

Boundary Management in Action: A Diary Study of Students' School-Home Conflict

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Contemporary technologies enable students to be “connected” with friends, family, student peers, and their study materials 24/7. This study aimed to examine how college students’ boundary management enactment (BME; ranging from segmentation to integration) related to school-to-home conflict and home-to-school conflict and, subsequently, to school performance, satisfaction with home life, and home-school balance. Moreover, this study aimed to establish whether these relationships depended on students’ boundary management preferences for segmenting school from home, and home from school. A diary study was conducted among 122 students from a major university in the Netherlands. Students completed an online questionnaire and online daily surveys over a period of 5 consecutive days of study. Results supported that students experienced more school-home and home-school conflict when they integrated rather than segmented school and home. Also as predicted, integration related to lower school performance, lower home life satisfaction, and lower balance, and these relationships were mediated by increased conflict between home and school life. Students’ preferences did not moderate these relationships. This indicates that segmenting school and home life roles seems to be the advisable strategy for students, irrespective of their preference for segmentation. Students would benefit from increased awareness of the advantages of segmentation and ‘how to’ training sessions that teach them how to set boundaries between school and home.

Keywords: boundary management, role-conflict, school-home conflict, balance, diary study

Information and communication technology has dramatically changed the way we work, study, spend our free time, and connect with others (Hoonakker & Korunka, 2014; Kossek & Lautsch, 2012). One important aspect of change is that the boundaries between our work (or school) and nonwork lives have become increasingly blurred (Kossek, Ruderman, Braddy, & Hannum, 2012). Whereas a substantial body of research has

investigated how workers manage the boundaries between their work and private lives, and how this relates to measures of well-being and performance, research on college students’ boundary management is scarce. This is surprising because students, like telecommuters, have role boundaries that are highly flexible and permeable, with the risk of a great amount of role blurring. Besides scheduled lectures and meetings, students can study and access university materials anywhere, anytime. Moreover, students can get interrupted or let themselves be interrupted by friends and family (e.g., Facebook, Whatsapp) while studying. In other words, students have to handle the boundaries between their school and private life, and their success at boundary management can reveal important insights to increase well-being and study success.

The current study focused on college students’ BME which is the extent to which individuals keep their school and home life roles

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separate from each other (segmentation) or let them encroach upon one another (integration; Allen, Cho, & Meier, 2014; Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006; Nippert-Eng, 1996). Consistent with previous studies on role conflict of university students (Butler, 2007; Cheng & McCarthy, 2013; Park & Sprung, 2015), we used the term “school” to denote university. We examined which strategy worked best for students in order to achieve lower conflict, and higher levels of home-school balance, satisfaction with home life, and school performance. We aimed to capture the dynamic nature of BME (Ammons, 2013; Kossek & Lautsch, 2012; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009) by using a diary design which allows for testing whether individuals’ daily fluctuations in BME covaried with daily variation in our chosen outcome variables (Ohly, Sonnentag, Niessen, & Zapf, 2010). In doing so, we addressed an important shortcoming in the role boundary management literature which had mainly examined BME in cross-sectional designs. Such designs precluded an examination of within-person daily fluctuations, thus providing a potentially oversimplified account of how BME may relate to important outcome variables. The present study further expanded the literature by focusing on individuals’ boundary management *preference*, which denotes one’s general preference to keep life roles more segmented or integrated (Kreiner, 2006). Past empirical investigations have tended to conflate preference and enactment. There is reason to expect that one’s preference may influence (moderate) whether the enactment of a particular boundary management strategy would be of benefit to the person or not (Ammons, 2013). Our first aim was to examine how BME related to school-to-home conflict and home-to-school conflict and, subsequently, how these forms of conflict relate to balance, satisfaction with home life, and school performance. Second, we aimed to test whether these relationships depended on students’ boundary management preference.

Role Conflict and Its Negative Consequences

The literature on role conflict has largely focused on conflict between work and family. Work-family conflict has been defined as

... a type of role conflict that arises when joint role pressures from work and family domains are experienced as incompatible in some respect, as a result of which participation in one role is made more difficult by virtue of participation in the other role. (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985, p. 77; Greenhaus & Powell, 2003)

Work-family conflict has been shown to be bidirectional in nature in that the work role can interfere with family life (work-to-family conflict) and family life can interfere with work (family to-work conflict; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1992; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991). Both directions of role conflict relate negatively to one’s assessment of work-family balance, implying that such conflict can make it difficult for individuals to experience success simultaneously in both roles (Greenhaus, Ziegert, & Allen, 2012). Moreover, cross-sectional and longitudinal studies show that both directions of conflict relate to lowered work performance, and a host of negative health and well-being outcomes such as depression, burnout, absenteeism, turnover, and lower work satisfaction and marital satisfaction (e.g., Amstad, Meier, Fasel, Elfering, & Semmer, 2011; Frone, Russell, & Cooper, 1997; Leiter & Durup, 1996; O’Driscoll, Brough, & Kalliath, 2004; Steinmetz, Frese, & Schmidt, 2008).

