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Consequences of work-home segmentation or integration: a person-environment fit perspective

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Summary This study demonstrates how the interaction between an individual's work-home segmentation preference and the perceived segmentation provided by the workplace affects work-home conflict (WHC), stress, and job satisfaction. Using a person-environment (P-E) fit theoretical base and methodology, data from 325 employees in a wide variety of occupations and organizations illustrate significant fit effects on these outcomes. Results from polynomial regression and response surface methodology highlight important asymmetric effects found in these P-E fit relationships. By demonstrating the asymmetric results of fit effects, the findings challenge previous research, which has typically advocated an integration of work and home in order to ameliorate role conflict and stress. Copyright © 2006 John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Managing the conflict between work and home domains has become an increasingly compelling and pressing issue—both for organizational scholars interested in theoretical and empirical advances, and for human resources practitioners seeking to ameliorate the negative outcomes associated with the conflict (such as lower satisfaction, higher stress, etc.). Individuals must routinely negotiate the boundaries between work and home as they participate in daily activities. This process of boundary negotiation can be frustrated by individual differences and/or environmental circumstances that prevent the transition from occurring successfully. For example, the ease or difficulty of transitions between work and home is largely characterized by how segmented or integrated the two domains are. I define segmentation as the degree to which aspects of each domain (such as thoughts, concerns, physical markers) are kept separate from one another—cognitively, physically, or behaviorally. Integration, by contrast, represents the merging and blending of various aspects of work and home. Segmentation and integration have been conceptualized as two poles on a continuum, each representing opposite approaches to work-life balance (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996).

One aspect of the work-home boundary negotiation involves individual difference. Specifically, previous research has demonstrated that individuals vary in their preferences for segmenting or integrating aspects of work and home (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999; Nippert-Eng, 1996). So-called 'segmenters' prefer to keep the two domains as separate as possible, creating and maintaining a boundary or 'mental fence' (Zerubavel, 1991); these people prefer to keep work at work, and home at

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home. For example, Nippert-Eng (1996) found that some individuals would disconnect the two domains by keeping separate calendars and/or key chains, not discussing the events of one domain with the participants of the other, or trying to not think about the issues of one domain while in the other. Conversely, others prefer to integrate elements of both domains, essentially removing boundaries between the two and blending facets of each. For example, 'integrators' in Nippert-Eng's study would display pictures of family at work, bring co-workers home for dinner, talk about family while at work, use one set of keys for all aspects of life, etc. Ashforth et al. (2000) argued that for those individuals who integrate aspects of life, boundaries between domains are either non-existent or very permeable. The upshot is that the concerns, joys, successes, and failures of either domain are all blended into one holistic experience. Conversely, individuals who prefer to segment domains tend to erect physical, emotional, and/or cognitive barriers between domains so as to keep the worlds separate; thoughts, feelings, and artifacts are left in each domain rather than shared across domains. In sum, we can speak of a person's desire to separate work and home domains as 'preferences' for work-home segmentation, and that *segmentation* is the opposite of *integration*.

Another aspect of boundary negotiation deals with the environments involved in role transitions. Just as *individuals* vary in the degree they want to segment or integrate work and home, *workplaces* vary in the degree to which they create an environment that promotes either segmentation or integration (Hochschild, 1997; Kirchmeyer, 1995). Some workplaces go to great lengths to allow (or even encourage) the integrating of work and home life. They might remove boundaries between the two domains by providing integrating policies such as on-site day care or promoting an integrating work climate during the recruitment process (Hochschild, 1997; Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999; Osterman, 1995). In fact, many jobs now force at least some integration on workers through technologies such as pagers, cell phones, and telecommuting, which blurs the boundary between work and home. So, not only do individuals vary in their preference to segment work and home, but also workplaces vary in the degree that they 'supply' the conditions and resources that enable a given level of segregation or integration.

In this paper, I examine *not only* these individual preferences and workplace supplies, but also their interactive and asymmetric fit effects on important workplace outcomes. I accomplish this by: (1) briefly reviewing the concepts of work-family conflict (WFC) and work-home conflict (WHC); (2) demonstrating how person-environment (P-E) fit can overcome previous research shortcomings by more thoroughly examining WHC dynamics and uncovering asymmetry in their relationships; and (3) providing results from a study in which polynomial regression and response surface methodology illustrate the complex relationships among work-home segmentation, WHC, stress, and job satisfaction.

Trends in WFC Research

Work-family conflict (WFC) acknowledges that forces deriving from the work and home domains can be incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). WFC has been classified as a type of interrole conflict in which forces deriving from the work and family domains are somehow incompatible (Frone & Rice, 1987; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). WFC is also a type of work–nonwork conflict, the latter of which encompasses not only home life, but potential conflicts stemming from social obligations such as church, school, or leisure (Frone, 2003; Rice, Frone, & McFarlin, 1992). The established antecedents of WFC can be divided into three categories: (1) responsibilities and expectations, such as demands on time or the level of care-giving one has for others (children, elderly parents, etc.); (2) psychological demands, such as role ambiguity or work pressures; and (3) organizational policies and climate, such as work schedules, family-friendly policies, supervisor support, etc. (Judge & Colquitt, 2004).

Recent developments in WFC research have involved several refinements of the construct. This has included (but is not limited to) a distinction in the *direction* of the conflict (work-to-family or family-to-work), as well as a distinction among the *sources* of the conflict (time-, strain-, and behavior-based) (Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). Few studies, however, utilize *every* dimension of WFC, but rather selectively choose those dimensions that fit best with the research questions or general models being tested (Carlson et al., 2000).

As fruitful as the construct of WFC has been, some recent developments in the literature suggest that researchers need to refocus their attention beyond traditional conceptualizing and testing of WFC. One such trend is the recent work that has urged scholars to take an inclusive stance on work-home relations, and not overly restrict the study of WFC to a narrow population (Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002; Rothausen, 1999). A considerable amount of previous WFC research focuses only on married or partnered couples with children at home, unnecessarily restricting its applicability and generalizeability (Rothausen, 1999). In fact, the majority of today's workers are excluded by using such restrictive criteria. Indeed, Parasuraman and Greenhaus (2002:305–6) note, 'the underrepresentation of these groups of individuals with potentially different types of work-family pressures represents a major gap in the work-family research and in our knowledge.'

One potentially fruitful approach to taking this more inclusive recommendation is through an emphasis on the domain of *home* instead of the social group of *family.* A domains perspective focuses on physically distinct realms that are separated by borders or boundaries (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996; Rau & Hyland, 2002). This research stream urges an examination of the *domains* themselves (i.e., 'home' or 'work'), not just the members or social groups found in the domains (i.e., 'family,' 'co-workers,' etc.). This approach allows researchers to be inclusive of a diverse array of home arrangements (e.g., single parents, married couples, individuals caring for elderly parents, etc.). Taken together, these trends imply that a rethinking and retooling of some of the more traditional constructs and measures in the literature should be undertaken to more thoroughly and accurately capture the interactions and asymmetries inherent in work and family research. Hence, in this paper I examine 'work-home conflict' (WHC) as a more appropriate and inclusive construct.

