

# The Work–Family Interface and Promotability: Boundary Integration as a Double-Edged Sword

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*Based on role accumulation theory and boundary theory we propose and examine a model that represents the process by which family involvement influences promotability through enrichment, and the moderating roles of employees' boundary management preferences (i.e., segmentation/integration) in that process. Data collected from 347 registered nurses and their supervisors (N = 40) across three periods showed that as employees' family involvement increases, they are able to accumulate resources from their family role and transfer them to the workplace. This increase in family-to-work enrichment (FWE) benefits employees by increasing supervisor perceptions of employees' promotability. As hypothesized, an integrating boundary management preference serves as a double-edged sword for employees such that it strengthens the positive influence of family involvement on FWE, but weakens the relationship between FWE and supervisor perceptions of promotability.*

**Keywords:** *work–family conflict; identity; role accumulation theory*

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As workers with families attempt to manage the boundaries between work and family (Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2005; Parasuraman & Greenhaus, 2002), it is important to

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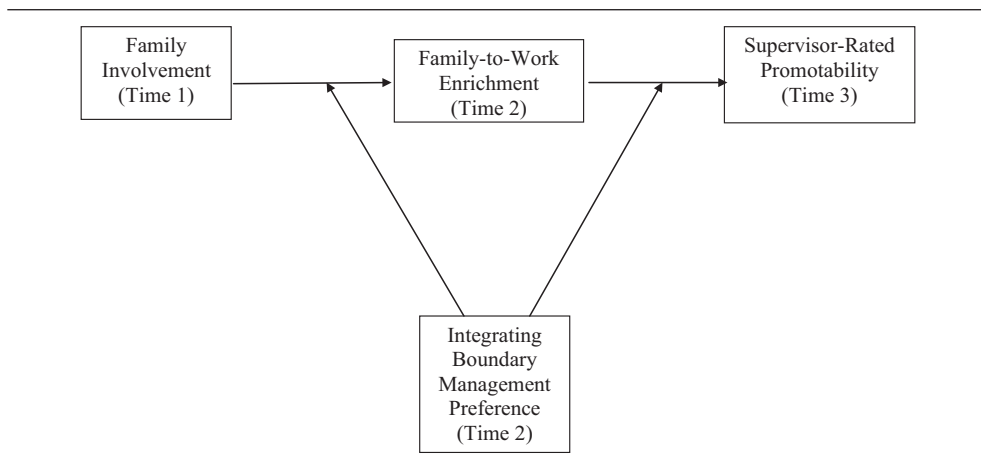
examine the effect of employees' family involvement on important career-related outcomes. The small body of research in this area has generally considered the negative effects of family involvement on employee outcomes including greater work–family interference (Adams, King, & King, 1996) and perceptions of employees' reduced job commitment (Campbell, Campbell, & Kennard, 1994; Fletcher & Bailyn, 1996). Recently, however, a more positive outlook on the impact of employees' family involvement on work was offered. Specifically, Greenhaus and Powell (2006) suggested that family-to-work enrichment (FWE), or the extent to which experiences in the family role improve the quality of life in the work role, occurs when workers use resources they gain from family involvement to enrich their work roles. Building on the foundations of role accumulation theory (Sieber, 1974), we propose that resources accumulated in the family domain will lead to greater FWE, which will subsequently increase supervisors' perceptions of employees' promotability.

Although role accumulation theory provides support for our contention, empirical studies examining the relationship between FWE and promotability are absent. We address this gap in the literature by considering why and when a supervisor would (or would not) consider the experience of FWE to be an asset for the organization. We propose that the process of moving resources from the family domain to the work domain and subsequent outcomes of enrichment and promotability may depend on how employees decide to manage the boundaries between work and family. Researchers have proposed that employees navigate the boundaries between work and family life in various ways, and these preferences may affect important outcomes of the work–family interface (Hall & Richter, 1988). Boundary theory suggests that people fall somewhere on an integration-to-segmentation continuum such that more integrated boundaries combine the work and family domains in a manner that makes the boundaries more blurred, whereas less integrated (segmented) boundaries sharpen the borders such that the domains are kept separate (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996). Yet very little research has examined how boundary management plays a role in employee career success.

By combining role accumulation theory with boundary theory, we propose a model (see Figure 1) that represents the process by which family involvement positively influences FWE, which then increases the supervisor's perceptions of his or her subordinate's promotability. Furthermore, we suspect that both links in our fully mediated model are moderated by employees' boundary management preferences (i.e., segmentation/integration). We argue that an integrating boundary management preference may serve as a double-edged sword for employees—strengthening the relationship between family involvement and FWE, but weakening the relationship between FWE and supervisor perceptions of promotability.

This research makes a number of contributions. First, it links the work–family literature with the important outcome of promotability. To a limited extent, this relationship has been examined as the negative effect of female employees' work–family conflict on supervisors' perceptions of their promotability (Hoobler, Wayne, & Lemmon, 2009). However, we answer a call in the literature (i.e., Carlson, Kacmar, Wayne, & Grzywacz, 2006; Voydanoff, 2001) to extend the extant research by examining a positive outcome of family involvement—supervisor perceptions of promotability—through the effects of FWE. In addition, we test boundary theory by examining how employees' integrating boundary management preferences moderate the links in the mediational chain that connect family involvement to FWE to promotability. In doing so, we are able to better understand how the work–family management preferences of employees can both help and hurt their career success.

**Figure 1**  
**Hypothesized Moderated Mediation Model Linking Family Involvement to Promotability Through Family-to-Work Enrichment**



## Theoretical Background and Hypothesis Development

### *Family Involvement, Family-to-Work Enrichment, and Promotability*

The majority of studies examining the work–family interface have primarily focused on the negative consequences (i.e., work–family conflict) associated with the limited time and resources that result from individuals’ engagement in multiple roles (e.g., Barnett, 1998; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). Yet some have questioned the preoccupation with the conflict perspective (e.g., Marks, 1977; Sieber, 1974), proposing that the rewards of managing multiple roles are likely to outweigh the drawbacks (Barnett & Baruch, 1985). Indeed, reviews of the work–family literature have called for a more balanced approach that also identifies the positive benefits that result from work and family involvement (Barnett, 1998; Frone, 2003; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999). One such positive benefit is an individual’s ability to take resources from his or her family involvement and use them to enrich his or her work role. While conflict and enrichment may both result from involvement in multiple roles, they are caused by different factors. As Carlson et al. (2006: 149) argue, “The primary antecedents of conflict are pressures emanating from both work and family (Frone, Yardley, & Markel, 1997; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), while the primary antecedents of enrichment are environmental resources (Greenhaus & Foley, 2004; Wayne, Musisca, & Fleeson, 2004).” As such, many researchers have begun to take a role accumulation approach in order to examine how resources from one role can be used to enrich an individual’s performance in another role (i.e., Grzywacz, 2000; Rothbard, 2001; Wayne et al., 2004).

