



Horyzonty Polityki
2026, Vol. 17, N° 60



AGNIESZKA SZCZUDLIŃSKA-KANOŚ

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7382-4858>
Jagiellonian University in Kraków
agnieszka.szczudlinska-kanos@uj.edu.pl

ŁUKASZ SUŁKOWSKI

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1248-2743>
Jagiellonian University in Kraków
lukasz.sulkowski@uj.edu.pl

<https://doi.org/10.35765/HP.2026.1760.21>

The Relationship Between Work-Family Boundary Management Styles, Work-Family Conflict, and Well-Being among Working Parents in Poland

Abstract

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE: The aim of this article is to analyze work-family boundary management styles and to examine how perceived segmentation and integration of work and family roles are associated with work-family conflict and employee well-being. The study focuses on working parents in Poland and examines boundary management in the post-pandemic context.

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND METHODS: The research question concerns how to manage the interpenetration of professional and private roles in flexible and digitalized work environments. The article draws on a narrative literature review and data from a nationwide survey of 1,578 employees, analyzing the relationships between boundary management styles, work-family conflict, and well-being. Although the survey was addressed to all working parents, women constituted the majority of respondents. This should be taken into account when interpreting the findings.

THE PROCESS OF ARGUMENTATION: The article begins with an overview of the concept of work-family boundaries and the main approaches to boundary management. This is followed by a presentation of empirical findings on the relationship between boundary management, work-family conflict, and well-being.

RESEARCH RESULTS: The findings indicate that work-family boundary management is associated with employee well-being. Greater separation between work and private life is linked to lower work-family conflict, whereas stronger

Suggested citation: Szczudlińska-Kanoś, A., & Sułkowski, Ł. (2026). The Relationship Between Work-Family Boundary Management Styles, Work-Family Conflict, and Well-Being among Working Parents in Poland. *Horizons of Politics*, 17(60), 409–428. <https://doi.org/10.35765/HP.2026.1760.21>.

role integration is associated with higher conflict levels. Work-family conflict is also related to lower job and life satisfaction. These results highlight the role of boundary management in shaping the experiences of working parents.

CONCLUSIONS, INNOVATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS: The findings highlight the importance of maintaining clear boundaries between work and family life. Recommendations include flexible work arrangements, boundary-management training, and organizational cultures that support work-life balance. Organizations may also consider core working hours, limiting after-hours communication, and implementing right-to-disconnect policies.

KEYWORDS:

work-family boundary management styles, role conflict,
work-life balance, public policy

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary labor market is characterized by dynamic changes that affect the way individuals function in their professional and private roles. The development of technology, the popularization of remote work, and growing expectations towards employees mean that the boundaries between professional and personal life are becoming increasingly fluid. In this context, the way people manage these boundaries, both physically and psychologically, takes on particular importance.

The way in which the boundaries between work and family life are managed is a key research topic in the field of modern organizational management. This issue is gaining much importance at a time when work flexibility and remote work are becoming more and more common, and expectations regarding maintaining a balance between work and personal life are significantly increasing. This is particularly noticeable in the younger generations, who value work-life balance (WLB) very much. In the literature on this topic, you can find various methods of managing boundaries, including the main ones: segmentation, integration and various flexible approaches. In general, the integration style is based on combining work and family roles, which can increase the employee's availability, but on the other hand, it can also create challenges in separating work duties from family life. The segmentation style, on the other hand, is based on a clear separation of the workplace from personal life, which can of

course support the process of regeneration and achieving work-life balance but it may be difficult to maintain in situations requiring high availability. This approach may be more difficult to maintain in highly flexible, remote, and hybrid work environments. The flexible style, on the other hand, combines aspects of both approaches, which allows for the adjustment of boundaries depending on life and work circumstances. The flexible style requires from employees a high level of self-discipline and awareness in using different boundary management strategies in specific situations, and from employers and organizations openness, understanding, trust, flexibility and the creation of an organizational culture that supports autonomy, work-life balance and proper communication.

