed the wording from work to home/family. Sample items are
“I never seem to have enough time to get everything done at home,” and “It often seems like I have too many family demands for one person to do.” The reliability coefficient of this scale was .82.

*Work identity.* Following previous research (Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992, 1995), we measured work identity by adapting 5 job involvement items from Kanungo (1982). Sample items include “I am very much personally involved with my job” and “My job is a very important part of my life.” The alpha coefficient for work identity was .74 for the current study.

*Family identity.* We used the same five-item scale measuring job involvement (Kanungo, 1982) to assess family identity. Following Frone et al., (1992), we changed the wording from my job to my family for all five items. Sample items are “I am very much personally involved with my family” and “My family is a very important part of my life.” The alpha coefficient for this scale was .74.

*Desire for segmentation.* We used a 4-item scale developed by Edwards and Rothbard (1999) to measure desire for segmentation. Respondents reported what they personally felt to be acceptable levels of a series of work and family characteristics. Sample items include “not being required to work while at home” and “being able to forget work while I am at home.” The alpha coefficient for this scale was .82 in the current study.

*Time measures.* Respondents were asked to include the official work hours stipulated by their company, average actual work hours, average work hours in different locations (at office, at home, and in any other locations), and average overtime work hours. *Overtime work* was measured the direct report of the average number of hours worked each week beyond the official work hours stipulated by the company. *Working from home* was indicated by the number of weekly hours spent working at home.
Work-to-family interference. Work-family conflict was operationalized as work-to-family interference Grzywacz and Makrs’s (2000) 4-item Work to Family Interference scale. Items include “your job makes you feel too tired to do the things that need attention at home” and “Your job reduces the effort you can give to activities at home.” The alpha coefficient for this scale was .77 for the current study.

Control variables. Based on previous research, we controlled for age, gender, marital status, whether the respondent had a child or not, education level and family income level

Results

Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, correlations, and reliability coefficients for all studied variables. Both overtime work and working from home were significantly correlated with work-to-family interference (correlation coefficients equal to .27 and .11 respectively). The correlation between overtime work and working from home was also positive and significant (.50).

Tables 2 to 4 show the results of the hypotheses testing. Table 2 demonstrates models predicting overtime work. The first model only included controls. In the second model, work overload, work identity and desire for segmentation were included in the regression. We found a positive relationship between work overload and overtime work ($\beta=.18, p<.01$), which supported Hypothesis 1. Table 3 demonstrates models which predict working from home. In the second model, family overload, family identity and desire for segmentation were included in the regression. We did not find significant relationships between family overload ($\beta=.03, ns$) with working from home. Thus, Hypotheses 2 was not supported. Hypothesis 3 suggested that work
identity should correlate with overtime work positively. In the regression model in Table 2, the coefficient for work identity was significant ($\beta=.11$, $p<.05$). Thus Hypothesis 3 was supported. Table 3 also demonstrates that the coefficient for family identity was significant in regression of working from home ($\beta=.10$, $p<.05$). Thus Hypothesis 4 was supported. Hypothesis 5 posited that desire for segmentation between work and family domains should negatively correlate with overtime work. This relationship was marginally significant ($\beta=-.08$, $p<.10$), as showed in Table 2. We also found that desire for segmentation was significantly correlated with working from home ($\beta=-.11$, $p<.01$). Thus Hypotheses 5 and 6 were both supported.

Table 4 revealed the results of testing Hypotheses 7 and 8. In Hypothesis 7, we posited a positive relationship between overtime work and work-to-family interference. In the second model, after controlling for demographic variables, we did find a significant effect of overtime work ($\beta=.27$, $p<.01$). Thus Hypothesis 7 was supported. We also proposed a positive relationship between working from home and work-to-family interference in Hypothesis 8. As demonstrated in the second model, the effect of working from home was not significant ($\beta=-.06$, $ns$).

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Insert Tables 2-4 about here
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**Discussion**

This study examined two important variables (overtime work and working from home) and their antecedents and consequence in the areas of work and family. We focused on three goals: (1) to examine whether work overload, work identity, and desire for segmentation were directly linked to overtime work; (2) to examine whether family overload, family identity, and desire for segmentation were directly related to working from home; and (3) to examine whether overtime work and working from home affected the level of work-family interferences.
experienced by managers and professionals. Our study offers evidence to support some of the hypothesized relationships.