The central thesis of role accumulation theory is the idea that having multiple life roles or identities, such as involvement in both work and family, contributes positively to the individual (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Sieber, 1974). Significant involvement in certain life roles provides individuals with a sense of meaning and purpose, which contributes to greater engagement, enthusiasm, energy, and positive affect that spills over to other roles (Frone,

2003; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Kahn, 1990). For example, a manager reported how her involvement with her family enhanced her work role: "I think being a mother and having patience and watching someone else grow has made me a better manager. I am better able to be patient with other people and let them grow and develop in a way that is good for them" (Ruderman, Ohlott, Panzer, & King, 2002: 373). Consistent with role accumulation theory, we believe that individuals who identify strongly with their family role will transfer resources they accumulate from that role to enrich their work role.

There is some empirical evidence that supports our contentions. In a seminal study of the effects of family involvement on employees' development of work-related resources including positive affect and people skills, Crouter (1984) found that family involvement can prove beneficial for employees via educational and psychological spillover. Educational spillover can include a skill, ability, or knowledge that an employee learns at home, and applies on the job. Psychological spillover includes the ways in which family life may affect an employee's mood, energy level, or attention span at work. Given this transfer of resources that occurs, Wayne, Randel, and Stevens (2006) found that family identity positively predicted FWE.

Furthermore, FWE is more likely to occur if the involvement in the family role is high (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Stoner, Hartman, & Arora, 1990-1991). Thus, as individuals are involved and invested in the family domain, they are likely to accumulate resources that can contribute to the experience of FWE. For instance, parenting or other caregiving experiences may enable employees to develop job-relevant skills and perspectives outside of the workplace, including skills in multitasking and being empathetic, respectful, and developmental toward others. In addition, spending time with family may put employees in a good mood and help them to have a positive outlook while they are at work. In contrast, individuals who are less committed and involved in the family role are unlikely to generate resources in that domain because of their lack of personal investment in the role. Thus, we expect that individuals with strong family involvement are likely to derive positive benefits from their family role that are transferred to the work domain, thereby experiencing greater enrichment of their work role.

*Hypothesis 1: Employees' family involvement is positively related to their FWE.*

Role accumulation theory also allows us to propose that the resources gained through increased FWE should influence how supervisors perceive employees' promotability. When employees are highly involved in their family lives, they acquire resources in the form of skills and knowledge, enhanced efficiency, and positive emotions. When these resources are enacted at work, they can affect supervisor perceptions of how capable an employee may be of succeeding in more demanding positions. For instance, an employee demonstrating FWE may be adept at managing conflicts among team members, or providing mentoring to a colleague. Such behaviors are likely to demonstrate leadership potential to supervisors.

This notion is supported by Carlson, Witt, Zivnuska, Kacmar, and Grzywacz (2008), who found a positive relationship between supervisor perceptions of employees' FWE and their subsequent job dedication and interpersonal facilitation. Additional support for this relationship comes from a study by De Pater, Van Vianen, Bechtoldt, and Klehe (2009). These authors found that subordinate ratings of the extent to which they have been involved in challenging work experiences signaled to supervisors that they had the capabilities needed to be

promoted. These subordinate perceptions positively related to supervisor ratings of employee promotability, and actual promotions as reported in organizational records. This finding is supported by signaling theory (Bliege Bird & Smith, 2005; Spence, 1973), which suggests that supervisors base their judgments of employees' future achievements on the employees' current behaviors that signal their capacities and talents. While perceptions of challenging work experiences are not the same thing as FWE, both constructs represent employee perceptions of their workplace competencies. Thus, we believe that the extent to which subordinates take resources from home and apply them to enrich their work role will signal to supervisors that they have the capability to be promoted. This notion is consistent with role accumulation theory (Sieber, 1974).

When employees gain resources from home such as greater engagement, enthusiasm, energy, and positive affect, these resources are likely to result in the development of a wide range of skills, abilities, insights, knowledge, and values that can be used on the job (McCall, Lombardo, & Morrison, 1988). These competencies are observable by organizational leaders and can serve as a signal of an individuals' capacities for effective managerial action (London, 2002; McCauley, Ruderman, Ohlott, & Morrow, 1994). Thus, we propose that when employees transfer resources they gain from home to their work (i.e., FWE), supervisors are likely to notice work behaviors that demonstrate managerial potential, increasing their perceptions of employees' promotability (Bandura, 1977; Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978).

*Hypothesis 2:* Employees' FWE is positively related to supervisor-perceived promotability.

Altogether, consistent with role accumulation theory (Sieber, 1974), we believe that the mechanism by which the family involvement of an employee crosses over from the family domain to the work domain and plays into the perception of their promotability is FWE. While employees' family involvement occurs in a domain outside of work, and thus cannot be directly observed by supervisors, supervisors are able to form perceptions of employees' promotability through the behaviors associated with FWE that occur within the workplace. As such, supervisors are likely to observe an employee's accumulation of resources from the family domain through the mechanism of enrichment, and perceive the use of such resources as a signal that the employee is promotable (De Pater et al., 2009).

Our prediction is supported by previous research in which managers explained how a variety of abilities and skills derived from their personal life (e.g., interpersonal skills, ability to multitask, respect for individual differences) enhanced their capacities for managerial effectiveness (McCall et al., 1988; Ruderman et al., 2002). Indeed, Carlson et al. (2008) found that the degree to which supervisors believed that employees were enriched by family activities significantly and positively affected the supervisors' evaluations of employees' performance. Thus, we argue that supervisors observe the use of resources that employees with high family involvement gain through FWE, and are likely to use these observations as a basis for their evaluations of employees' promotability. Thus, FWE is the mechanism through which resource acquisition from the family gets transferred and demonstrated in the work domain. Thus, we propose

*Hypothesis 3:* The positive relationship between family involvement and promotability is fully mediated by FWE.