Although the number of empirical studies is still limited, it is increasingly recognized that balancing multiple roles also is an important theme for college/university students (Cheng & McCarthy, 2013; Park & Sprung, 2015), and even for high-school pupils (Kuhnle, Hofer, & Kilian, 2012). Among college students who were juggling school, family, and a substantial work role, Cheng and McCarthy (2013) found that students were less satisfied with school when they experienced more school-to-work and school-to-family conflict. Also, they were less satisfied with their work role to the extent that they experienced more work-to-school and work-to-family conflict. Additionally, scholars have found that students’ work-school conflict related to lower sleep quality (Park & Sprung, 2015) and lower school performance (Butler, 2007), and that their schoolwork conflict related to lower performance in the work role (Wyland, Lester, Ehrhardt, & Standifer, 2016). The present study did not examine students’ work role, because it was conducted in the Netherlands where most students only work for a very limited number of hours per week, but instead

examined how university students manage the boundaries between *school* and their *home/private life*. We examined students' home/private life rather than only students' family life because most university students have private lives that encompass more than obligations to or activities with family members, such as with their friends, roommates, and romantic partners. This is akin to work-family researchers who have recognized that the demands and obligations of one's personal life transcend those that relate only to family matters (e.g., Kossek et al., 2012; Van Steenbergen, Ellemers, & Mooijaart, 2007). The present study contributes to the literature by examining whether and how students' day-to-day boundary management strategies relate to the level of role conflict they experience, and their feelings of balance, satisfaction with home life, and school success.

BME

The question of how individuals manage the boundaries between multiple roles in their efforts to achieve balance between them is actively addressed in the "boundary dynamics" literature, which has mainly focused on work and family roles (Allen et al., 2014). Work-family boundary dynamics concerns the "socially constructed lines of demarcation between work and family roles, and the ways in which individuals maintain, negotiate, and transition across the lines created" (Allen et al., 2014, p. 100; Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Clark, 2000). A central concept is that of BME (also called strategy or behavior). This concept captures what individuals actually *do*; the strategies they use to organize and separate role demands and expectations of work and home life roles (Allen et al., 2014; Nippert-Eng, 1996). It ranges on a continuum from segmentation, where work and family are kept totally separate from each other to integration, where work and family activities are much more intertwined (Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006). But which strategy works best to keep conflict low between roles and to experience greater satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment in both roles?

According to boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996), humans create and maintain boundaries between roles to simplify and order their environment. This theory

posits that more integration would make it more challenging for a person to concentrate more on one role and less on others (Ashforth et al., 2000). Enacting integration more than segmentation would thus increase the odds that one role would encroach upon obligations or activities in another role. To date, research in the working population is generally supportive of this theoretical prediction. People who tend to integrate rather than segment their roles experience more work-to-family conflict (Danner-Vlaardingierbroek, Kluwer, Van Steenbergen, & van der Lippe, 2013; Kinman & Jones, 2008; Kossek et al., 2012), and more family-to-work conflict (Kossek et al., 2006). However, these previous studies were limited by their cross-sectional designs, which precluded a more fine-grained examination of how daily fluctuation in boundary management strategies relate to work, family, and general life outcomes, and made it difficult to convincingly disentangle individuals' general preference for a particular boundary management strategy from the actual boundary management strategy they enact that would likely vary on a daily basis (Ammons, 2013; Kossek & Lautsch, 2012; Kossek et al., 2006; Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009). Thus, based on boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996) and earlier findings in the work-family literature, we predicted that integration enactment relates to higher school-home and home-school conflict (Figure 1).

The use of a diary design enabled us to test our hypotheses in two ways, namely at the day level and the person level. First, in our *day-level hypotheses*, we tested whether daily (within person) variations in integration enactment covaried with daily variations in home-school and school-home conflict, and also with daily variations in outcome measures. Additionally, having data over five work days, enabled us to construct mean scores for each person on integration enactment, home-study and study-home conflict and the outcome measures. In our *person-level hypotheses*, we could thus test whether persons who generally integrated their school and home life experienced more conflict and scored lower on outcome measures than students who generally segmented school and home. Testing our hypotheses in this manner is consistent with the approach of Zhang, Zyphur, and Preacher (2009), and adds to the robustness of our findings by testing whether our predic-

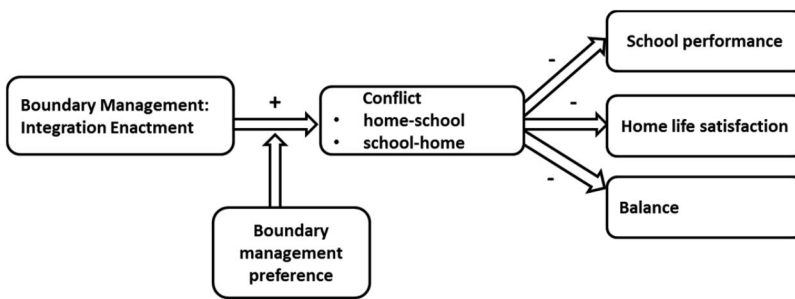


Figure 1. Hypothesized model.

tions were supported whether we considered variation between persons or within persons (over time).

Hypothesis 1 (person level): Students who generally integrate their school and home life experience more home-school conflict and school-home conflict than students who segment school and home.