We found that work overload was significantly related to work overtime. Our results indicate that having too many things to do at work is positively related to the devotion of additional time, beyond normal office hours, to work. The results are consistent with prior research (Frone et al., 1997; Major et al., 2002) which reveals a significant relationship between work overload and longer working hours. Our findings did not support the relationships between family overload and working from home. This implies that employees with high family demands may not necessarily adopt the strategy of working from home to resolve their problems. Since working from home is not often adopted formally by organizations in China to help their employees achieve their work-family balance, it is less likely an option for workers to cope with their excessive family demands. Without measuring the availability of flexible work arrangement in the current study, this explanation is rather speculative. Future studies are encouraged to examine this boundary condition with workers from organizations having different work policies.

Our findings support the associations between identity and overtime work and working from home. Consistent with our hypotheses, we found that work identity was positively correlated with overtime work and family identity was positively correlated with working from home. While working overtime is an explicit means for those with high work identity to demonstrate their commitment towards their job, working from home is a way for those with high family identity to share more time with their treasured family members. Individuals can enhance their self image by obligating more time towards their identified social roles. Our findings support the importance of role identity in work-family functioning.
We have also demonstrated that employees’ desire for segmentation is negatively associated with overtime work and working from home. This study went beyond previous research by testing desire for segmentation as a predictor of overtime work and working from home. While previous research (i.e., Kossek et al., 2006) examined the direct relationship between desire for segmentation and work-family conflict, none has examined the role played by overtime work and working from home in the relationships. Our findings suggest that people with greater desire for segmentation may choose to finish their job on time and are more likely to work based on the official norms. They may also dislike the offer of flexible work arrangement, such as working from home, as this type of arrangement allows interruption and intrusion from work domains to family domains. For segmentors, working from home signals blurring boundaries across work and family roles and they may feel compelled to work all the time.

The result is consistent with the boundary management strategy defined by Kossek et al. (1999). They argued some professionals may prefer to organize or plan activities for work (e.g., overtime work in the evening) and home (e.g., care giving to younger kids at the time they work) roles together (as an integration boundary management strategy) while some other professionals may like to separate demands from work and family domains and put a tight boundary in between the two (as a segmentation boundary management strategy).

Our findings also suggest that people who work overtime were exposed to an increased level of work-to-family interference. The finding is consistent with previous research (Day & Chamberlain, 2006; Frone et al., 1997; Kossek et al., 2006; Major et al., 2002) which established that work time or long work hours would lead positively to work interference with family. As a proportion of total work time, we demonstrated that overtime work has a strong and positive relationship with work-family conflict. Perhaps having long work hours (i.e., more than officially
required such as working overtime) forced people to physically and psychologically commit to their work roles which creates time-based conflict for some individuals. In the work and family research areas, scholars have argued that the more time one commits to work, the greater the individual’s perception of conflict between work and family domains (Major et al., 2002).

Our results did not reveal a significant relationship between working from home and work-to-family interference, although the sign of the relationship is consistent with the negative relationship between telecommuting and work-to-family conflict reported in a recent study (Golden et al., 2006). Working from home can be structured as a formal (i.e., telecommuting on a full-time basis and employees only visit the office when needed) or informal (i.e., bringing uncompleted tasks back home to work on) arrangement. These different situations of working from home may have different implications for the work-family relationship. Based on a formal arrangement, people may try to adjust to the new arrangement since it is officially recognized or mandated. Therefore, it may eventually enhance work and family balance. However, if working from home is on an ad-hoc or incidental basis, people may feel interrupted because they may not be able to take care of their home duties as they would normally have planned. As a result, a temporary arrangement of working from home (as depicted in our study) may in fact bring up the levels of conflict across work and family domains. The impacts of working from home on work-to-family interference have opposite directions in the above two situations and are likely to cancel out each other. We did not ask our participants in the survey whether their working from home activities were formal or informal. The above explanations are rather speculative. Future studies are encouraged to directly make a comparison between formal and informal arrangements for working from home.
Our results have both theoretical and practical implications. Importantly, we investigated two time- and space-based forms of cross-boundary behaviors, work overtime and working from home. Our findings suggest that work overtime and working from home tend to have different antecedents, as such, in order to better understand these two behaviors, future research should distinguish between work overtime and working from home in modeling work-family issues. In addition, we attempted to examine the antecedents of work overtime and working from home from three important theories: role theory, identity theory, and boundary theory. Our findings suggest significant and direct relationships between role demands, role identity, desire for segmentation, and the two cross-boundary behaviors. As most research to date has examined the direct relationship between the determinants and work-family conflict, our model suggest that time- and space-based variables are important to consider in examining work and family interface.