### *Boundary Management as a Moderator*

Boundary theory suggests that individuals have boundaries between the work and family domains that take the form of cognitive, physical, and behavioral boundaries (Ashforth et al., 2000). Thus, the work and family domains are defined by the boundaries surrounding those roles (Nippert-Eng, 1996). The amount of flow between domains is minimized to the extent that segmentation occurs, while the flow is maximized to the extent that integration occurs (Ashforth et al., 2000). Due to this increased flow between domains, we propose that a preference for integrating boundaries will increase the strength of the relationship between family involvement and FWE.

However, due to the continual inclusion of family at work by those enacting an integrating style, we argue that a preference for integrating boundaries will have just the opposite effect on the strength of the relationship between FWE and promotability such that the relationship is attenuated. Bosses who constantly witness subordinates addressing family issues at work will not consider integrators to be as promotable as those who segment. Thus, in this research, we conceptualize boundary management preferences as moderators to the relationship between family involvement and FWE (first-stage moderation) and the relationship between FWE and promotability (second-stage moderation).

*First stage moderating effects of boundary management.* The choices employees make about the degree to which they integrate the work and family domains have been shown to affect the extent to which resources may transfer between domains (Ilies, Wilson, & Wagner, 2009). We believe that an integrating boundary management preference also plays a role in the process whereby family involvement leads to FWE. More specifically, we argue that those who are high in integration are more likely to transfer resources such as affect, knowledge, and skills they acquire at home to the workplace, due to the increased flow between domains. Integration allows employees to have greater flexibility and to deal with problems that arise in any domain and not have to transition back and forth between roles (Ashforth et al., 2000), allowing resources to flow more easily across boundaries (Halbesleben, Zellars, Carlson, Perrewe, & Rotondo, 2010). We propose that the advantages of being highly involved with family (i.e., gaining resources) are more likely to materialize if the employee prefers an integrating (as opposed to segmenting) boundary management style as these individuals will have the increased flow between domains needed to efficiently transfer the skills and knowledge from home to work. Thus, we expect that the family involvement to FWE path will be strengthened when an individual is higher in work–family integration.

*Hypothesis 4:* The positive relationship between family involvement and FWE is moderated by boundary management preference such that the relationship will be stronger with more integration.

*Second-stage moderating effects of boundary management.* While integration may strengthen the family involvement to enrichment relationship, we believe the opposite will occur for the enrichment to promotability relationship. Traditional views and cultural norms surrounding work and family domains portray separation as being the most effective way for employees to dedicate their time and energy to the workplace (Fletcher & Bailyn, 1996). Fletcher and Bailyn (1996) argue that despite an influx over the past few decades of

employees being more likely to want to integrate their work and family domains, organizations continue to reward those employees who can strictly segment their family and work lives. One such reward may be promoting employees with segmented work and family boundaries to higher organizational levels.

Selecting subordinates for promotion is one part of a manager's job. To accomplish this, managers assess employees' potential for a promotion by searching for informational clues that demonstrate their readiness for promotion. We argue that one such clue is the supervisors' perceptions of employees' boundary management preferences and behaviors. For instance, employees who prefer to segment their work and family domains are likely to stay at work late in order to get the job done, while employees who prefer to integrate are more likely to take their work home with them (Nippert-Eng, 1996), suggesting that those who segment appear more committed to the organization. Furthermore, when integrating employees manage family issues at work, such behaviors may be seen as incompatible with a manager's vision of the successful worker as someone who is not bothered by outside demands and puts his or her job first. When supervisors are forming judgments of employees' promotability, they are likely to remember and reward the workers who stayed late and focused on work while at work, rather than the workers who took their work home and conducted family business while at work.

This perspective is supported by boundary theory, which argues that limitations of an integrating boundary management preference include the increased interruptions and reduced engagement an individual may face in a particular domain (Ashforth et al., 2000). When boundaries are highly integrated, they "allow one to be physically located in the role's domain but psychologically and/or behaviorally involved in another role" (Ashforth et al., 2000: 474). Drawing from signaling theory, we propose that employees who prefer an integrating boundary management style are likely to enact behaviors while at work, such as keeping an eye on issues at home, that signal to managers that the employee does not have the behaviors needed to be a successful and promotable worker (Spence, 1973). Thus, despite the positive benefits of integration in increasing the effects of family involvement on FWE, we propose that an integrating boundary management preference will weaken the positive effect of enrichment on managers' perceptions of employees' promotability.

*Hypothesis 5:* The positive relationship between FWE and promotability is moderated by boundary management preference such that the relationship will be weaker with more integration.

## Method

### *Participants and Procedure*

Our sample is composed of registered nurses (RNs) and their immediate supervisors working at a health system in the Upper Midwest United States. Five facilities participated in the survey, including two acute-care hospitals, one large suburban clinic, and two rural clinics. The director of nursing sent all employees an e-mail request to participate in the study with a link to an online survey. A paper version of the survey also was distributed to each employee's work mailbox two days later. Employees who chose the paper version of the survey returned their surveys to a central location in their facility. The employees were sent a reminder message encouraging them to participate one week after the initial e-mail.

The entire data collection procedure was conducted three times (every 2 weeks). We separated the data collections by two weeks because time lags in studies can help reduce common method variance concerns (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). The survey was initially sent to 642 RNs. At Time 1, 490 nurses completed the survey (initial response rate of 76%). We asked the employees to provide their employee number and/or name in order to match the surveys across the three data collections and with supervisor ratings of promotability; participants were assured that this information would remain confidential and would be deleted from the data set once the data were matched. In all, 436 employees completed the Time 2 survey (response rate = 68%, retention rate = 89%) and 379 completed the Time 3 survey (response rate = 59%, retention rate = 87%). Due to the nature of the study, we limited the analysis to those RNs for whom we had complete data, who were married/cohabiting, and who had at least one child at home resulting in a final sample size of 347 pairs of subordinates and supervisors (final response rate = 54%, final retention rate across data collections = 71%). A small portion of our response and retention rates can be attributed to the organization's turnover during that time. According to organizational records, 16 RNs (2.5%) left the organization during that time.