Hypothesis 2 (day level): Students experience more home-school conflict and school-home conflict on days on which they integrate than on days on which they segment their school and home life.

Boundary Management Preference

Two central assumptions in boundary theory are that individuals vary in their preferences for segmentation vs. integration—although few are assumed to prefer complete segmentation or complete integration—and that individuals generally have some latitude over the degree to which they segment or integrate their roles (Ashforth et al., 2000). Whereas BME captures the extent to which individuals actually integrate/segment on a daily basis, boundary management preference is an individual difference variable that captures the degree to which an individual wishes to keep work and family roles separate (Allen et al., 2014; Kreiner, 2006). Whereas several studies have examined the fit between the individual's preference for segmentation and what the organization offers in this regard (e.g., Chen, Powell, & Greenhaus, 2009; Kreiner, 2006), no quantitative study to date has investigated whether the effects of integration enactment are less harmful or more beneficial for some individuals compared with

others dependent on their preferences. Based on her recent qualitative study, Ammons (2013) however, emphasized that individuals differ in how they like to handle their role boundaries and suggested that the “fit” between one's boundary management preference and enactment would lead to beneficial outcomes, such as experiencing reduced conflict between roles. In other words, a person enacting role segmentation who generally prefers to segment school and home would experience a good fit between the strategy they prefer and the one they enact, and thus have less difficulty avoiding role incompatibility. Conversely, someone enacting role integration who prefers to segment one's roles would experience poor fit and thus have greater difficulty avoiding role interference. Two recent quantitative studies have shown that segmentation preferences comprised of two dimensions (preference to segment the home domain from intrusions of the work domain, and preference to segment the work domain from intrusions of the home domain) and that individuals experienced fewer intrusions into the domain they desired to protect (Methot & LePine, 2016; Park & Jex, 2011). To test the notion of fit described above, we examined whether these preferences moderated relationships between integration enactment and our chosen outcome variables (see Figure 1).

Hypothesis 3 (person level): The positive relationship between integration enactment and school-home conflict is stronger for students who prefer to segment school from home; The positive relationship between integration enactment and home-school conflict is stronger for students who prefer to segment home from school.

Hypothesis 4 (day level): The positive relationship between daily integration enactment and daily school-home conflict is stronger for students who prefer to segment school from home; The positive relationship between daily integration enactment and daily home-school conflict is stronger for students who prefer to segment home from school.

As described earlier, the present study investigated whether integration enactment related to school performance, home life satisfaction, and balance, *mediated* by school-home and home-school conflict (see Figure 1). Previous research found that both directions of conflict relate to these life outcomes (e.g., Amstad et al., 2011; Greenhaus et al., 2012).

Hypothesis 5 (person level): Home-school and school-home conflict mediate the negative relationship between integration enactment and life outcomes (school performance, home-life satisfaction, and balance).

Hypothesis 6 (day level): Daily home-school and school-home conflict mediate the negative relationship between daily integration enactment and daily life outcomes (school performance, home-life satisfaction, and balance).

Method

Procedure and Participants

Participants were students at a major university in the Netherlands. The data was collected in March and April of 2015. Participants were recruited in the breaks of classes, on the university's Facebook page, and via flyers that were placed across campus. In total, 156 students signed up to participate. Upon signing up, students received an informed consent email which explained the nature of the study, and that participation involved completing a general online survey the week before the diary study, and then completing an online daily questionnaire over a period of five consecutive weekdays (Monday to Friday). It was explained that students could receive research credits for their participation, and could win a voucher worth €30 (\$US 33) for the pizza restaurant at the campus. It was

emphasized that participation was voluntary and that participants could stop at every given time without providing a reason. To agree with these statements, participants were asked to provide the email address on which they wanted to receive the online surveys. All 156 students agreed to participate. Out of these students, 128 completed the general survey as well as at least three out of the five daily surveys. Six students did not provide the data on the requested day of our diary study, and were therefore removed from the study. The remaining dataset of $N = 122$ equals a response rate of 78%. Participants, 104 females (86.7%) and 18 males, were all full-time bachelor's students, in their first year (2%), second year (52%), or third year (46%), with an average age of 21.3 years old (19–35 years, $SD = 2.0$). Half of the participants ($N = 62$) reported having an intimate relationship (with whom they were married, cohabiting, or living apart). One of the participants indicated to care for a child.

Measures

Boundary management preference was assessed in the general survey; all other variables in the daily surveys. We adapted existing measures by substituting “school” for “work.” Moreover, we explained that home life meant the private life they had with family, friends, partner, and hobbies. In the daily questionnaire, items were slightly adapted by including the word “today” in order to clearly capture day-level occurrences. Unless noted otherwise, participants answered on 5-point scales (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*). For the daily measures, the internal consistency was calculated across the 5 days.