Several key limitations in existing work-life research lead me to the design and rationale of the present study. First, while previous research has examined a host of predictors for interrole conflict, a person's preferences for work-home segmentation coupled with the level of segmentation supplies provided by the workplace has not been examined. In one of the few studies that explicitly measures work and family issues using a P-E fit approach, Edwards and Rothbard (1999) did not measure fit effects on role conflict, only on well being. Yet without measuring conflict, we are unsure as to the effects of fit/misfit on a key variable in the work-home literature. The second shortcoming in WFC research has been an over reliance on situational predictors and a lack of attention to individual differences such as dispositions or work preferences in predicting WFC. Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) and Carlson (1999) call for more research to investigate the impact of specific personal factors that affect WFC. Indeed, in their recent review of work-family research, Parasuraman and Greenhaus (2002:300) note the 'disproportionate emphasis on environmental and situational factors' and the 'relative neglect' of individual-level antecedents of conflict and stress. The third curious deficiency in the WFC literature is the lack of research involving interaction and/or fit predictors of WFC. Quite rare is the study in this field that incorporates both individual *and* environmental influences together. Indeed, Carlson (1999) and Parasuraman and Greenhaus (2002) argue that a more interaction-based approach that includes both situational *and* individual variables as predictors of WFC in a single study would be a better strategy. Hence, in this study I move to overcome these deficiencies by jointly examining a key individual difference (preference for segmentation) coupled with environmental perceptions (supplies of segmentation) to affect work-home balance.

The P-E Fit Approach

I propose that a useful way to move the WHC research forward, and to overcome some of these shortcomings of previous research, is to examine WHC through a P-E fit theoretical lens, coupled with a response surface methodology. Specifically, this approach allows for the inclusion of individual *and* situational variables interacting to predict WHC. Some research exists that has begun to look at fit effects and work-life balance; while not focusing on WHC *per se*, this research has shown how issues regarding schedule flexibility, for example, affects stress and other outcomes (Barnett, Gareis, & Brennan, 1999; Gareis, Barnett, & Brennan, 2003). Testing P-E fit with response surface methodology offers greater precision than other methods and allows us to examine interaction effects that are not taken into account by the large amount of research that advocates integrating work and home *vis-à-vis* workplace policies and cultures.

P-E fit is based on the notion that the person and the environment not only directly affect individual outcomes, but also interact with one another to affect these outcomes (Harrison, 1978; Kulka, 1979; Stone & Hollenbeck, 1984). One approach within P-E fit research, the 'preferences-supplies' perspective, examines whether the environment (in this case, the workplace) satisfies a person's needs, values, or preferences (Kristof, 1996). When the workplace provides the person's preferred level of supplies (i.e., desired resources), fit is achieved. When the workplace provides either *too little* or *too much* of the preferred supplies, a mismatch results. P-E fit theory predicts that a match will be beneficial to the individual through reduced conflict and stress and increased well-being, whereas mismatches yield opposite results.

How, then, might P-E fit be applied to the notion of work and home segmentation? And what does it offer above and beyond other approaches? While many researchers have advocated integrating work and home domains to improve workers' quality of life, I argue that integration is not inherently better or worse than segmentation. Rather, because individuals differ in their desire for segmenting work and home, not all workplaces supply the 'right' level of segmentation for any given worker. Therefore, I hypothesize about effects of a fit between preferred and perceived work-home segmentation. For example, a person desiring work-home *integration* would fit a workplace that allows such integration, whereas a person desiring *segmentation* between work and home domains would be a misfit in that same workplace. However, for the person who desires segmentation or integration but is not provided it in the workplace, a lack of necessary supplies to create and maintain the ideal work-home boundary creates conflict. It is also useful to examine the *degree* of discrepancy between preferences and supplies. A P-E fit perspective would argue that as supplies of workplace segmentation increase toward the level preferred by the individual, he or she is better able to negotiate successfully the work-family boundary in the preferred manner. That is, in the absence of perfect congruence, we can examine the level of incongruence and its effects on the outcomes. The following sections apply this logic to three specific individual-level outcomes: work-home conflict, stress, and job satisfaction.

Hypotheses

A key component of P-E fit research is the ability to predict *a priori* the specific effects that matches and mismatches will have upon the dependent variable (Edwards, 2001). One key issue concerns the symmetry of the effects of different mismatches. Is the relationship between fit of preferences-supplies and the outcome the same regardless of whether it is the person or the environment that has the

'deficiency' or 'surplus' in its score? Or, might the relationship between fit and the dependent variable vary according to which element in the equation scores lower (Kahana, 1978; Kulka, 1979; Ostroff & DuBois, 1993)? The second key issue concerns outcomes at different levels of perfect fit. For example, will matches in which both preferences and supplies are high (e.g., the person wants and receives strong segmentation between work and home domains) have the same impact on the outcome as matches in which both are low (e.g., the person does not want and does not get segmentation)? Or, will outcomes differ at different levels of perfect fit? Hence, in this section I hypothesize about these two issues in regard to the relationships between preferences/supplies and outcomes.

Fit and work-home conflict

How might the interaction between segmentation preferences and supplies affect work-home conflict? Let us first consider one type of 'supply' in the workplace—HR policies—and its disappointing results in predicting WFC. Although research has been done linking work-family policies to WFC, the results have been mixed (Kossek & Ozeki, 1998). Glass and Finley (2002) show that firm-level policies and practices can affect individual level outcomes, as well as how individuals negotiate the work-home boundary, but note that results are mixed overall in terms of policies' effectiveness. Similarly, Solomon (1994) finds that work-family policies have only a small direct effect on WFC. This evidence—because it demonstrates that there are alternative explanations for the small direct effect—is consistent with the central argument of this paper, which is that it is the *fit* between the individual and the workplace that ameliorates stress and conflict rather than the policies *themselves*. Fit allows the individual to negotiate the work-home boundary to their liking, thus reducing strain and increasing satisfaction. Another concern, in terms of research on policies' impacts, is that policies and their implementation vary dramatically from company to company, making precise measurement of the policies in place difficult in studies of multiple organizations. (For example, the term 'job sharing' can mean quite different things in each organization, as the policies surrounding them and their use will differ.) In an attempt to overcome these difficulties, in this study I broaden the focus from merely company policies to general workplace supplies and resources that enable workers to maintain their desired level of work-home segmentation. This broadened focus allows respondents to holistically assess the factors most salient to them, which may include company policies, supervisor support, amenable colleagues, etc. It also allows the individual to reflect on policies *as a whole* rather than on any given set of policies idiosyncratic to a given company. Another important research question, then, is, will *fit* between segmentation supplies and individual preferences be a more fruitful predictor for WHC and distal outcomes?

In the P-E fit tradition, insufficient supplies represent unfulfilled needs, which creates tension, negative affect, and conflict (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999). Following the basic tenets of P-E fit theory, then, and applying it to work-home dynamics, we can say that workplace supplies of the desired level of segmentation or integration can help ameliorate WHC. How does this happen? As a person's preferences are met, the right level of work-home resources is made available to the person, which means they are better able to negotiate the work-home boundary to their liking. This increased ability translates to reduced WHC because the individual is empowered by the available resources. This phenomenon is captured in part A of each hypothesis below. For example, to the person who desires separation of work and home, the workplace that facilitates that segmentation (e.g., through clearly articulated work hours, no phone calls at home) would be deemed a good fit—it's a place that meets the person's preferences. But a work environment that forces or aggressively promotes work and home integration (e.g., through mandatory cell phone wearing, needing to be available on weekends, on-site day care) would likely alienate rather than endear that worker. Congruence facilitates the reduction of

WHC because the individual has access to environmental factors and resources that create his or her ideal work-home conditions—in the case of the segmenter, a world that separates work and home. Individuals can, particularly over time, recognize what kind of environment is most conducive to their particular style of negotiating the work-home boundary—the kind of environment in which they experience less role conflict. This recognition of the ideal helps to shape their preferences. In the case of incongruence, though, when a person is in a place that provides too much or too little segmentation for their preferences, a clash can exist, as the workplace would frustrate the person's efforts to keep work and home separate.