The final subordinate sample was primarily female ( $n = 302$ , 87%), with an average age of 34.74 ( $SD = 7.11$ ), and who worked an average of 37.64 ( $SD = 6.33$ ) hours per week. They had worked for their facility an average of 11.59 ( $SD = 7.33$ ) years and with their supervisor for an average of 4.39 ( $SD = 2.73$ ) years. As noted earlier, all in the sample were married and had at least one child at home. The average number of children at home in the sample was 1.45, whose ages ranged from 6 weeks to 20 years. Of the sample, 91% had a spouse that also worked full-time.

At each round of data collection, all nursing supervisors in the health system were given a paper-based survey and asked to rate the promotability of their direct reports. A total of 40 supervisors completed promotability ratings for their employees; this was out of 41 possible supervisors (response rate = 98%). Each supervisor, on average, rated 8.67 subordinates (range 5 to 17). Mirroring our subordinate sample, the supervisors were primarily female ( $n = 37$ , 93%), with an average age of 40.28 ( $SD = 6.15$ ), worked an average of 37.64 ( $SD = 6.33$ ) hours per week, and had worked for their facility an average of 17.28 ( $SD = 6.15$ ) years. All but 3 ( $n = 37$ , 93%) of the supervisors were married. A total of 28 supervisors (70%) had children at home, but 8 supervisors did not respond to this question. We coded these individuals as not having a child in the home, which may have made it appear as though there were fewer supervisors with children at home than there actually were. The average number of reported children in the home by the supervisors was 1.54 whose ages ranged from 1 year to 20 years.

Given that all but one supervisor provided promotability ratings, we are confident that nonresponse bias is not an issue for the supervisor sample. To test for the possibility of nonresponse bias and other possible confounds, we compared the final subordinate sample with the population of employees from which the sample was drawn (Rogelberg & Stanton, 2007). The final sample was not significantly different from the employee population of the organization on any demographics for which we were able to capture data from the organization (gender, age, race, job title, and facility). The final sample did not differ significantly from the participants who responded only to the first survey when considering the variables in the study and demographics (specific tests are available from the authors). Overall, we concluded that nonresponse bias was unlikely to play a role in the interpretation of the results.



### *Measure From Employees at Time 1*

*Family involvement.* To assess family involvement, we used three items adapted from Lodahl and Kejner's (1965) job involvement scale, with the word *family* substituted for *job* ("A major source of satisfaction in my life is my family," "Most of the important things that happen to me involve my family," and "I am very much involved personally in my family") and a fourth item based on Lobel and St. Clair's (1992) work ("Most of my interests are centered around my family"). These items have been used previously in the literature on family involvement (Carlson & Perrewe, 1999; Greenhaus, Parasuraman, & Collins, 2001). They responded using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha in the current research was .95.

### *Measures From Employees at Time 2*

*Family-to-work enrichment.* We measured FWE using the nine-item scale developed by Carlson et al. (2006) to examine how resources of knowledge, emotions, and skills are transferred from family to enrich the work domain. Each item is prefaced with the stem "My involvement in my family. . . ." Respondents are then asked to then respond to nine resources (i.e., knowledge, emotions, or skills) that could result from family involvement (e.g., helps me acquire skills and this helps me to be a better worker). They responded using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha in the current research was .97.

*Boundary management preferences.* We utilized Kreiner's (2006) four-item measure of preferences for segmenting work and family as a measure of boundary management preferences; we coded the items to reflect an integrating boundary management preference. The items include "I prefer to keep work life at work," "I don't like to have to think about work while I'm at home," "I don't like work issues creeping into my home life," and "I like to be able to leave work behind when I go home." They responded using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha in the current research was .94.

### *Measure From Supervisors at Time 3*

*Promotability.* To assess promotability, supervisors rated each of their subordinates using the three-item scale of Thacker and Wayne (1995). The items include "If I had to select a successor for my position, it would be this subordinate," "I believe that this employee will have a successful career," and "I believe that this subordinate has high potential." They responded using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Cronbach's alpha for this measure was .73.

### *Control Variables*

We tested the models with a number of control variables from the employee that past research demonstrated could offer alternative explanations for the results (Hoobler et al., 2009). Specifically we controlled for gender, tenure with the supervisor, number of children

at home, and the working status of the spouse (e.g., working vs. at home). We found that when we included the control variables, only gender had any significant effect on the findings. Following the recommendations of Becker (2005), we report the results with only gender as a control variable.

### *Analysis*

We used the data on family involvement from Time 1, FWE and boundary management at Time 2, and supervisor ratings of promotability at Time 3. The data represent individuals nested within five organizations working under 40 different supervisors. Given the inherent nesting in the data and possibility of dependencies within supervisors, we examined the intra-class correlation (ICC(1), the amount of variance residing between supervisors) values for our outcome variable, promotability. We found a supervisor-level ICC(1) of .09 ( $t = 1.79$ , *ns*) and an organization-level ICC(1) of .05 ( $t = 1.54$ , *ns*). This suggests that a nonsignificant amount of variability lies at the supervisor or organization levels of analysis and that the level of nonindependence in the data is what Kenny, Kashy, and Bolger (1998) argued is “inconsequential” in that nonindependence of that magnitude should not affect the ability to reject the null hypothesis. The remaining variables were fundamentally individually based (family involvement, FWE, and boundary management), so we conducted our analyses at the employee level.

The model we have proposed represents a moderated mediation model in which the indirect effects of work–family enrichment on the family involvement–promotability relationship are moderated by boundary management preferences at the first and second stages. We followed the procedures provided by Edwards and Lambert (2007) and used Mplus code for such models developed by Preacher, Rucker, and Hayes (2007). Model 1 was a mediated model where FWE was treated as a mediator of the family involvement–promotability relationship. The results from this model can be used to test Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3. Model 2 was a first-stage moderated mediation model that included the moderating effect of integrating boundary management preference on the indirect effect of family involvement through FWE on promotability. In this model we added the interaction between family involvement and integrating boundary management preference in predicting promotability through enrichment. Hypothesis 4 can be tested using this model. In Model 3 we added a second-stage moderation effect by including the interaction between FWE and integrating boundary management preference in the prediction of promotability. This model can be used to test Hypothesis 5.