Boundary management: preference. We used the 4-item preference measure developed by Kreiner (2006), which is focused on segmenting work from family. We have adapted this measure into the Preference for Segmenting School from Home (PSSH) to assess the individual's preference to keep one's home life free from school influences, for example, “I don't like school issues creeping into my home life.” As previous research has demonstrated the bidirectional nature of preference (Park & Jex, 2011; Methot & Lepine, 2016), we included a second 4-item scale, parallel to Kreiner's (2006) scale, to measure Preference for Segmenting

Home from School (PSHS; see Park & Jex, 2011 and Methot & Lepine, 2016 for the same approach) to capture one's preference to keep school free of influences of the home life, for example, "I don't like home life issues creeping into my studies." Both measures used a 7-point rating scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*), had acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .69$ and $\alpha = .68$, respectively), and did not correlate significantly, $r = .15$, *ns*. Previous studies among employees found a positive correlation between the preference for segmenting work from family and the preference for segmenting family from work, although not strongly ($r = .28$, $p < .01$ in Park & Jex, 2011, and $r = .38$, $p < .01$ in Methot & Lepine, 2016).

Boundary management: integration enactment. We used the three-item scale developed by Desrochers, Hilton, and Larwood (2005). for example, "Today, I tended to integrate my school and home life duties". The internal consistency estimate across the 5 days was 0.83.

Home-school conflict. We adapted two scales developed by Grzywacz and Bass (2003). A first four-item scale assessed school-to-home conflict (e.g., "Today, my studies reduced the effort I could give to activities at home"), which had an internal consistency estimate of 0.87. A second four-item scale assessed home-to-school conflict (e.g., "Today responsibilities at home reduced the effort I could devote to my studies"), $\alpha = .77$.

Balance between school and home. We used one item from the five-item Work-Family Balance Scale developed by Allen and Kiburz (2012), and adapted it to reflect school-home balance. The item was: "Today I was satisfied with the balance I have achieved between my school and my private life". Only one item was selected because the daily diary survey had to be very short to obtain a reasonable high response rate. Based on the conceptualization of Greenhaus and Allen (2011), this particular item best reflected, on face validity, an individual's overall assessment of balance.

Home life satisfaction. Home life satisfaction was measured with a single-item measure, "Today, I was satisfied with my home life," developed by Frone, Barnes, and Farrell (1994).

School performance. We adapted a four-item measure of self-rated in-role job perfor-

mance (Bartram & Casimir, 2007), so it reflected daily school performance. The four items were: "Today, I worked hard on my studies," "Today, I completed my study work by the time I had specified," "Today, I produced work of a high standard in my studies," and "Today, I made good use of my study time," $\alpha = .87$.

Statistical Analysis

The data were analyzed using multilevel analysis in SPSS 20, with the mixed model procedure, using maximum likelihood estimation. In our model, the person-level independent variables were: PSSH, PSHS, and personal integration enactment (i.e., the extent to which students, on average, across the 5 days, integrate school and home life [high scores] or keep school and home life separate [low scores]). All person-level independent variables were grand mean centered, that is, the overall mean was subtracted such that the average across all participants was 0. The day-level independent variables were: (a) day (ranging from $-2 = \text{Monday}$ to $+2 = \text{Friday}$), and (b) daily integration enactment, namely the daily ratings of integration (high scores) or segmentation (low scores) of school and home for each student, relative to his or her personal integration enactment. Daily integration enactment was person mean centered, that is, each participant had an average score of 0 on this variable across all days. We controlled for day to rule out the possibility that unmeasured factors associated with specific days confounded the relationships we set out to test. For the mediation analyses, person-level (grand mean centered) and day-level (person-mean centered) variables of school-home conflict and home-school conflict were used as mediators (Zhang et al., 2009).

For each day-level variable, the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) was computed by estimating the random variance in the intercept, that is, the between-person variance in the variable (Model 1). A high ICC shows that there are individual differences in the level of a variable. The person-level hypotheses were answered by a hierarchical regression in the multilevel analysis. In Model 2, two person-level independent variables (personal integration enactment, preference) were entered in the regression. In Model 3, the interaction between both independent variables was entered. The day-level hypotheses

were answered by adding additional steps in the hierarchical regression in the multilevel analysis. If the interaction term in Model 3 was significant, then it was included in the following steps. However, the main effects of the person-level independent variables remained in the interaction regardless of their significance. In Model 4, two day-level independent variables (week day, daily integration enactment) were entered in the regression. In Model 5, the cross-level interaction term between preference (person level) and daily integration enactment (day level) was entered. Only when the fit of the model improved by an additional step in the regression, were the contributions of the added predictors considered.

The mediation hypotheses (H_5 and H_6) were answered by adding school-home and home-school conflict to the regression of school performance, home life satisfaction, and balance. Mediation was tested by examining the indirect effects (ab) which was the product of the direct effects (a) of BME on the mediator (school-home conflict or home-school conflict) and the direct effects (b) of the mediator on the dependent variable (school performance, home life satisfaction, balance). These indirect effects were tested using Monte Carlo simulations to generate 95% confidence intervals (CIs; Selig & Preacher, 2008). This was done for the person-level (Model 3) and the day-level (Model 5) part of the model. It should be noted that this method to generate confidence intervals is correct only if no *random effects* of the independent variable (integration enactment) or the mediator(s) are present, which was the case in our study. All estimated coefficients were fixed, except for the random intercept.