Boundary management is closely related to the level of conflict between work and family roles. Greenhaus and Beutell indicate that work-family conflict (WFC) and family-work conflict (FWC) are two types of conflicts that are related to work-family conflict. Conflict (FWC) is the result of inconsistency of expectations and requirements resulting from both roles, which can lead to stress, reduced psychological well-being and decreased professional effectiveness (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The boundary management style can act as a buffer or catalyst for conflict. A properly selected style can minimize tensions, while an inadequate one can increase them. From the perspective of organizational management, it is crucial to understand and support different boundary management methods, which contributes to the creation of a healthy work environment. Organizations that implement policies that promote work-life balance, for example by introducing flexible working hours, enabling remote work, or the possibility of occasional time off from work, contribute to increased job satisfaction, employee loyalty, and reduced turnover (Szczudlińska-Kanoś & Marzec, 2022; Szczudlińska-Kanoś, 2024). Additionally, enabling employees to independently manage their own boundaries can contribute to increasing their engagement and innovation, which is particularly important in the context of knowledge management and human potential.

There are numerous studies in the literature that indicate that employee well-being is strongly related to their ability to manage role conflicts, as well as the level of support received from the organization (Molina, 2021). Work-family conflict (WFC) affects the level of

stress, which in turn reduces job satisfaction (Fontes et al., 2025). In addition, there are analyses that show how perceived organizational support in the field of family life affects employee engagement, the level of work-family conflict and the tendency to seek new employment (Thompson et al., 2004). Taking the above into account, it should be noted that managing the boundaries between work and family is not only an individual issue, but also a strategic element of human resource management. Organizations that ignore this aspect are exposed to a decrease in operational efficiency and talent loss.

The aim of this article is to analyze the styles of managing the boundaries between work and family, as well as to show their impact on the level of work-family conflict and subjective well-being of employees. The article is an attempt to answer the question of how matching the style of managing boundaries to the needs of the individual and the work context can contribute to improving the quality of professional and private life. The article also aims to present recommendations for managers and HR specialists in the field of designing a work environment conducive to employee well-being and effectiveness. The novelty of the study lies in examining these relationships among a large sample of working parents in Poland in the post-pandemic context and in incorporating a gender perspective into the analysis. Although the survey was addressed to all economically active parents, women constituted the majority of respondents.

The findings presented in the study are based on a narrative review of the literature and analyses of survey data. The study used data from a nationwide survey entitled "Work and Childcare". The research was conducted in Poland in November 2024. Respondents were recruited via the nationwide electronic journal Librus, a broad-based journal, which aimed to capture a diverse cross-section of working parents across the country. A total of $N = 1,578$ people completed the survey.

WORK-FAMILY BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT STYLES—A THEORETICAL APPROACH

Work-family boundary theory provides a framework for understanding how individuals cope with the demands of work and family roles by creating and managing boundaries between these spheres.

Early conceptualizations by S.C. Clark (2000), Nippert-Eng (1996), and Ashforth and colleagues (2000) emphasize that people draw mental, physical, and temporal boundaries that serve to separate work from family in order to reduce stress and role conflict.

Modern work patterns, such as remote work, flexible hours, and the culture of always-on availability, have blurred traditional boundaries between work and private life, increasing the risk of role conflict and overload. The interplay between work and family has become a critical area of research as social, technological, and organizational changes have significantly impacted the way individuals function in these two spheres (Allen et al. 2021). Researchers have increasingly focused on how people manage these boundaries to maintain psychological well-being, professional performance, and the quality of family relationships. This interest also stems from the growing awareness that effective boundary management can benefit not only individuals but also organizations by influencing employee engagement, retention, and workplace culture (Wang, 2024; Carvalho et al., 2023).

Work-life boundary management is a concept describing the ways in which individuals organize, negotiate, and maintain boundaries between their professional and private spheres. In contrast to the traditional approach to work-life balance (WLB), which assumes a rather static division of time and energy between these two areas, boundary management treats these boundaries as dynamic, fluid, and subject to continuous negotiation. These boundaries can be physical (e.g., workplace), temporal (e.g., working hours), or psychological (e.g., mental separation of roles) (Mroczkowska & Kubacka, 2019). From the perspective of organizational psychology, boundary management is more individualized and adaptive than the classical approach to work-life balance. It takes into account not only the amount of time spent on different roles, but also the quality of transitions between them, the level of control over these transitions, and strategies for dealing with role conflicts. As a result, boundary management offers a more realistic and flexible framework for analyzing and supporting employee well-being in the complex environment of modern work. Work-family boundary management styles not only influence the experience of conflict between work and family roles, but also significantly affect individual well-being and job satisfaction. Understanding and assessing boundary management tactics

are essential to improving the quality of life of individuals balancing work and personal responsibilities.