For all significance tests, we used bootstrapped estimates from 10,000 samples to create bias-corrected confidence intervals (Shrout & Bolger, 2002). We compared the three models by computing a generalized  $R^2$ , Q, and W statistics (see Tepper, Henle, Lambert, Giacalone, & Duffy, 2008). Because our path models have two predictors, we combine the mediator and dependent variable  $R^2$  values into a generalized  $R^2$  (see Tepper et al., 2008). The Q statistic is an assessment of differences in the generalized  $R^2$  of two models (with a maximum value of one, which would indicate the models are not different). W is a conversion of the Q statistic to a chi-squared distribution, permitting significance testing of the Q statistic. A significant W indicates that the models are significantly different; thus, a model with a higher generalized  $R^2$  and a significant W explains more variance than the model it was compared to. From

**Table 1**  
**Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations Among Study Variables**

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5
1. Subordinate gender	0.86	0.34	—				
Variables from subordinates							
2. Family involvement (Time 1)	2.56	0.76	.05	(.95)			
3. Family-to-work enrichment (Time 2)	2.78	1.15	.04	.36**	(.97)		
4. Integrating boundary management (Time 2)	2.87	1.31	.14*	.35**	.64**	(.95)	
Variables from supervisor							
5. Promotability (Time 3)	2.80	0.81	.18**	.08	.20**	.08	(.73)

Note:  $N = 347$ . Internal consistency estimates (Cronbach's alpha) appear in parentheses along the diagonal. Gender: female = 1, male = 2.

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

there, we examined the parameter estimates for our hypothesized model. In addition, we examined the conditional indirect effects of family involvement to promotability through FWE at different levels of integrating boundary management preferences.

## Results

The descriptive statistics, reliability estimates, and correlations for all study variables are displayed in Table 1. Prior to conducting the moderated mediation analysis, we conducted a confirmatory factor analysis on the scales to ensure that the items represented discrete scales. We included the three scales completed by the employees (family involvement, FWE, and boundary management preference). The expected three-factor model, with correlated factors, provided acceptable fit to the data ( $\chi^2 = 506.71$ ,  $df = 167$ , comparative fit index [CFI] = .95, Tucker-Lewis index [TLI] = .95, root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = .077). Moreover, this model fit better than a one-factor model where all of the items loaded onto one factor ( $\chi^2 = 2997.59$ ,  $df = 170$ , CFI = .60, TLI = .56, RMSEA = .22,  $\Delta\chi^2 = 2490.88$ ,  $\Delta df = 3$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and a two-factor model where Time 1 variables loaded onto a factor and Time 2 variables loaded onto a second factor ( $\chi^2 = 1921.52$ ,  $df = 169$ , CFI = .75, TLI = .72, RMSEA = .17,  $\Delta\chi^2 = 1414.81$ ,  $\Delta df = 2$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This suggests that a measurement model where each employee-rated scale is considered unique is the best fitting model.

The results from each path model in the moderated mediation analysis are displayed in Table 2. In support of our first and second hypotheses, we find that family involvement was positively associated with FWE ( $b = .36$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and FWE was significantly and positively related to supervisor assessments of promotability ( $b = .21$ ,  $p < .01$ ). We predicted in Hypothesis 3 that the relationship between family involvement and promotability was mediated by FWE. Model 1 in Table 2 represents this mediated model. The direct path from family involvement to supervisor assessments of promotability was not significant ( $b = .01$ ,  $ns$ ), demonstrating full mediation (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). In support of Hypothesis 3, the indirect effect of family involvement on promotability through FWE ( $.09$ ,  $p < .01$ ) also was significant.

**Table 2**  
**Path Analytic Tests of Hypothesized Moderated Mediation Model and Alternative Models for Promotability**

Path Estimated	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
Gender → promotability	.04*	.05*	.16*	.13*
Family involvement → family–work enrichment	.36**	.36**	.38**	.16*
Family involvement → promotability	.01	.44**	.10**	.46**
Family–work enrichment → promotability	.21**	.17**	.28**	.71**
Boundary management → family–work enrichment		.05*		.43*
Boundary management → promotability			.17**	.43**
Family involvement × boundary management → family–work enrichment		.25*		.08*
Family–work enrichment × boundary management → promotability			–.03*	–.30*
$R^2_{\text{Family-Work Enrichment}}$	.13**	.23**	.14**	.47**
$R^2_{\text{Promotability}}$	.07*	.12**	.13**	.16**
$R^2_{\text{Generalized}}$	.19**	.32**	.25**	.55**

*Note:*  $N = 347$ . Table values are standardized path estimates for each respective model test. Model 1 is the simple mediation model (where family–work enrichment is the mediator). Model 2 is a moderated mediation model with first stage moderation. Model 3 is a moderated mediation model with second-stage moderation. Model 4 is the predicted model; it includes the indirect moderating effect of preference for integrating boundary management (first-stage and second-stage moderation).

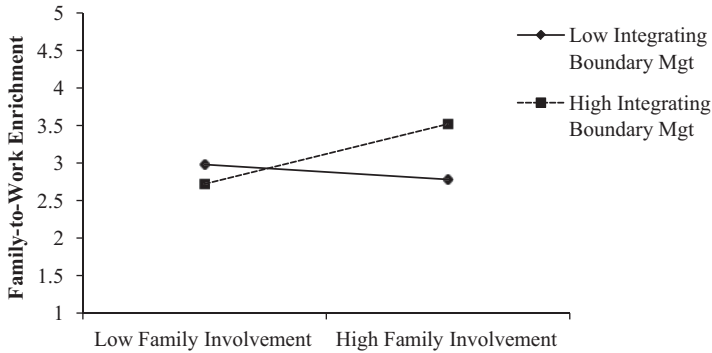
\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

In Hypothesis 4, we predicted that the family involvement to FWE relationship is moderated by integration preferences such that the relationship will be stronger when an integrating boundary management preference is high. To test this, we added the first-stage moderation effect of integrating boundary management preference in Model 2 (along with a direct path from boundary management to FWE). Comparisons of Models 1 and 2 reveal that the generalized  $R^2$  for Model 2 ( $R^2_{\text{Generalized}} = .32$ ) was significantly higher than the generalized  $R^2$  for Model 1 ( $R^2_{\text{Generalized}} = .19$ ;  $Q = .84$ ,  $W = 26.29$ ,  $d = 1$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This suggests that adding the interaction between integrating boundary management and family involvement ( $b = .08$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significantly increases the explained variance in FWE, supporting Hypothesis 4.