Another difference might exist between those who strongly desire and get either segmentation or integration compared to those who are neutral toward integration or segmentation. This aspect is conveyed in part B of each hypothesis below. The presence of the desire for either integration or segmentation (that is, extremely low or extremely high scores) *combined with* receiving sought-after supplies would likely lead to lower levels of conflict, as the individual who has a stronger degree of preference (further away from 'neutral') would receive greater benefits from the appropriate supply than someone without a clear preference. This logic is consistent with the preferences-supplies perspective of P-O fit, which offers two theoretical rationales for reduced conflict through congruence (Harrison, 1978; Kristof, 1996). First, strongly held preferences that are met often have a spillover effect onto other dimensions. In this case, met segmentation preferences could increase autonomy, control, or power. Second, obtaining high levels of sought-after preferences can increase perceptions of achievement and self-worth.

The preceding discussion leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: (a) WHC will decrease as segmentation supplies increase toward segmentation preferences, and will increase as segmentation supplies exceed segmentation preferences; (b) WHC will be lower when preferences and supplies are both high or both low than when both are neutral.

Fit and stress

Stress is an important outcome and is studied widely in organizational and psychological research, particularly in the work and family arena. P-E fit theory predicts that as supplies increase toward preferences, stress decreases (French, Caplan, & Harrison, 1982); additionally it suggests that insufficient supplies result in unfulfilled needs, a situation that then creates tension and stress. Similarly, too much of a good thing can be a bad thing—excess segmentation or integration can lead to stress as well (Edwards & Rothbard, 1999). Further, differences might be found between those who want and get segmentation and those who do not want and do not get segmentation supplies. A person who wants *and gets* segmentation would experience less stress because he or she would be predisposed to translate the benefits of segmentation supplies than someone without a clear preference, who is not primed to capitalize on the segmentation. Hence:

Hypothesis 2: (a) Stress will decrease as segmentation supplies increase toward segmentation preferences, and will increase as segmentation supplies exceed segmentation preferences; (b) stress will be lower when preferences and supplies are both high or both low than when both are neutral.

Fit and job satisfaction

A similar linkage can be found between fit and job satisfaction, a well-established measure of the adjustment process (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) and a logical choice for a general measure of the

effects of workplace fit on the person. As individuals interpret and evaluate characteristics of their workplace, their satisfaction with the job is influenced. That influence increases when we examine those workplace characteristics *vis-à-vis* their own preferences. As supplies and preferences interact to create fit or misfit, people are more or less satisfied overall with their job. That is, when a workplace is congruent with a person's preferences, job satisfaction increases, whereas incongruence produces dissatisfaction. Let us also consider the differences between those who desire and get segmentation and those who do not desire and do not get segmentation. The person's desire for segmentation combined with receiving sought-after segmentation supplies would likely lead to higher levels of satisfaction; the person is receiving something clearly sought after, so would be more satisfied than the individual who is only passively interested in the work-home segmentation issue. That is, when the issue is salient for the worker, his or her satisfaction would be enhanced to a greater degree than someone who is neutral on segmentation availability. Hence:

Hypothesis 3: (a) Job satisfaction will increase as segmentation supplies increase toward segmentation preferences, and will decrease as segmentation supplies exceed segmentation preferences; (b) job satisfaction will be higher when preferences and supplies are both high or both low than when both are neutral.

Organization Context

In order to best study person-environment fit effects, I needed to maximize the variance on both the person and the environment sides of the fit equation. So, I chose an alumni database in order to capture a wide variety of organizations, occupations, and job levels, and I included a 10-year span of graduates at both graduate and undergraduate levels to include a diverse sample in terms of age and life phase. Arizona State University's Alumni Association provided me with names and contact information for alumni, based on specific parameters needed for the project. Specifically, they generated a stratified random sample of all graduates between 1981 and 1990 from all programs across the university. Respondents lived across the United States, but the majority resided in the Southwest. I collected data for this paper in the Spring and Summer of 2001.

Method

Data were collected at two times. Time 1 surveys measured control variables, segmentation preferences and supplies, whereas time 2 surveys measured outcome variables.

Sample

Surveys were sent to alumni who had graduated from a major Western university between 1981 and 1990. The university's alumni association provided names stratified in the following way I requested:

50 per cent female; 10 per cent earning doctorates; 30 per cent earning master's degrees; and 60 per cent earning bachelor's degrees; 10 per cent from each graduating year within the specified range; and a random selection across all colleges, departments, and majors. I stratified the sample to obtain a diverse group of respondents—people from different educational backgrounds/levels, of both genders, and of different life stages—which more effectively tests P-E fit hypotheses (Kristof, 1996; Ostroff & DuBois, 1993). Eighty-nine per cent of the sample was Caucasian; four per cent was Asian; three per cent was African-American; two per cent was Hispanic; one per cent was Native American.

I followed a modified Dillman (1999) procedure. A small reward (a pen) was included with the survey. All respondents were told that they would receive a leather bookmark upon return of a completed survey, along with a follow-up survey. Also, respondents who returned completed surveys were entered in a drawing for multiple prizes, including cash and university-logo clothing. Reminder cards were sent 2 weeks after the surveys were mailed. Respondents were assured their responses would remain confidential, and subjects' names did not appear on the surveys or return envelope; identification numbers were used to match Time 1 and 2 surveys.

Time 1 surveys were mailed to 2026 alumni; 63 were undeliverable. Of the remaining 1963 surveys, 529 were returned, and five individuals were retired or a stay-at-home parent; this yields a 27 per cent response rate. Seven more of the returned surveys were not usable (because of non-employment), leaving 517 surveys for analysis. Though at first glance the response rate is disappointing, those individuals who are not currently employed (stay-at-home parents, retirees, etc.) would likely not return the survey, as it did not apply to their current circumstance. Previous research that targeted working alumni (see Zanzi, Arthur, & Shamir, 1991 for an example) has received similar or lower response rates (in this example, 21 per cent).

Three months after the Time 1 surveys were sent, the Time 2 surveys were sent to those who returned the initial surveys. Three weeks later, surveys were sent again to those respondents who had not yet returned the Time 2 survey. Of the 517 people sent Time 2 surveys, 338 returned them, yielding a 65 per cent retention rate. Of the 338, 13 were unusable for analysis because they had changed jobs and/or organizations since the Time 1 survey, leaving 325 for analysis and a usable rate of 16 per cent from the initial sample.

Eighty-nine per cent of the respondents were white; 54 per cent were female; 74 per cent were married or living with a partner (8 per cent divorced; 2 per cent widowed); the average age was 43; 73 per cent had children (ranging from 0 to 9); 60 per cent had children living at home (ranging from 0 to 6); average organizational tenure (at Time 1) was 8.4 years (ranging from 1 month to 40 years; average job tenure (at Time 1) was 5.7 years (ranging from 1 month to 26 years); average organizational size was 3,414 (ranging from 1 to 80,000); average number of hours worked per week was 45.0 (ranging from 4 to 80; $SD = 12.0$); 32 per cent self-identified as management or supervisor; 38 per cent had completed bachelor's degrees; 42 per cent had completed master's degrees; and 20 per cent had completed doctoral degrees. Women were more likely to return the survey; the sample population consisted of 50 per cent female, yet the respondents were 54 per cent female (chi-square $= 4.27$, df $= 1$, $p < 0.05$).

Measures

Workplace segmentation preferences and supplies

I created the four-item measures for workplace segmentation preferences and supplies, and measured each on a Likert-type scale of 1 to 7, with 1 being 'strongly disagree', 7 being 'strongly agree', and 4 being 'neutral.' Individual level items were written to reflect the 'preferences' part of the preferences-supplies approach to P-E fit, that is, the degree to which the individual prefers a workplace that helps

segment work and home domains. Corresponding 'supplies' items were written to reflect the respondent's perception of the workplace providing (or not) the individual preferences for segmentation. An example of the preference items ($\alpha = 0.91$) is 'I don't like to have to think about work when I'm at home.' The corresponding workplace item ($\alpha = 0.94$) is 'My workplace lets people forget about work when they're at home.' An EFA was conducted on these items, along with the outcome measures. Each item loaded on its corresponding factor above the 0.70 level. Details of the EFA are included in the Appendix, as are all the items in the measures.