Our findings also have several practical implications. Specifically, our results suggest that work overtime may directly increase the level of work-family conflict. As research has found that employees who involved in work-related activities at the time they are not supposed to work (e.g., work during off-hours in the evening) often reported higher strain before sleep (Sonnentag, 2001) and need more time for recovery (Demerouti, Taris, & Bakker, 2007), organizations may like to pay attention to the design of work arrangements in order to have a healthy and balanced workforce. In other words, work-family policies initiated by the employers may help to reduce the time and energy tensions individual workers faced in a dilemma.

Finally, for individual employees, our findings further suggest that work role demand (overload) and a strong work identity will cause them to work longer hours, while a strong family identity will result in working from home. Our results also indicated that individuals with
a strong desire to segment work and family boundaries tend to choose to work during normal hours and not to have take-home assignments. In this regard, individuals may be better off to know which role (i.e., work or family) do they more commit to and the level of integration of these two domains they prefer. This awareness may help them more consciously manage their duties and responsibilities in both domains and achieve a better work-family balance.

The study had several limitations. First, we collected data only from three organizations. The small number of organizations prevented us from examining the impact of work policies on individual level work behaviors and work-family relationships. Future studies are encouraged to survey employees from a large and diverse pool of organizations so that organizational factors can be controlled for or examined. Second, all variables were measured from a single survey. The common method bias may distort the results. Although two major variables in the study, overtime work and working from home, were measured by relatively objective reports of work time allocation, it still would be better for future studies to collect data from other sources such as from the company’s records of working time.

In the current study, we only studied work behaviors crossing the boundaries and intruding into the family domain. The permeance of tasks across the work-family boundary can happen in the opposite direction. For example, workers can take extra time to attending family chores at the expense of their work needs. They can also engage in family related activities while at their workplace. It would be fruitful for future studies to examine “border-crossing” behaviors of individuals from both directions as they navigate multiple role demands and responsibilities on a dynamic, continuing basis.
References


Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

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<td>.11</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.27</td>
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</table>

Note. Gender: female = 0, male = 1; Marital status: single = 0; married = 1; Child: no child=0; have child=1; Education level: 1=primarily school, 2=high school, 3= senior school, 4=associate, 5=bachelor, 5=graduate; income: 1= less than 2000 RMB, 2=2001 to 4000 RMB, 3=4001 to 6000 RMB, 4=6001 to 8000 RMB, 5=8001 to 10000 RMB, 6=10001 to 12000 RMB, 7=12001 to 14000 RMB, and 8=over 14000. Numbers in parentheses are reliability estimates. Correlation coefficients in bold are significant at .05 level.
Table 2
Regression Analysis for predicting work overtime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Work overtime $(\beta)$</th>
<th>Work Overtime $(\beta)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.13 **</td>
<td>.10 *</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
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<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child</td>
<td>.12</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.10 †</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work overload</td>
<td>.18 **</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work identity</td>
<td>.11 *</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for segmentation</td>
<td>-.08 †</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2$  .04 *  .09 **
$\Delta R^2$ .05 *

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. 
Table 3
Regression Analysis for predicting working from home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Working from home ($\beta$)</th>
<th>Working from home ($\beta$)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Child</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Income</td>
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<td>.02</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family overload</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family identity</td>
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<td>.10*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire for segmentation</td>
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<td>-.11*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2$                | .02                         | .05*                        |
$\Delta R^2$         |                             | .03 *                       |

* $p < .05.$
Table 4
Regression Analysis for predicting work-to-family interference with work overtime and working from home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Work-to-family interference (β)</th>
<th>Work-to-family interference (β)</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
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<td>-.03</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Child</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>.00</td>
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<td>Income</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Working from home</td>
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<td>-.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$R^2$                          .01              .10**             
$\Delta R^2$                   .09**             

† $p < .10$, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. 