Results

For integration enactment, the ICC was 0.10, showing that 10% of the variance in integration enactment systematically varied between persons. This means that some individuals are more likely to integrate their school from their home than others, but that the majority of the variance in integration enactment was between days within persons. To provide more information on this measure, we also calculated who had a stable strategy and who had not by dichotomizing this measure at the scale midpoint (3). This showed that 11% of the students in our

sample were “stable” in that they segmented every day of the diary study, 7% integrated every day, and the largest part of the students, 81%, changed between segmenting on some days and integrating on others. Tables 1 and 2 show the results for school-home and home-school conflict, respectively.

The ICCs showed that 38% of the variance in school-home conflict and 41% of the variance in home-school conflict was systematic variance between persons, the rest was variance within persons per day. As Model 2 in both tables shows, H_1 was supported; students who generally integrated their school and home life experienced more school-home as well as home-school conflict. As Model 4 in both tables shows, H_2 was also supported because students experienced more school-home and home-school conflict on days on which they integrated rather than segmented. Furthermore, students experienced more school-home conflict early in the week (Monday, Tuesday) than later in the week (Thursday, Friday).

H_3 (person level, Model 3) and H_4 (day level, Model 5) were not supported as the interaction terms between preference and integration enactment were not significant, although the predicted interaction between the preference for segmenting school from home life and daily integration enactment was almost significant ($p = .051$) in the regression of school-home conflict (Table 1, Model 5).

Table 3 shows the results for school performance. Students with the preference for segmenting home from school reported higher school performance than those who preferred integration. However, person-level integration enactment in Model 2 did not contribute to the regression of school performance. Adding the person-level mediators in Model 3 showed that home-school conflict was negatively related to school performance, whereas school-home conflict was unrelated to school performance. As person-level integration enactment was not significantly related to school performance, no mediation was present. Nevertheless, the *negative indirect effect* of integration enactment on school performance through higher home-school conflict was significant ($ab = -0.11$; 95% CI $[-0.20, -0.04]$). This shows that, consistent with H_5 , students who integrated experienced more home-school conflict, which, in turn, related to lower school performance.

Table 1
Multilevel Regression of School-Home Conflict

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Person level					
Intercept	3.16***	3.15***	3.15***	3.14***	3.14***
PSSH		.24**	.24**	.24**	.24**
Personal IE		.91***	.90	.91***	.91***
PSSH × Personal IE			.01		
Day level					
Time (week day)				-.23***	-.23***
Daily IE				.48***	.48***
PSSH × Daily IE					.10
Fit (-2 log L)	1,941.29	1,907.99	1,907.98	1,767.49	1,763.68
Δ fit		33.3***	.01	140.48***	3.82
df		2	1	2	1
Variance					
Random intercept (person level)	.92***	.61***	.61***	.69***	.69***
Residual (day level)	1.52***	1.53***	1.53***	1.10***	1.09***
ICC	.38				
Explained variance (%)	0	13	13	27	27

Note. Unstandardized regression weights are presented. PSSH = preference for segmenting school from home life; IE = integration enactment; df = degrees of freedom; ICC = intraclass correlation coefficient. Week day was coded as -2 = Monday, -1 = Tuesday, 0 = Wednesday, 1 = Thursday, 2 = Friday.
** p < .01. *** p < .001.

At the day level, Model 4 shows that integration enactment was negatively related to school performance. Model 5 shows that home-school conflict was also negatively related to school perfor-

mance, but school-home conflict was *positively* related to school performance. This means that students considered their school performance as better as their home life was more compromised

Table 2
Multilevel Regression of Home-School Conflict

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Person level					
Intercept	2.96***	2.96***	2.96***	2.96***	2.96***
PSHS		.09	.09	.09	.09
Personal IE		.54***	.53***	.54***	.54***
PSHS × Personal IE			.06		
Day level					
Time (week day)				.02	.02
Daily IE				.36***	.36***
PSHS × Daily IE					.02
Fit (-2 log L)	1,777.09	1,763.60	1,763.37	1,716.97	1,716.74
Δ fit		13.49**	.23	46.40***	.24
df		2	1	2	1
Variance					
Random intercept (person level)	.77***	.66***	.66***	.69***	.69***
Residual (day level)	1.10	1.10***	1.10***	.99***	.99***
ICC	.41				
Explained variance (%)	0	6	6	10	10

Note. Unstandardized regression weights are presented. PSHS = preference for segmenting home life from school; IE = integration enactment; df = degrees of freedom; ICC = intraclass correlation coefficient. Week day was coded as -2 = Monday, -1 = Tuesday, 0 = Wednesday, 1 = Thursday, 2 = Friday.
** p < .01. *** p < .001.