In the scientific literature, several styles of managing the work-family boundary are distinguished, which describe how individuals organize and regulate the relations between these two spheres of life. The style of managing the boundary is not only a matter of personal preferences, but also the result of the interaction between individual characteristics, job demands, family structure, and the organizational and cultural context (Kossek & Lautsch, 2012; Clark, 2000).

The most common approach to work-family boundaries is based on a continuum between segmentation and integration. The segmentation style involves maintaining a clear separation between work and family responsibilities across physical, temporal, and psychological domains. Individuals who prefer segmentation avoid mixing professional and personal responsibilities, which may help reduce role conflict and stress associated with transitions between roles (Ashforth et al., 2000). According to Kreiner's (2006) person-environment fit perspective, the effects of segmentation and integration depend not only on the boundary management style itself, but also on the degree of fit between employees' preferences and organizational expectations. The integrative style, in contrast, is characterized by greater permeability between work and family roles. It may increase flexibility and perceived control, but can also contribute to overload and difficulties in psychological recovery when boundaries become blurred (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; Voydanoff, 2005). The literature also identifies flexible, mixed, and hybrid approaches that combine elements of both segmentation and integration (Kossek & Lautsch, 2012; Handelzalts et al., 2024; Chung & van der Lippe, 2020).

The style of managing the boundaries between work and family has important implications for organizational management. Supporting flexibility and individual preferences of employees in this area can contribute to reducing role conflicts, improving well-being and increasing organizational effectiveness. However, this requires a conscious approach on the part of leaders and HR departments, which should take these factors into account in the design of organizational policies and in the daily management of teams.

Although the literature has already described styles of managing work-family boundaries many times, the dynamic changes that have

taken place in recent years in the way work is organized, the structure of family life and expectations towards professional and private roles mean that there is a need for continuous updating and deepening. In this context, it has become justified to conduct new empirical research that will allow us to capture how contemporary working parents cope with the challenges related to combining professional and family roles. The following chapter presents the results of such a study, which is a response to the need for a better understanding of current strategies for managing boundaries in the conditions of changing socio-professional reality.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The study was based on the nationwide survey “Work and Child-care,” conducted in Poland between 15 October and 6 November 2024. The target population consisted of working adults with childcare responsibilities. In total, data were collected from 1,578 respondents, including 1,491 working parents. Women constituted a clear majority in this group (1,375 individuals, 92.2%). However, the survey was addressed to all working parents, and the predominance of women in the sample most likely reflects the characteristics of the recruitment channel (the Librus platform) rather than the assumptions of the research design. This should be taken into account when interpreting the findings. The diagnostic survey method was applied using an online CAWI questionnaire, consisting of 36 questions, mostly closed, many using Likert scales. Statistical analysis was performed using the Statistica program (Szczudlińska-Kanoś & Marzec, 2024).

Based on the literature review and theoretical framework, the following research question was formulated: How do work-family boundary management styles relate to work-family conflict and well-being among working parents, and how does gender influence these relationships?

Two research hypotheses were formulated. H1: individuals with a more integrative boundary management style are expected to report higher levels of work-family conflict, whereas individuals with a more segmenting style are expected to report lower levels of conflict. H2: higher levels of work-family conflict are expected to be associated with lower levels of well-being and work-life balance satisfaction.

For the purposes of this article, the analysis focuses on the key constructs included in the theoretical model: boundary management style, work-family conflict, well-being, and gender as a moderating variable. Additional variables related to the respondents' family and employment situations were also included in the study; however, due to the limited scope of the article, they were not incorporated into the analyses presented here.

Boundary management style was operationalized using two survey questions directly related to respondents' management of work-family boundaries. The first question concerned the ability to separate work from personal life and was measured using a five-point Likert scale. This item served as an indicator of perceived segmentation. A high score reflected a strong separation between work and personal life, whereas a low score indicated greater difficulty in separating these domains, suggesting a higher level of role integration or boundary blurring. The operationalization adopted in this study should be treated as exploratory and does not correspond to the multidimensional boundary management scales proposed by Kossek and Lautsch (2012).