Work-home conflict

WHC ($\alpha = 0.93$) was measured using a slightly modified Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian's (1996) 5-item Work-Family Conflict Scale, which uses a 1–5 Likert-type scale to measure work demands interfering with family. As mentioned previously, Parasuraman and Greenhaus (2002) and Rothausen (1999) urge scholars to move toward a broader conceptualization of the work-family research than merely nuclear families. Rothausen (1999) notes that the term 'family' can overly restrict a respondent's perception of home-based activities and lead respondents to think only of their nuclear families. One approach to the measurement of the conflict that offers a solution to this problem is examining it from a domains perspective, as is recommended by boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996; Rau & Hyland, 2002). As mentioned in the literature review, these theories advocate examining the domains of 'home' and 'work' in which conflicts would occur. Hence, 'home' replaced the word 'family' in three items in order to help respondents think of a broader set of home- and family-related issues; the word 'home' is already found in two of the five items in Netemeyer et al.'s (1996) original measure. While the potential problems of altering existing measures are acknowledged, this approach best reflects the study's emphasis on capturing a more inclusive population and taking a domains perspective, and was particularly appropriate given the diverse sample chosen, which included people of various ages and life stages. As mentioned in the literature review, there are many conceptualizations of work/non-work conflict, but few studies utilize *every* dimension of it; rather, they selectively choose those dimensions that fit best with the research questions or general models being tested (Carlson et al., 2000). In this case, I have chosen to focus on the work-to-home direction of conflict, as that allows organizational behavior researchers to assess how to better manage *workplace* factors (those factors under management's control) in trying to ameliorate conflict. And, these items tend to focus on the time-based approach to conflict (as opposed to a strain- or behavior-based approach). An example reworded item is, 'The demands of my work interfere with my home and personal life.'

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.75$) was measured using three items from Hackman and Lawler (1971) that capture an overall job satisfaction assessment. An example is, 'Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job.'

Stress

I measured stress with five items from Folkman and Lazarus' (1985) Stress Questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.80$), which has been shown to have good psychometric properties and construct validity. Respondents are asked how often they have felt each of five emotions (e.g., angry, sad) in the past 2 months, ranging from 'not at all' (1) to 'a great deal' (5).

Control variables

Many variables have been demonstrated to affect one or more of the outcomes in this study. WFC has been clearly predicted by gender, age, marital status, children living at home, number of hours worked

per week, and responsibility level outside the workplace (Carlson, 1999; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Rothausen, 1999; Vinokur, Pierce, & Buck, 1999). Further, organization size, job and organization tenure, and position level in the organization have been shown to affect such outcomes as job satisfaction and stress (Judge & Watanabe, 1994; Kossek & Ozeki, 1998; Parasuraman & Simmers, 2001). Hence, data for each of these variables were used as control variables for each analysis. Age, organization size, number of hours worked per week, number of children living at home, and job and organization tenure were each measured as continuous variables from fill-in measures (e.g., 'What is your age? ___ '). Gender, marital status, and position level were measured as categorical variables. Responsibility level outside the workplace was measured using Rothausen's, (1999) question, 'Considering everything, how much responsibility for other people (outside the workplace) do you have?' Responses range from 'little or none' (coded as 1) to 'an exceptional amount' (coded as 5).

Results

Means, standard deviations, and correlations for all variables are found in Table 1. Age, hours worked, and education level each had a significant and negative correlation with segmentation preferences. Thus, the modal respondent with high segmentation preference was younger, worked fewer hours, and was not as highly educated. Significant variation on these dimensions also provides preliminary evidence for the notion that individuals will vary in their preference for work-home segmentation, and gives some early clues as to what dimensions are associated with that preference. Being male, organization tenure, number of hours worked, and education level had significant negative correlations to segmentation supplies. Thus, males tended to see their workplaces as less segmenting than women, as did those who worked more hours, had worked longer for their organizations, and were more educated. This may represent a perceptual difference or these groups might tend to gravitate toward work environments that are less focused on work-home segmentation. Given that the number of hours worked and education level were both negatively correlated to *both* segmentation preferences and supplies, we might also speculate that highly educated employees who work many hours are simply less concerned with separating the work and home domains, as they have invested so much in their work, both long-term (through education) and short-term (through current work schedules). It is also noteworthy that segmentation preferences and supplies were significantly and positively correlated (0.25, $p < 0.01$). This could suggest that individuals self-select into organizations that appear to meet their segmentation preferences and/or are populated by like-minded individuals, consistent with the attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) framework (Schneider, 1987).

The polynomial regression approach

Since the main hypotheses tested involve P-E fit and response surface methodology, I now briefly review those methodological procedures. Edwards and his colleagues have demonstrated that the relationship between person (e.g., segmentation preferences), environment (e.g., segmentation supplies), and outcomes (e.g., WHC, stress, and job satisfaction) should be considered in three dimensions, using polynomial regression to generate three-dimensional response surfaces that visually represent the combined relationship of P and E on the outcomes. This approach overcomes the shortcomings of earlier approaches to fit (such as difference scores). Further rationale and complete logistics behind this approach are widely available in the works of Edwards and his colleagues

Table 1. Means, standard deviations, and correlations for all variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. # of Children At Home	—																
2. Responsibility Level	−0.47**	—															
3. Gender[a]	0.17**	−0.04	—														
4. Age	−0.24**	0.12**	−0.13**	—													
5. Org. Tenure	0.01	−0.07	−0.09*	0.40**	—												
6. Job Tenure	−0.03	−0.04	−0.08	0.28**	0.48**	—											
7. Hours Worked	0.02	−0.01	0.33**	−0.02	−0.02	−0.02	—										
8. Org. Size	0.03	−0.02	0.01	−0.05	0.03	−0.03	−0.03	—									
9. Education[a]	−0.06	0.08	0.11*	0.29**	0.14**	0.09*	0.14**	−0.05	—								
10. Marital Status[a]	0.35**	−0.28**	0.15**	−0.07	0.04	−0.02	0.01	0.03	0.01	—							
11. Ethnicity[a]	0.02	−0.10	−0.08	0.08	0.04	0.06	−0.09	−0.07	0.02	0.05	—						
12. Position Level[a]	0.02	−0.02	0.11*	−0.08	−0.06	−0.13**	0.24**	0.06	−0.05	−0.01	−0.02	—					
13. Segmentation Preferences	0.02	−0.03	−0.06	−0.12**	−0.07	−0.04	−0.15**	0.02	−0.25**	0.00	−0.05	0.03	(0.91)				
14. Segmentation Supplies	−0.03	0.09	−0.04*	−0.06	−0.10*	−0.05	−0.31**	0.02	−0.15**	−0.01	0.00	0.00	0.25**	(0.94)			
15. WH Conflict	0.12**	−0.10*	0.01*	−0.05	−0.02	−0.10*	0.36**	−0.03	−0.01	0.03	−0.10*	0.08	0.03	−0.43**	(0.93)		
16. Stress	0.00	−0.07	−0.06	−0.05	−0.10	−0.06	0.07	0.01	−0.07	−0.07	−0.02	0.02	0.16**	−0.12*	0.27**	(0.80)	
17. Job Sat.	0.12**	−0.09	−0.06	0.03	0.15*	0.14**	−0.05	−0.01	0.18**	0.12*	0.05	0.03	−0.26**	0.05	−0.22**	−0.39**	(0.75)
Mean	1.19	2.75	0.46	43.12	8.42	5.72	44.65	3414	1.84	0.74	0.89	0.32	5.68	3.79	3.07	2.29	3.76
S.D.	1.25	1.16	0.50	7.64	7.08	5.23	11.83	9226	0.73	0.44	0.31	0.47	1.30	1.65	1.05	0.76	0.84
Range													1–7	1–7	1–5	1–5	1–5

[a]For gender, 0 = female, 1 = male; for education, bachelor's, master's, and doctorate coded 1 to 3, respectively; for marital status, 0 = single, divorced, widowed, 1 = married or living with partner; for ethnicity, 0 = non-white, 1 = white; for position level, 0 = not manager/supervisor, 1 = manager/supervisor.
*$p < 0.05$;**$p < 0.01$;***$p < 0.001$.
Note: Cronbach alphas are shown along diagonal where appropriate.