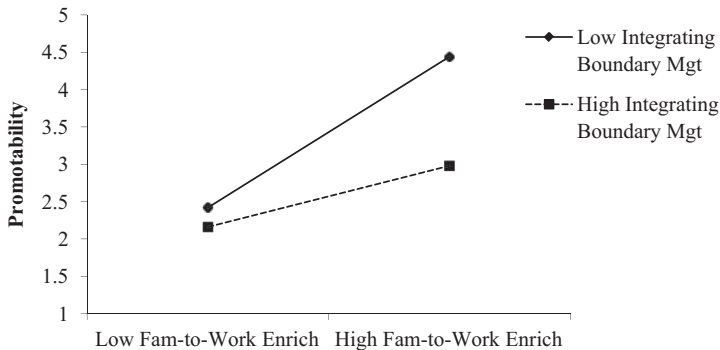
In Hypothesis 5, we predicted the FWE relationship to promotability is moderated by integrating boundary management preference such that the relationship will be weaker when integration is high. To test this, we added the second-stage moderation effect of integrating boundary management preference in Model 3. Comparisons of Models 1 and 3 reveal that the generalized  $R^2$  for Model 3 ( $R^2_{\text{Generalized}} = .25$ ) was significantly higher than the generalized  $R^2$  for Model 1 ( $R^2_{\text{Generalized}} = .19$ ;  $Q = .93$ ,  $W = 11.56$ ,  $d = 1$ ,  $p < .01$ ). This suggests that the adding the interaction between integrating boundary management and family involvement ( $b = -.03$ ,  $p < .05$ ) significantly increases the explained variance in promotability, supporting Hypothesis 5.

We further explored these relationships by graphing the significant interactions at levels of integrating boundary management one standard deviation above and below the mean.

**Figure 2**  
**Moderating Effect of Integrating Boundary Management on the Family Involvement–Family-to-Work Enrichment Relationship**



**Figure 3**  
**Moderating Effect of Integrating Boundary Management on the Family-to-Work Enrichment–Promotability Relationship**



These graphs appear in Figures 2 and 3 and further support the underlying pattern predicted in Hypotheses 4 and 5 and highlight the “double-edged sword” effect that integrating boundary management appears to have in the model. Specifically, we can see (Figure 2) that the positive relationship between family involvement and FWE was stronger when employees integrated than when they did not. However, the FWE–promotability relationship (Figure 3) was stronger when integration was lower rather than higher.

We further examined the conditional indirect effects of family involvement on promotability through FWE at different levels of integrating boundary management. In light of the double-edged sword effect that is predicted by Hypotheses 4 and 5, these effects are likely masked somewhat by the positive first-stage moderation and negative second-stage interaction. As such, we first examined the conditional direct effects for the first- and second-stage moderation effects individually. This allowed us to examine the manner in which each moderation effect affects the indirect path from family involvement to promotability through FWE.

**Table 3**  
**Conditional Indirect Effects Across Levels ( $\pm 1$  *SD*) of Preference for Integrating Boundary Management**

	Estimate	SE	95% Confidence Interval	
			Lower Limit	Upper Limit
First-stage moderation effects				
+1 <i>SD</i>	.086**	.025	.132	.050
Mean	.069**	.022	.110	.039
-1 <i>SD</i>	.031	.018	.068	-.006
Second-stage moderation effects				
+1 <i>SD</i>	.113	.030	.173	-.008
Mean	.121**	.022	.161	.084
-1 <i>SD</i>	.125**	.030	.179	.081
Total effects (first- and second-stage moderation effects)				
+1 <i>SD</i>	-.005	.006	-.796	.426
Mean	.012*	.007	.003	.012
-1 <i>SD</i>	.051**	.018	.027	.087

Note:  $N = 347$ .

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

For the first-stage moderation effects, we found that those at the mean or higher in preference for integration had a significant positive indirect effect from family involvement to promotability through FWE. This is consistent with Hypothesis 4, which suggests that having a preference for integration increases that indirect relationship when the moderation effect occurs at the first stage. For the second-stage moderation effects, we found that those at the mean or lower in preference for integration (in other words, those who had a great preference for segmentation) had a significant positive indirect effect from family involvement to promotability through FWE. This is consistent with Hypothesis 5, which suggests that having a preference for integration decreases that indirect relationship when the moderation effect occurs at the second stage.

Finally, to test the combined effects of the first- and second-stage moderation, we included both in Model 4 (see Table 3). The generalized  $R^2$  for Model 4 ( $R^2_{\text{Generalized}} = .55$ ) was significantly higher than the generalized  $R^2$  for Model 2 ( $Q = .66$ ,  $W = 62.04$ ,  $d = 1$ ,  $p < .01$ ) and Model 3 ( $Q = .60$ ,  $W = 76.76$ ,  $d = 1$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Moreover, both moderation effects were significant (see Table 2). This finding suggests that the inclusion of both first-stage (family involvement  $\times$  integrating boundary management) and second-stage (FWE  $\times$  integrating boundary management) moderation adds to the variance in promotability for which we can account. Overall, this pattern of findings supports the moderated mediation model that we predicted.

When we examine the combined first- and second-stage moderation effects, we did find differences in the indirect effects at different levels of integrating boundary management (see Table 3). Specifically, for those at the mean or one standard deviation below the mean on integrating boundary management (leaning more toward a preference for segmentation), the indirect effect is positive and significant, whereas those one standard deviation above the mean on integrating boundary management had a nonsignificant indirect effect. This suggests that when

we combine the first- and second-stage moderating effects, the link between family involvement and promotability is stronger for those who tend to keep work and family segmented.