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Table 3
Multilevel Regression of School Performance, Including Mediation Through Home-School Conflict and School-Home Conflict

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Person level					
Intercept	2.98***	2.98***	2.9***	2.97***	2.97***
PSHS		.14**	.15***	.14***	.15***
PSSH		-.07	-.05	-.05	-.05
Personal IE		-.13	-.03	-.02	-.02
Personal home-school conflict			-.2***	-.21***	-.21***
Personal school-home conflict			.02	.01	.01
Day level					
Time (week day)				-.16***	-.11***
Daily IE				-.14**	-.12*
Daily home-school conflict					-.31
Daily school-home conflict					.20
Fit (-2 log L)	1,554.33	1,542.77	1,525.36	1,493.84	1,417.80
Δ fit		11.56**	17.41***	31.52***	76.04***
<i>df</i>		3	2	2	2
Variance					
Random intercept (person level)	.11*	.08*	.05	.06	.09**
Residual (day level)	.91***	.91***	.91***	.85***	.71***
ICC	.11				
Explained variance (%)	0	3	6	11	22

Note. Unstandardized regression weights are presented. PSHS = preference for segmenting home life from school; PSSH = preference for segmenting school from home life; IE = integration enactment; *df* = degrees of freedom; ICC = intraclass correlation coefficient. Week day was coded as -2 = Monday, -1 = Tuesday, 0 = Wednesday, 1 = Thursday, 2 = Friday.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

by their schoolwork. The negative relationship between daily integration enactment and school performance remained, although it also had two opposite indirect effects through both forms of conflict. The indirect effect on school performance through home-school conflict was significant ($ab = -0.11$; 95% CI [-0.16, -0.07]), and so was the opposite indirect effect through school-home conflict ($ab = 0.09$; 95% CI [0.05, -0.14]). This means that, in support of H_6 , students experienced more home-school conflict on days on which they integrated, which partly explained their lower school performance on these days. However, this negative relationship was reduced by higher school-home conflict, which increased perceived school performance. The net effect of integration remained negative: on days on which students integrated, their school performance was worse than on days on which they separated school and home life.

Regarding home life satisfaction, Table 4 (Model 2) shows that person-level integration enactment was related to lower home life satis-

faction. Model 3 shows that part of the negative relationship between integration enactment at the person level and home life satisfaction was mediated by higher school-home and home-school conflict at the person level. The negative indirect effects of integration enactment on home life satisfaction through higher school-home ($ab = -0.16$; 95% CI [-0.29, -0.06]), and home-school conflict ($ab = -0.07$; 95% CI [-0.15, -0.01]) were significant. This shows that students who integrated experienced more conflict, and that both forms of conflict in turn related to lower home life satisfaction.

At the day-level, similar findings were found. Model 4 shows that on days students integrated school and home life, they were less satisfied with home life. Model 5 shows that both types of conflict partly mediated the negative relationship between daily integration enactment and home life satisfaction. The indirect effect of integration enactment on home life satisfaction through school-home conflict was significant ($ab = -0.11$; 95% CI [-0.16, -0.07]), as was the small indirect effect through home-school

Table 4
Multilevel Regression of Home Life Satisfaction, Including Mediation Through School-Home Conflict

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Person level					
Intercept	3.61***	3.61***	3.62***	3.62***	3.61***
PSHS		.03	.07	.08	.07
PSSH		-.17**	-.12*	-.12*	-.12*
Personal IE		-.51***	-.28**	-.29**	-.29**
Personal home-school conflict			-.12*	-.13*	-.13*
Personal school-home conflict			-.18***	-.18***	-.18***
Day level					
Time (week day)				.05	-.00
Daily IE				-.25***	-.10*
Daily home-school conflict					-.11**
Daily school-home conflict					-.24***
Fit (-2 log L)	1,533.32	1,500.63	1,478.48	1,435.96	1,388.24
Δ fit		32.68***	22.15***	42.52***	47.72***
df		3	2	2	2
Variance					
Random intercept (person level)	.27***	.16***	.10*	.12**	.14***
Residual (day level)	.79***	.79***	.79***	.72***	.64***
ICC	.25				
Explained variance (%)	0	10	15	21	26

Note. Unstandardized regression weights are presented. PSHS = preference for segmenting home life from school; PSSH = preference for segmenting school from home life; IE = integration enactment; *df* = degrees of freedom; ICC = intraclass correlation coefficient. Week day was coded as -2 = Monday, -1 = Tuesday, 0 = Wednesday, 1 = Thursday, 2 = Friday.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

conflict ($ab = -0.04$; 95% CI [-0.07, -0.01]). This means that students experienced more conflict on days on which they integrated school and home (see Tables 1 and 2), and this interference partly explained their lower home life satisfaction on these days. Thus, H_5 and H_6 received support for home life satisfaction.

Finally, Table 5 shows the results for balance. Both at the person level (Model 2) and the day level (Model 4), integration enactment was related to lower balance. Moreover, home-school and school-home conflict partly mediated the relationship between integration enactment and balance. At the person level (Model 3), the negative indirect effect of integration enactment on balance through both higher home-school conflict ($ab = -0.09$; 95% CI [-0.17, -0.02]), and school-home conflict ($ab = -0.13$; 95% CI [-0.24, -0.04]) were significant. Thus, H_5 was supported as students who integrated school and home life experienced more conflict (both types), which was, in turn, related to lower balance.

There also was partial mediation at the day level (Model 5). The indirect effects of integra-

tion enactment on balance through both home-school conflict ($ab = -0.08$; 95% CI [-0.12, -0.04]), and school-home conflict ($ab = -0.06$; 95% CI [-0.11, -0.03]) were significant. This means that—in line with H_6 —students experienced more conflict (both types) on days on which they integrated school and home life, and this partly explained their lower experienced balance between school and home life on these days.