(Edwards, 1994, 1996, 2001; Edwards & Harrison, 1993; Edwards & Parry, 1993; Edwards & Rothbard, 1999, 2000). Given the interest in an interactive effect and the complex relationships among the variables hypothesized, this technique is the most appropriate for testing the hypotheses in this paper. Hence, I followed the protocols advocated by Edwards and his colleagues. Specifically, the hypotheses were tested using multiple regression techniques. Outcomes were each regressed on the work-home segmentation supplies (S), the individual's preference for segmentation (P), the interaction between them (P*S), the square of S, and the square of P. These five terms are all included in order to incorporate the potential linear and curvilinear fit effects. The equation can be represented as follows, where Z represents the outcome of WHC, stress, or job satisfaction; X represents the segmentation preference score; and Y represents the segmentation supply score:

$$Z = b_0 + b_1X + b_2Y + b_3Y^2 + b_4XY + b_5X^2 + e$$

Again following the protocols established by Edwards and his colleagues, to test the hypotheses, each of which speculates on the functional form of fit, I computed hierarchical regressions wherein each specified outcome (e.g., satisfaction) was regressed on control variables in the first step (Model 1); the main effects of preferences and supplies in the second step (Model 2); and the cross-product of preferences and supplies, the square of preferences and the square of supplies in the third step (Model 3). When R^2 increases significantly in the third step, or when individual higher order terms are significant, a nonlinear relationship between the outcome and fit is indicated, and response surface methodology is appropriate for analysis. The detailed results of each polynomial regression are found in Table 2. As suggested by Edwards and his colleagues, I conducted four tests to evaluate each of the three models hypothesized. (Their works outline the specific protocols.) These tests determine whether each model is supported by the data. The four conditions were met for all three hypotheses.

Interpreting response surfaces

Edwards (1994, 1996, 2001) recommends interpreting the surface corresponding to each equation. Figures 1a,b, and c represent the 3-D surfaces for hypotheses 1 through 3, respectively. The P = −S line represents outcomes when preferences are opposite of supplies (e.g., preferences = 7 and supplies = 1). This line is represented in each figure by dashed, curved lines; it passes through the values of 7–1, 6–2, 5–3, 4–4, 3–5, 2–6, and 1–7. Conversely, the line of perfect fit (P = S) represents outcomes on the response surface when preferences equal supplies (e.g., preferences = 1 and supplies = 1). This line is represented in each figure by a solid, curved line; it passes through the values of 1–1, 2–2, 3–3, 4–4, 5–5, 6–6, and 7–7. Part A of each hypothesis addresses effects of mismatch: all the data on the surface plane to the *left* of the line of perfect fit are outcomes when preferences are greater than supplies; data on the surface plane to the *right* of the line of perfect fit are outcomes when supplies are greater than preferences. As values move further away from the line of perfect fit, greater incongruence is found, and complete incongruence (e.g., 1–7 or 7–1) is found in the far side corners of the surface plane. Hence, visual inspection of each side of the line of perfect fit tells the 'story' of what happens as mismatch increases. Following the line of perfect fit along its slope helps interpret part B of each hypothesis; that is, the slope of the P = S line is tested for part B.

Figures were created using the Excel spreadsheet program. Beta weights for each appropriate variable are entered into the polynomial equation for various combinations of preferences and supplies scores. Specifically, an outcome value is calculated for each possible value of preferences and supplies (each on a 1–7 scale). Results are then plotted onto the three-dimensional surface for interpretation. Unstandardized beta weights are used, in keeping with the protocols outlined in Edwards (1994, 1996). Edwards and Parry (1993) demonstrate the method for mathematically identifying important features of these surfaces, and I followed those protocols, as have others using this methodology (such as

Table 2. Polynomial regression results for hypotheses 1–3

Variable	*H1*: Work-home conflict on fit			*H2*: Stress on Fit			*H3*: Job Satisfaction on Fit		
	Model 1 Control variables	Model 2 Betas (S.E.)	Model 3 Betas (S.E.)	Model 1 Control variables	Model 2 Betas (S.E.)	Model 3 Betas (S.E.)	Model 1 Control variables	Model 2 Betas (S.E.)	Model 3 Betas (S.E.)
Children At Home	0.09^{*}	0.09^{*}	0.04	−0.01	−0.01	−0.07	0.06	0.06	0.04
Responsibility Level	−0.05	−0.02	−0.03	−0.06	−0.06	−0.06	−0.02	−0.03	−0.03
Gender	-0.30^{**}	-0.24^{*}	-0.24^{*}	−0.13	−0.11	−0.09	−0.15	−0.17	$-0.20^{\dagger}$
Age	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00	−0.01	−0.01	−0.01
Org. Tenure	0.00	0.00	0.00	−0.01	−0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01
Job Tenure	-0.02^{*}	-0.02^{*}	-0.03^{*}	0.00	0.00	−0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02
Hours Worked	0.04^{***}	0.03^{***}	0.03^{***}	0.01	0.01	0.01	−0.01	0.00	0.00
Org. Size	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Education	−0.05	−0.06	−0.08	−0.06	−0.03	−0.02	0.24^{**}	0.18^{*}	0.17^{*}
Marital Status	−0.02	−0.01	0.06	−0.14	−0.13	−0.04	0.17	0.17	0.18
Ethnicity	$-0.26^{\dagger}$	$-0.25^{\dagger}$	$-0.27^{\dagger}$	−0.04	−0.02	−0.03	0.04	0.01	0.03
Position Level	−0.04	0.00	0.03	−0.02	−0.02	0.03	0.15	0.15	0.15
Segmentation Preferences		$0.12\ (0.04)^{**}$	−0.30 (0.24)		$0.11\ (0.04)^{**}$	$-0.93\ (0.23)^{***}$		$-0.17\ (0.04)^{***}$	$-0.47\ (0.25)^{\dagger}$
Segmentation Supplies		$-0.23\ (0.03)^{***}$	$-1.06\ (0.21)^{***}$		$-0.07\ (0.03)^{*}$	$-0.70\ (0.20)^{**}$		$0.07\ (0.03)^{*}$	$-0.37\ (0.22)^{\dagger}$
Segmentation Prefs. Sqd.			0.02 (0.02)			$0.10\ (0.02)^{***}$			0.00 (0.03)
Segmentation Supplies Sqd.			$0.06\ (0.02)^{**}$			$0.06\ (0.02)^{**}$			−0.01 (0.02)
Preferences × Supplies			$0.06\ (0.05)^{*}$			0.02 (0.03)			$0.08\ (0.03)^{**}$
R	0.42	0.56	0.58	0.20	0.28	0.41	0.31	0.41	0.44
R^2	0.17	0.31	0.34	0.04	0.08	0.17	0.10	0.17	0.20
F	6.89^{***}	12.14^{***}	11.30^{***}	0.86	$1.62^{\dagger}$	2.97^{***}	2.31^{**}	3.64^{***}	3.66^{***}
ΔR^2		0.13	0.03		0.04	0.09		0.07	0.03
ΔF	6.89^{***}	36.12^{***}	5.40^{**}	0.86	5.94^{**}	8.64^{***}	2.31^{**}	10.57^{***}	3.32^{*}
Linear shape along P = S		$a_1 = b_1 + b_2 = -1.36^{***}$			$a_1 = b_1 + b_2 = -1.63^{***}$			$a_1 = b_1 + b_2 = -0.84^{***}$	
Curvilinear shape along P = S		$a_2 = b_3 + b_4 + b_5 = 0.14^{*}$			$a_2 = b_3 + b_4 + b_5 = 0.18^{*}$			$a_2 = b_3 + b_4 + b_5 = 0.07^{\dagger}$	
Linear shape along P = −S		$x_1 = b_1 - b_2 = 0.76^{***}$			$x_1 = b_1 - b_2 = -0.23^{**}$			$x_1 = b_1 - b_2 = -0.10$	
Curvilinear shape along P = −S		$x_2 = b_3 - b_4 + b_5 = 0.02$			$x_2 = b_3 - b_4 + b_5 = 0.14^{*}$			$x_2 = b_3 - b_4 + b_5 = -0.09^{\dagger}$	