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine positive workplace outcomes resulting from the intersection of work and family—employees' FWE and promotability. In line with role accumulation theory, we found that as employees' family involvement increases, they are able to accumulate resources from their family role and transfer them to the workplace. This increase in FWE benefits employees by increasing supervisor perceptions of employees' promotability. In addition, we examined the moderating effects of employees' work–family boundary management preferences on the process of how family involvement influences promotability through FWE. As hypothesized, we found that an integrating boundary management preference serves as a double-edged sword for employees such that it strengthened the positive influence of family involvement on FWE, but it weakened the relationship between FWE and supervisor perceptions of promotability.

### *Contributions to Research and Theory*

The literature concerning family involvement has generally only considered negative outcomes including greater work–family interference (Adams et al., 1996) and reduced boss perceptions of employees' job commitment (Fletcher & Bailyn, 1996). Supporting role accumulation theory, our findings demonstrated that there are also positive outcomes of employees' family involvement—greater enrichment and promotability. Building on a growing body of literature highlighting the positive side of the work–family interface (Barnett, 1998; Frone, 2003; Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1999), our study emphasizes the importance of an employee's ability to take resources gained from home and use them to improve the work role. Our findings also serve to expand role accumulation theory—suggesting that employees' boundary management preferences (in addition to their involvement in multiple roles) also play a part in the influence of role involvement on the transfer of resources to other domains.

This finding also contributes to the dearth of research aimed at understanding the factors that may enhance employees' FWE. The positive effect of an integrating management preference on the relationship between family involvement and FWE, fits with arguments proposed by Ashforth and colleagues (2000) regarding the permeability of highly integrated work–family domains and the transferability of resources. Yet there may be other kinds of factors that affect employees' ability to take resources from one domain and apply them to another domain. For instance, Friede and Ryan (2005) argued that personality characteristics are critical to understanding the work–family interface. Indeed, Witt and Carlson (2006) proposed that the achievement orientation associated with conscientiousness may lead employees who are highly conscientious to see the value of applying resources acquired at home to the job and then make the effort to do so, potentially strengthening their FWE. This is an important avenue for future researchers to explore, particularly if uncovering these moderators may increase employees' abilities to achieve work–family enrichment.

The current study also contributes to the limited research that has examined workplace outcomes of employee FWE. While a few studies have examined the FWE–performance

relationship, they have generally found nonsignificant effects (Carlson, Ferguson, Kacmar, Grzywacz, & Whitten, 2011; Witt & Carlson, 2006). We believe that FWE is more likely to significantly affect perceptions of employees' promotability rather than their performance, given how performance is typically measured as the production of a good or the provision of a service (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). While the ability of an employee to take resources they receive from home (i.e., skills, knowledge, abilities, positive affect) and use them on the job (i.e., FWE) may affect employees' ability to produce a good or service, we believe these resources are more likely to enhance behaviors that allow managers to recognize employees' potential for future career success. For instance, an employee demonstrating FWE may be adept at managing conflicts among team members, or providing mentoring to a colleague. While these behaviors may demonstrate leadership potential, they do not directly contribute to the production of a good or service. Thus, we agree that FWE may not relate to performance (Carlson et al., 2011; Witt & Carlson, 2006), but we find support for the notion that it positively relates to supervisor's perceptions of promotability. Interestingly, Greenhaus and Powell's (2006) arguments for work–family enrichment based on role accumulation focus on the concept of one role affecting *performance* in another role. Based on our findings, we believe it is important to consider that broader outcomes may be more appropriate for the multitude of resources captured by FWE. Task performance may be too narrow of a work outcome to capture the positive effects of FWE on employees' careers.

Finally, supporting boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000), our findings demonstrate that the boundary management strategies employees prefer to use to manage their family and work domains can both hurt and help their career success. Not only did an integrating boundary management preference enhance the relationship between family involvement and FWE, but we also found that a preference for integration can hurt employees due to a weakening of the positive influence of enrichment on perceptions of promotability. This effect can be explained in part by long-standing societal and organizational norms that reward employees for being able to separate (rather than integrate) their work lives from their family lives (Fletcher & Bailyn, 1996). In addition, according to boundary theory, a benefit of highly segmented work–family boundaries is that employees may be less distracted by family issues when they are at work (Ashforth et al., 2000). Our study provides support that this benefit of segmenting seems to be one in which managers recognize, and take into account above and beyond the positive benefits of enrichment, when forming judgments of employees' promotability.

### *Practical Implications*

The double-edged sword nature of integration builds on the suggestion by Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep (2009) that researchers consider boundary management in a more nuanced way rather than simplifying it into an either–or phenomenon. For example, in their study of Episcopal priests, they found instances where participants engaged in both integration and separation. Consistent with this finding, we propose that employees who engage in integrating boundary management tactics can capitalize on those gains (through enhanced enrichment), but they should do so in a way that is less overt (and less visible to supervisors). In other words, it may benefit employees, who enact integrating boundary management preferences generally, to appear to segment work and family in the presence of management.



Future research, perhaps qualitative in nature, which can explore how employees engage in such tactics successfully, could serve as a logical next step in this research stream. Greenhaus and Powell suggest such a method in their 2006 review of work–family enrichment. They proposed a qualitative method to examine enrichment that involves a critical incident approach—enabling researchers to question participants about a particular time in their lives where a work or family role enriched their performance in another role. This would allow researchers to develop more specific suggestions to aid employees in their ability to take resources from one domain and utilize them in another domain.

In addition, our study also points to the importance of managers being made aware of the benefits (i.e., increased enrichment) of an integrating style for employees who have high family involvement. This may help to reduce the impulse to reward employees who can strictly separate their personal lives from their work lives (Fletcher & Bailyn, 1996). It is important for organizations to recognize that successful workers may manage work and family boundaries in a variety of ways, and that both integrated and segmented strategies may have costs and benefits for employees and their organizations. In addition, research has suggested that organizational work–family policies also can be organized along the integration–segmentation continuum (Ashforth et al., 2000; Rau & Hyland, 2002). Studies in this area have shown that the fit between employees’ desire for segmentation and organizational policy (e.g., flex time, on-site child care) has an effect on satisfaction and commitment over and above the effects of demographic characteristics (Rothbard, Phillips, & Dumas, 2005). Thus, it may be important for organizations to take into account the specific segmentation and integration needs of their employees in order to enhance the effectiveness of organizational work–family policies.