Discussion

This was the first study to investigate boundary management “in action” using a diary design to examine how daily fluctuation in enacted role boundary management strategy relates to daily variation in salient outcomes. The focus on students and the inclusion of BME as well as boundary management preferences are novel given how previous research has focused on working populations, and has tended to conflate preference and enacted strategy. Moreover, this research answers to the call in the literature (e.g., Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, &

Table 5
Multilevel Regression of Balance, Including Mediation Through Home-School and School-Home Conflict

Predictors	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Person level					
Intercept	3.03***	3.03***	3.04***	3.03***	3.03***
PSHS		.08	.12**	.12**	.11*
PSSH		-.07	-.03	-.02	-.02
Personal IE		-.45***	-.24*	-.24*	-.23*
Personal home-school conflict			-.17**	-.17**	-.16**
Personal school-home conflict			-.14**	-.14**	-.14**
Day level					
Time (week day)				-.02	-.05
Daily IE				-.43***	-.29***
Daily home-school conflict					-.22***
Daily school-home conflict					-.13**
Fit (-2 log L)	1,618.76	1,595.85	1,573.90	1,494.78	1,458.73
Δ fit		22.91***	21.95***	79.12***	36.06***
df		3	2	2	2
Variance					
Random intercept (person level)	.17**	.11*	.06	.09*	.11**
Residual (day level)	.99***	.99***	.99***	.82***	.76***
ICC	.15				
Explained variance (%)	0	6	10	22	26

Note. Unstandardized regression weights are presented. PSHS = preference for segmenting home life from school; PSSH = preference for segmenting school from home life; IE = integration enactment; *df* = degrees of freedom; ICC = intraclass correlation coefficient. Week day was coded as -2 = Monday, -1 = Tuesday, 0 = Wednesday, 1 = Thursday, 2 = Friday.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Brinley, 2005) to investigate potential strategies that individuals can use to reduce interrole conflict, and thus increase their well-being and role functioning.

Overall, this study showed that keeping school and home life roles separate (segmentation) was the optimal strategy for students in terms of curtailing conflict between school and home life roles, and subsequently, experiencing higher home life satisfaction and a better balance between school and home. These relationships were found at the day level—students experienced lower conflict and better outcomes on days on which they segmented—as well as at the person level, in that students who generally segmented generally experienced lower conflict and better outcomes. These findings are consistent with previous correlational research findings among employees (Danner-Vlaardingerbroek et al., 2013; Kinman & Jones, 2008; Kossek et al., 2006, 2012), and thus provide accumulating evidence that segmentation is beneficial for individuals.

Regarding school performance, we found slightly different results. Person-level integra-

tion indeed related to higher home-school conflict, which related to lower school performance, but no significant effects were found for school-home conflict. At the day level, we found that integration went hand in hand with higher home-school and school-home conflict, but that only home-school conflict was detrimentally related to school performance. School-home conflict even corresponded with a higher sense of accomplishment at school. The net effect, however, remained as predicted, in that, on days on which students integrated, their perceived school performance was worse, which again underscored the benefits of segmenting roles.

Our finding that students' interrole conflict relates negatively to important outcome variables is also consistent with previous findings among university students. Previous studies have shown that sleep quality (Park & Sprung, 2015) and school performance (Butler, 2007) suffer from work-school conflict. This study suggests that school performance can also be undermined by home-school conflict. Additionally, previous studies have shown that interrole

conflict relates negatively to satisfaction with school and with work. Adding to this line of research, the present findings show that home-school and school-home conflict also relate to lower satisfaction with the home domain and lower balance between home and school.

This was the first study to examine segmentation preferences among students. Interestingly, students' segmentation preferences were unrelated, whereas previous studies among employees found a positive correlation between the preference for segmenting work from family and the preference for segmenting family from work (Methot & Lepine, 2016; Park & Jex, 2011). This might speak to the difference in experience between conflict involving work and family roles and conflict involving home and school roles. Perhaps the former is relatively more problematic for individuals than the latter. Although work-to-family conflict appears relatively worse for people than family to-work conflict, there is meta-analytic evidence that both directions are strenuous (Amstad et al., 2011). This would imply a general preference among employees to segment in both directions, thus explaining the previously reported positive correlations between work-family segmentation preferences. In contrast, students might vary considerably on whether they consider each direction of school-home conflict significantly strenuous. With such variation, students' preference to segment home from school would not generally imply a preference to segment school from home, as suggested by the nonsignificant relationship between the school-home segmentation preferences that we observed.

Theoretical Contributions

This study suggests that role segmentation would be the advised strategy to limit role conflict and to obtain better outcomes such as performance and satisfaction in one's important roles. In general, our findings are consistent with boundary theory's (Ashforth et al., 2000) propositions that segmentation avoids role blurring and interruptions, and facilitates concentration and focus on the role at hand. However, boundary theory also implies that there are "costs" associated with segmentation, namely, that it is more difficult for individuals to transition from one role to another. The current

findings suggest that the benefits of segmentation might outweigh their costs for individuals.