$^{\dagger}p < 0.10$.; $^{*}p < 0.05$; $^{**}p < 0.01$;$^{***}p < 0.001$.

Note: a_1 and a_2 represent the slope of each surface along the P = S line, while x_1 and x_2 represent the slope of each surface along the P = −S line, where b_1, b_2, b_3, b_4 and b_5 are the coefficients on Preferences, Supplies, Preferences squared, Preferences × Supplies, and Supplies squared, respectively.

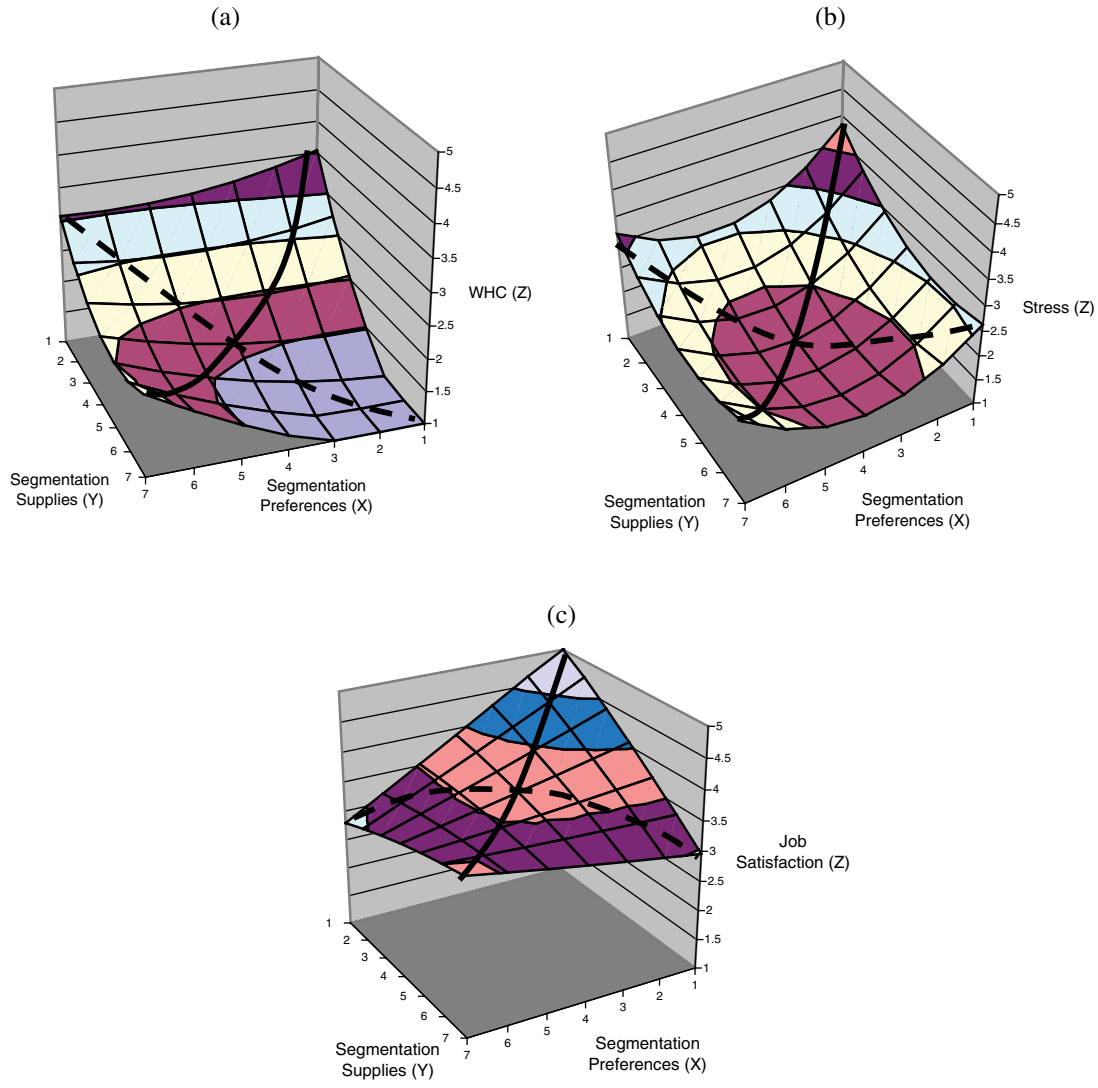

Figure 1. Three-dimensional response surface analyses. [This figure is available in colour online at www.interscience.wiley.com]

Atwater, Ostroff, Yammarino, & Fleenor, 1998; Kalliath, Bluedorn, & Strube, 1999). All three equations were examined using the method outlined below. Note that these two tests can be used in tandem with visual interpretation of the response surfaces to determine whether or not portions of each hypothesis are supported, and to give further information about the shape and meaning of the data.

First, since each hypothesis/equation had significant higher order effects, I tested slopes along the P = −S line. For this test, I let $x_1 = b_1 - b_2$, and $x_2 = b_3 - b_4 + b_5$. These results can be interpreted similarly to those along the line of perfect fit. If x_1 differs from zero, there is a linear slope along the P = −S line, and if x_2 is greater than zero, the surface curves upward along the P = −S line (Atwater et al., 1998; Edwards & Parry, 1993). I also analyzed the first and second principal axes of the surface. These tests are helpful in examining part A of each hypothesis to see if the general trend in the data matches predictions on each side of the line of perfect fit.

Second, I let $a_1 = b_1 + b_2$ and $a_2 = b_3 + b_4 + b_5$, where b_1 is the beta for preferences scores, b_2 is the beta for supplies scores, b_3 is the beta for preferences-squared, b_4 is the beta for the cross-product of preferences and supplies, and b_5 is the beta for supplies-squared. When a_1 differs from zero, there is a linear slope along the line of perfect fit where preferences equal supplies; a positive value for a_1 indicates that fit at higher values of preferences and supplies yields a more positive outcome than at lower levels. This helps examine part B of each hypothesis, which addresses the slope of the line of perfect fit (P = S). A positive slope indicates higher levels of the outcome variable when the preferences-supply match is high than when the match is low. If a_2 is negative, a concave shape is found along the line of perfect fit; if a_2 is positive, this surface is convex or curved upward along the line of perfect fit; either result shows that perfect fit has different results for mid-range than extremely high and/or extremely low values. Results are detailed below and found in Table 2.