### *Limitations and Future Research*

We acknowledge that there are some limitations to our study. While the time-lagged design and multisource data are strengths of the study, family involvement, FWE, and boundary management preferences were all measured from the same source. Future research that uses other sources of data, for example, family members to confirm family involvement, could address this limitation. Future research may also want to measure manager’s perceptions of employees’ FWE in order to establish the strength of the relationship between subordinate ratings and managerial perceptions. Furthermore, we recognize that these data are from one health system and represent one occupation. Nurses represent an occupation in which employees typically work in long shifts; thus, there may be many instances where family issues could creep into an employee’s work role. For instance, nurses may be tempted to check their e-mail or to take a personal call during their long shifts. In addition, because nurses rarely have private office spaces, their integrating behaviors may be more visible to their supervisors than they would be for some other types of employees. Finally, nurses’ opportunities for promotions may be somewhat limited by the flat structure of nursing units. Yet in this study we attempted to overcome this limitation by measuring promotability as a general sense of how capable employees are of advancing to more demanding positions. Moreover, in light of documented nursing shortages, issues of succession planning and promotability are of critical importance in this occupation (Bolton & Roy, 2004).

Given the female-dominated nature of the job included in this sample, the majority of the subordinate-supervisor dyads were of the same sex (female). Research has shown that supervisors provide more family supportive supervision to subordinates who are of the same sex category as them, regardless of whether the dyads are composed of men or women (Foley, Linnehan, Greenhaus, & Weer, 2006). In jobs that are female or male dominated, it is likely that there will be more same-sex supervisor-subordinate dyads than in gender-neutral jobs. Thus, in these contexts it is likely that supervisors may be more willing to provide employees with the support they need to increase their FWE, and subsequent promotability. This may have contributed to our significant findings even when controlling for gender. Yet this is an empirical question that is beyond the scope of the current study. Replications in other samples may improve the generalizability of the results, and allow researchers to examine how the sex composition of the job as well as supervisor-subordinate dyads affect the relationships examined in this study.

Yet it is important to note that many studies have failed to find gender differences in work-family outcomes including work-family conflict (e.g., Eagle, Miles, & Icenogle, 1997; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Mauno, Kinnunen, Rantanen, Feldt, & Rantanen, 2012; Williams & Alliger, 1994), family involvement (e.g., Bagger & Gutek, 2008; Powell & Greenhaus, 2010), and boundary management permeability (Eagle et al., 1997). In addition, there have been inconsistent findings regarding gender differences in work-family enrichment (Grzywacz & Marks, 2000; Kirchmeyer, 1993; Rothbard, 2001). Consistent with these studies, we found no significant gender differences in family involvement or FWE. We did find that men were more likely to prefer segmenting than women, and that men were rated as significantly more promotable than women; however, our overall model was supported regardless of participants' gender.

Consistent with our findings, many scholars have concluded that work-family issues are equally relevant for men and women due to social changes in gender role identity (e.g., Beach, 1989; Graves, Ohlott, & Ruderman, 2007; Wohl, 1989). Mauno et al. (2012: 121) stated that "we should note that gender differences were very modest in our study overall, suggesting that traditional gender role theories may not be the most appropriate for use in contemporary work-family interface research." Despite this, we argue that gender role stereotypes may still play a role in *others'* perceptions of men and women's work-family issues. Consistent with Hoobler et al. (2009), we propose that managers may interpret work-family management behaviors of men and women differently. Specifically, women may be seen as having more difficulties in effectively integrating work and family boundaries than men, due to perceptions of their increased family responsibilities (Eagly, 1987; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Thus, based on stereotypes associated with men's and women's differing work and family responsibilities, managers may be more inclined to form negative perceptions of women's than men's promotability based on their integrating behaviors. It is likely that such stereotypes will be more prevalent if women have a token or minority status in the organization because such a status will highlight women's "motherly" characteristics that make them distinct from majority members (i.e., fathers; Mullen, 1991; Taylor, 1981). This is an important avenue for future researchers to pursue in order to tease apart the effect of gender role socialization from that of gender role stereotypes in affecting the relationships between gender and the work-family interface. It is also possible that traditional gender roles may increase

perceptions of work-interfering with family more strongly for men than women. Future research should examine perceptions of men and women’s work–family conflict in addition to their enrichment, in order to better understand the impact of both directions of the work–family interface on promotability.

Another potential limitation of the current study is the measure we used for capturing employees’ preference for segmentation (Kreiner, 2006). This measure examined only one direction of preferences—segmenting work from home. While several studies have discussed and measured segmentation preferences unidimensionally (e.g., Desrochers, Hilton, & Larwood, 2005; Kreiner, 2006; Rothbard et al., 2005), other researchers have noted that such preferences may be bidirectional (Bulger, Matthews, & Hoffman, 2007; Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2006). It is important to note however, that in both of these recent studies that examined both directions of boundary permeability (similar to integrating behaviors), employees’ work to nonwork permeability and their nonwork to work permeability were positively and significantly related (Bulger et al., 2007; Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2006). Thus, despite measuring employee preferences to segment work from home in the current study, it is likely that employees’ preferences for segmenting home from work would be similar. Nevertheless, it is important for future research to more closely examine how both directions of segmentation preferences influence employees’ enrichment.

In conclusion, this study set out to link the work–family literature with the important outcome of promotability. We answered a call in the literature (i.e., Carlson et al., 2006; Voydanoff, 2001) by using role accumulation theory to examine positive outcomes of family involvement—FWE and supervisor perceptions of promotability. In addition, we tested boundary management theory by examining how employee preferences for an integrating style moderate the process of family involvement influencing promotability through FWE. In doing so, we found that an integrating style of management serves as a double-edged sword for employees—ultimately increasing their FWE, but decreasing their promotability. We hope that our findings motivate other researchers to extend our results by examining other ways in which boundary management preferences interact with employee and organizational variables to affect employee promotability and other important outcomes.

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