Moreover, benefits of segmentation were observed irrespective of individuals' personal preferences. Even when individuals did not prefer to segment, segmentation enactment still corresponded with the lowest conflict and the most beneficial outcomes. Thus, no evidence was found for the suggested necessity of a fit between BME and preference (Ammons, 2013). On the one hand, this lack of evidence for the need for fit between enactment and preference could have to do with the study's target population; college students may not yet have established clear preferences. On the other hand, these findings parallel Sonnentag's theoretical and empirical work on the importance of psychological detachment from work, which is being able to mentally "switch off" from work during nonwork time. Psychological detachment is considered a core recovery experience that is essential for individuals' well-being, and has been found to buffer the relationship between high job demands and outcomes such as psychosomatic complaints and decreased work engagement (e.g., Sonnentag & Bayer, 2005; Sonnentag, Binnewies, & Mojza, 2010; Sonnentag & Fritz, 2015). In our view, keeping stricter boundaries between school (or work, if the population of interest is employed individuals) and home could enable individuals to psychologically detach from school at home, and to mentally detach from one's home life while at school. In that sense, role segmentation could be theoretically regarded as a personal resource that protects individuals from experiencing negative effects of high role demands (see Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2007, for a discussion of the role of personal resources in the job demands-resources model), or even a "21st century skill" to thrive in today's world where individuals can be "connected" to "everyone" "anytime."

Practical Implications

Most college students are in their early adulthood (ages 18–24), which is a crucial time in which students learn critical lessons and begin to form work-related attitudes, behaviors, and expectations regarding the work environment (Arnett, 2000; Loughlin & Barling, 2001). Learning how to deal with competing role de-

mands and faded role boundaries as a student cannot only be valuable in school life, but can also be a valuable skill for later as an employee. The present results suggest that students would benefit from increased awareness of the advantages of segmentation and “how to” training sessions that actually teach them how to set boundaries between their school and home life. It seems advisable to coach students in developing personal “scripts” or “transition scripts” for when they participate in one role or move from one role to another. A script is a cognitive structure that specifies the typical or appropriate sequence of behaviors and events in a given goal-oriented situation or process (Ashforth et al., 2000; Fiske & Taylor, 1991). For example, a student can decide to study or work on essays in the library only, with a transition script that involves saying goodbye to roommates, going into the library, putting one’s phone on airplane mode, shutting down Skype on one’s laptop, and start reading and writing for 2 hr. With repeated use, the script becomes relatively automatic and requires less conscious effort, which conserves cognitive capacity (Ashforth et al., 2000).

Limitations and Future Research Directions

A first limitation of this study is the use of single-item measures for home life satisfaction and balance. We chose to do so to ensure user-friendliness by minimizing the effort required to complete the questionnaires at each measurement moment, and thus optimizing response rates (see Radstaak, Geurts, Beckers, Brosschot, & Kompier, 2014, for a similar approach in diary research). Second, we did not assess students’ participation in paid employment as most Dutch students only work for a very limited number of hours per week. However, since considerable conflict can also occur with the work role (e.g., Cheng & McCarthy, 2013), future research on relationships between boundary management and school-home conflict should give explicit attention to students’ work role demands as well. Third, we can unfortunately not rule out the possibility that gender has influenced our results because our sample was predominantly female. Fourth, we had a self-report measure for school performance, which possibly also reflects students’ sense of accomplishment or effort. Ideally, future studies

should strive to obtain daily ratings of study performance by others such as peers or teachers. Finally, consistent with boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000) and previous empirical approaches (e.g., Park & Jex, 2011), we assumed that students’ preferences would be relatively stable, and thus measured preferences only once in the general survey. However, one cannot rule out the possibility that students’ preferences may also vary, perhaps as a function of particular events on specific days. It would be valuable to examine this possibility in future diary research.

The present finding among students that segmentation seems the better strategy to curtail conflict and achieve better outcomes parallels previous correlational findings among workers on the benefits of segmenting roles (e.g., Danner-Vlaardingerbroek et al., 2013; Kinman & Jones, 2008; Kossek et al., 2006). However, before “writing off” integration altogether it would be valuable to more thoroughly examine, possibly using qualitative techniques, whether there might be different ways of integrating roles, some of which may work well. When additional evidence on the benefits of segmentation are collected and the current (diary) findings are replicated among workers, a first important avenue for future research is to design intervention studies in which individuals are taught to segment. Second, our findings show that integration enactment fluctuates considerably per day as the majority of the variance in integration enactment was between days within persons. Therefore, it seems important to study what events or contexts trigger students to integrate rather than segment their roles, and how this can be averted. Third, an intriguing question is how integration enactment relates to the concept of self-regulation (Allen et al., 2014; Baumeister, Vohs, & Tice, 2007). Possibly individuals high on self-regulatory strength segment their work and family lives more, and are possibly also better at segmentation when feeling depleted or under difficult circumstances.

Conclusion

These findings suggest that students need to set clear boundaries between their school and home life to achieve a balanced and satisfactory life, as well as more school success. In their efforts to set such clear boundaries, individuals

should be supported by their organizations and institutions.

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