Hypothesis 1: This hypothesis predicts how congruence of segmentation preferences and supplies will affect WHC. Table 2 displays the results of the regression, and Figure 1a shows the three-dimensional response surface. For part A, as segmentation supplies increased toward preferences (moving from the far left to the center of the response surface), WHC decreased as predicted; as segmentation supplies surpassed preferences, however (moving from the center to the far right of the response surface) WHC continued to decrease, contrary to what was predicted. Slope analysis confirms what the visual diagram represents; the shape along the P = −S line did not have a significant curvilinear shape ($b_3 - b_4 + b_5 = 0.02$, NS). Note that segmentation supplies had a strong main effect decreasing WHC. The slope of the first principal axis was −1.87 and the slope of the second principal axis was −0.54. Part B was not supported; contrary to expectations, as values along the P = S line increased toward neutral (4–4), WHC decreased; WHC then increased again as values along the P = S line moved away from neutral. WHC was higher when preferences and supplies were both high or both low than when both were neutral ($b_1 + b_2 = -1.36$, $p < 0.001$).

Hypothesis 2: This hypothesis posited that fit of preferences and supplies would affect stress. Table 2 and Figure 1b report the statistical and visual results, respectively. As segmentation supplies increased toward preferences, stress decreased, and as supplies surpassed preferences, stress increased, providing support for part A. Slope analysis affirms the visual diagram and further supports the hypothesis; the shape along the P = −S line had a significant curvilinear shape ($b_3 - b_4 + b_5 = .14$, $p < 0.05$). The slope of the first principal axis was −0.33 and the slope of the second principal axis was −2.33. Support was not found for part B; as values along the P = S line increased toward neutral (4–4), stress decreased; stress then increased again as values along the P = S line moved away from neutral. Stress was higher when preferences and supplies were both high or both low than when both were neutral ($b_1 + b_2 = -1.63$, $p < 0.001$).

Hypothesis 3: This hypothesis predicted relationships between preferences-supplies fit and job satisfaction. Table 2 and Figure 1c report the statistical and visual results, respectively. Part A was supported; job satisfaction increased as supplies increased toward preferences, and job satisfaction decreased as supplies surpassed preferences. The shape along the P = −S line had a marginally

significant curvilinear shape ($b_3 - b_4 + b_5 = -0.09$, $p < 0.10$). The slope of the first principal axis was -16.10 and the slope of the second principal axis was -0.06. Part B was partially supported; as scores along the P = S line increased toward neutral values, job satisfaction decreased, as expected; but scores did not increase along the P = S line until higher values of perfect fit were reached ($b_1 + b_2 = -0.84$, $p < 0.001$).

Discussion

This paper used polynomial regression and response surface methodology to demonstrate P-E fit consequences of the work and home interface. Specifically, it showed the interaction between what people *want* regarding work-home domain segmentation and what they *get* from their workplace affects important outcomes, and documented asymmetries in the patterns of congruence. It also demonstrates that integrating or segmenting work and home is *not* inherently good or bad, but, rather, depends on the interaction between the individual and the workplace. Results showed that the congruence between an individual's work-home segmentation preference and the perceived segmentation supplies granted to the individual by his or her organization affected WHC, job satisfaction and stress. Generally, as workplace segmentation supplies more closely matched preferences, a person was better able to negotiate the work-home boundary to his or her liking, reducing WHC and stress and increasing job satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1: While WHC decreased as segmentation supplies approached segmentation preferences as expected, WHC continued to decrease even as supplies exceeded preferences. A strong main effect for segmentation supplies helps explain this result. Perhaps the environmental supply of being able to segment work and home is in and of itself enough to ameliorate WHC. That is, a workplace that leans toward keeping work and home separate naturally protects workers from WHC, which is more common for those whose lives tend toward integration. This suggests that, for WHC, the main effect of workplace segmentation supplies may be at least as telling as the interaction effects between preferences and supplies.

Hypothesis 2: Stress decreased as supplies approached preferences, and increased as supplies surpassed preferences. Interestingly, the lowest scores on stress were from those who desired and received a fairly neutral amount of segmentation; that is, they did not exhibit strong preferences or supplies toward either integration or segmentation. At least two possible explanations for this finding are worth pursing in future research. One, perhaps these findings suggest that an acceptance of tempered work-home segmentation that is a middle ground (neither too integrating or too segmenting) leads to lower levels of stress. Or, those for whom work-home segmentation is not a salient issue (and would therefore score neutrally on preferences) could experience, as a group, lower levels of stress because of less taxing life circumstances.

Hypothesis 3: As predicted, job satisfaction increased as segmentation supplies approached preferences, and decreased as supplies exceeded preferences. Also as predicted, the line of perfect fit was curvilinear in that the lowest scores on it were in fairly neutral values, although closer to an extreme than with WHC and stress. Interestingly, the highest scores for job satisfaction were at the point where both preference and supplies scores equaled 1—those people who did not want and did not have segmented work-home domains. Perhaps individuals who are not satisfied in their jobs

desire to segment their work and home life in order to not sully the home domain with the spillover of negative aspects of work, and people who are satisfied with their jobs do not mind bringing it home. Interestingly, these results are consistent with compensation theory as well.

Overall, the results of this study showed important differences across individuals and environments in predicting pertinent employee outcomes. Further, it demonstrated the added value of examining the individual-workplace interaction regarding work and home segmentation through a P-E fit and response surface lens. Subtle but important variations in how individuals responded to work-home segmentation illustrate this value. Consider as one example the difference between fit effects on WHC, stress, and job satisfaction. Though WHC and stress are both considered negative outcomes, the patterns of responses differed, particularly for those with low segmentation preferences in high supply organizations; stress for this group was quite high, while WHC (and job satisfaction) was quite low, suggesting that while segmentation might ameliorate WHC for some workers, it might increase stress in *other* work or home dimensions. Similarly, segmentation supplies had a stronger impact on WHC than preferences, whereas the reverse was found for stress and satisfaction. As another example, gender had a significant effect on WHC, but not on stress or satisfaction, perhaps indicating (as has past research) that work-home balance is particularly salient for women, even more so than other outcomes. A final interesting implication of the study is that, contrary to what P-E fit theory would predict, fit among those experiencing *neutrality* toward issues of work-home segmentation was actually associated with lower stress and lower WHC. This strongly suggests that, at least for some dimensions of fit, having neutral attitudes is more beneficial to employee well being than having strong preferences—even when the desired level of supplies matches those preferences.

Taken together, the results also suggest more broadly that work-family researchers should pay closer attention in future research to how such workplace 'segmentation supplies' as human resource policies, workplace climate, and supervisor behaviors affect individuals differently, rather than promoting across-the-board integration. This study has taken a first step in that direction by focusing on a broad measure of workplace supplies, which can be followed by more specific measures of human resource policies, supervisor behaviors, etc. Clearly, congruence is not the only path to reduced WHC; and, as the data suggest, WHC can still exist at considerable levels when congruence is achieved. Hence, future research could examine boundary conditions and important moderators of the relationship between fit and WHC. Studying individual segmentation preferences in conjunction with the availability and usage of specific work-family policies (such as flextime, job sharing, telecommuting) and less-tangible resources (such as supervisor support, colleague support, group/department norms) could be particularly useful.

Contributions

Previous research has shown that individuals differ in their preference toward integrating or segmenting aspects of their lives such as work and home (Ashforth et al., 2000; Edwards & Rothbard, 1999; Nippert-Eng, 1996). Less clear, however, have been the *effects* of that preference—especially when coupled with working conditions that either foster or hinder it. This paper demonstrates the impact of the fit between these individual preferences and workplace supplies. By so doing, this paper fills at least three important gaps in the literature: (1) a dearth of emphasis on WHC when considering fit and work-life balance together; (2) a lack of individual difference variables to predict WHC; (3) a lack of interactional/fit studies that incorporate the interaction between individual differences and situational variables to predict WHC.

In addition to overcoming these shortcomings in previous WHC research, this study's sample is highly appropriate for WHC and P-E fit research. The alumni sample included a wide range of ages, occupations, and job levels, which helps to overcome what Kossek and Ozeki (1998) note is a major limitation of most of the work-family research: that samples are almost always drawn from one occupation or one organization, thereby reducing the generalizeability of the findings. Kossek and Ozeki (1998) and Parasuraman and Greenhaus (2002) specifically call for studies that do not target homogeneous and specific work groups and contexts. Also, given the interest of this study in examining individual preferences *and* supplies, this sample not only yields a more heterogeneous group of *individuals*, but a wider array of *workplaces* as well. Indeed, Ostroff and DuBois (1993:16) note that 'any study of congruence conducted in a single environment or single setting is flawed, because (in)congruence between person and environment cannot be distinguished from the person factors.'

Limitations

Edwards (2001) notes some of the drawbacks of the polynomial regression and response surface methodology. For example, it inherits assumptions from multiple regression analysis that independent variables are measured without error. Measurement error can negatively affect coefficient estimates, and for tests with higher order terms, this error reduces statistical power. Additionally, this approach requires rather specific *a priori* hypothesizing about relationships, which can be difficult to do with the precision yielded by the results. In other words, although general trends in the data can be predicted based on relevant theory and existing empirical research, smaller effects in the data are likely to arise for which there was no existing basis for hypothesizing. This is both a strength and a weakness of the approach: a strength in that it allows a richer understanding of the results and relationships among variables after the fact, a weakness in that it makes precise hypothesizing beforehand a difficult task. And, while I have provided some alternative explanations for some unexpected results, speculative *post hoc* interpretations of surprise results in polynomial regression and response surface methodology are not encouraged, and should be viewed as exploratory in nature (Edwards, 2001). Another potential constraint exists in the way I operationalized work-home preferences and supplies; the wording of the measures assessed level of agreement with statements about work-home conditions rather than assessing the amount of the preference or supply.

In this study, I chose to focus on the effects of workplace segmentation on work-to-home conflict. One limitation is that I have not examined the home-to-work direction of conflict. This was largely due to a need for parsimony in the study, as well as a primary interest for management scholars in what could be changed in *workplaces* to ameliorate conflict. An interesting direction for future research, though, would be to examine these effects in the home-to-work direction, perhaps by adjusting the measures I have created to fit that perspective. Another potential limitation is in the measure of segmentation supplies, in that it holistically assesses respondents' perceptions of their work environment. Further research could be done that very specifically assesses workplace policies and supervisory behaviors, and links them to individual preferences to test this fit model. Another potential limitation in the data is that all respondents are college-educated. That said, they come from a wide variety of disciplines and levels/types of degrees, and the sample does include a wide mixture of occupations, ages, and life circumstances, which greatly facilitates generalizeability of the findings. Finally, regarding common method variance (which could be a concern since data were collected from the same source), it should be remembered that individuals' perceptions of workplace phenomena are often the focus of organizational behavior research, and that the unique patterns of correlations and antecedents associated with each of the outcomes suggests that considerably more is happening than

merely method variance. Notwithstanding, future research could include multimethods (e.g., peer/supervisory data) and/or obtain data about existing workplace policies.

Applications to organizations

Organizations have been urged by practitioners and academics alike to foster more integrative work-home policies such as on-site day care, job sharing and flextime, as well as creating workplace climates that facilitate work-home integration. The results of this study suggest that urging is overstated. This research demonstrates that (1) while some people prefer to keep work issues away from home (and/or *vice-versa*), others prefer to integrate their life domains, and (2) there are consequences for organizations meeting those preferences. Hence, what one employee sees as a welcome integrating policy or work climate might be viewed as an unwelcome encroachment by another employee. A fine line must be walked by management seeking to endear workers to their organization by adding more integrating policies, for what pleases the integrating personality might very well alienate the segmenting personality. Indeed, the findings herein suggest that flexible benefits programs—which allow workers to pick-and-choose elements without forcing any given policy on everyone—may be advisable so that the idiosyncratic preferences of individuals are met but not exceeded. Should managers deem it appropriate to become more segmenting, they could engage in such behaviors as not holding meetings too early or late in the day (which would interfere with home duties) or minimizing off-hour phone calls to the home or cell phone.

In addition to respecting the differences in individual preferences, management can incorporate institutionalized responses to manage work and home boundaries in ways that foster individual and organizational performance. Although we might take individual preferences as a constant, it is also important to consider the possibility that they can change or be changed. Organizational leaders and managers could attempt to change the preferences or expectations of their employees. One way this could be accomplished is through the socialization process during and after being hired. Employees are more likely to adapt to their surroundings during the socialization period as they pick up cues on prevailing expectations. Managers and peers can inform newcomers of work-home norms and policies and model the desired level of segmentation (e.g., not taking phone calls during non-work hours). Another approach could involve changing formal and informal reward structures to more closely match the segmentation or integration norms that are desired, such as moving from time-based to outcome-based pay or decreasing the tangible and intangible benefits for overtime work.

Additionally, managers could hire those individuals whose preferences match the supplies being granted (e.g., Chatman, 1991). That is, instead of (or in addition to) treating employee domain segmentation preferences as malleable and attempting to change them, managers could select people based on a predicted match between what they offer (e.g., policies for work-family integration) and what potential employees are seeking.

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Appendix

The following items were used to measure variables in the study. Results from an exploratory factor analysis using a Promax rotation are shown. **Bolded** items demonstrate factor loadings above 0.60. Stress was measured by asking respondents to rate how often they felt each emotion (listed below) within the past 2 months.

	Factor				
	1	2	3	4	5
Segmentation Preferences ($\alpha = 0.91$)					
1. I don't like to have to think about work while I'm at home	−0.03	−0.04	**0.89**	−0.06	0.00
2. I prefer to keep work life at work	−0.04	−0.04	**0.92**	0.03	0.00
3. I don't like work issues creeping into my home life	0.00	−0.01	**0.91**	0.02	0.00
4. I like to be able to leave work behind when I go home	0.09	0.13	**0.84**	0.00	−0.01
Segmentation Supplies ($\alpha = 0.94$)					
1. My workplace lets people forget about work when they're at home	−0.08	**0.86**	0.07	0.04	−0.03
2. Where I work, people can keep work matters at work	0.02	**0.93**	0.01	0.01	0.01
3. At my workplace, people are able to prevent work issues from creeping into their home life	−0.01	**0.92**	0.02	−0.02	−0.02
4. Where I work, people can mentally leave work behind when they go home	0.05	**0.95**	−0.07	−0.02	0.05
Work-home Conflict ($\alpha = 0.93$; adapted from Netemeyer, Boles, and McMurrian [1996])					
1. The demands of my work interfere with my home and personal life	**0.80**	−0.08	0.02	0.02	0.08
2. The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill home responsibilities	**0.94**	0.03	−0.03	0.02	−0.03
3. Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands my job puts on me	**0.94**	0.03	0.03	−0.04	−0.03
4. My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill home duties	**0.83**	−0.07	0.02	0.08	0.04
5. Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for home activities	**0.88**	0.05	−0.03	−0.04	−0.06
Stress ($\alpha = 0.80$)					
1. Angry	−0.01	0.00	0.02	**0.73**	0.08
2. Sad	0.00	0.05	−0.07	**0.89**	−0.19
3. Disappointed	0.02	0.07	−0.05	**0.79**	0.13
4. Guilty	0.02	−0.12	0.06	**0.66**	−0.18
5. Disgusted	−0.04	−0.02	0.05	**0.62**	0.21
Job Satisfaction ($\alpha = 0.75$)					
1. Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with this job	−0.02	0.03	−0.02	−0.09	**−0.83**
2. I frequently think of quitting my job (R)	−0.01	0.01	0.00	−0.06	**0.85**
3. Generally speaking, I am very satisfied with the kind of work I do on my job	0.00	−0.02	0.03	0.08	**−0.80**