Table 1. Possibility of separating professional work from private life due to gender

Are you able to separate work professional from private life?	Gender				Line together
	Female	Male	I don't want to say	Other	
Definitely yes	365	37	0	1	403
	26.55%	36.63%	0%	50%	
I guess so	628	45	5	0	678
	45.67%	44.55%	38.46%	0%	
Neither yes nor no	124	2	1	1	128
	9.02%	1.98%	7.69%	50%	
I don't think so	165	14	2	0	181
	12.00%	13.86%	15.38%	0%	
Definitely not	64	2	1	0	67
	4.65%	1.98%	7.69%	0%	
It's hard to say	29	1	4	0	34
	2.11%	0.99%	30.77%	0%	
General	1375	101	13	2	1491

Source: own study; Likert scale (1 = „Definitely no”, 3 = „Neither yes nor no”, 5 = „Definitely yes”).

The second question concerned the need to adapt one's work to the responsibilities related to caring for children. This item reflects the extent to which a person integrates or combines work with family demands. A high score indicates that he or she often adjusts or integrates work around family needs, while a low score suggests that he or she does not mix the two (maintains separation). Together, these two questions touch on opposite ends of the segmentation-integration continuum.

Table 2. The need to adapt one's work to the responsibilities related to childcare due to gender

Do you adjust your job to care for children?	Gender				Line together
	Female	Male	I don't want to say	Other	
Definitely yes	265	23	1	0	289
	19.36%	22.77%	7.69%	0%	
I guess so	448	44	3	0	495
	32.72%	43.56%	23.08%	0%	
Neither yes nor no	151	9	1	1	162
	11.03%	8.91%	7.69%	50%	
I don't think so	260	16	4	0	280
	18.99%	15.84%	30.77%	0%	
Definitely not	198	7	1	1	207
	14.46%	6.93%	7.69%	50%	
It's hard to point out	47	2	3	0	52
	3.43%	1.98%	23.08%	0%	
General	1369	101	13	2	1485

Source: own study; Likert scale (1 = "Definitely no", 3 = "Neither yes nor no", 5 = "Definitely yes").

Based on the data presented in the tables, conclusions can be drawn regarding the styles of managing the boundaries between work and private life, interpreting the answers in the context of segmentation (separation of roles) and integration (permeation of roles) preferences. The segmentation style is represented by the answers "Definitely yes" and "Rather yes", which indicate the ability to separate work from private life. Among women, as many as 72.2% declare such an ability, and among men 81.18%. This suggests that the majority of respondents, regardless of gender, prefer the segmentation

style. The integrative style can be attributed to the answers “Rather no” and “Definitely no”, which indicate difficulty in separating roles. Among women, 16.65% indicate such a style, and among men 15.84%. The data indicate that the dominant boundary management style among working parents in Poland is the segmentation style, although there are differences between women and men.

In summary, people who report being able to separate work from private life are more likely to use a segmented style. People who have difficulty separating roles are more likely to show features of an integrative style. Neutrality and uncertainty may indicate a mixed style or a lack of a well-established boundary management strategy.

In seeking to answer the research question, this study also aimed to examine whether respondents experience conflict between their professional and private lives. Work-family conflict was measured by asking about the difficulties they face in combining paid work with childcare responsibilities. As in the previous questions, respondents assessed this using a five-point Likert scale.

Table 3. Difficulties in combining professional work with childcare due to gender

Please rate the degree life satisfaction professional	Gender				Line together
	Female	Male	I don't want to say	Other	
Neither yes nor no	175	14	2	0	191
	12.77%	13.86%	15.38%	0%	
Definitely yes	391	16	4	0	411
	28.54%	15.84%	30.77%	0%	
I guess so	476	33	2	1	512
	34.74%	32.67%	15.38%	50%	
Definitely not	63	11	1	0	75
	4.60%	10.89%	7.69%	0%	
I don't think so	260	26	2	1	289
	18.98%	25.74%	15.38%	50%	
I have no opinion	5	1	2	0	8
	0.36%	0.99%	15.38%	0%	
General	1370	101	13	2	1486

Source: own study; Likert scale (1 = definitely no difficulties, 5 = definitely yes, a lot of difficulties, 3 = neutral).

As many as 63.28% of women declared that they experienced difficulties in combining work with childcare (“definitely yes” and “rather yes”), which shows that professional and family roles are

strongly related and difficult to separate. Only 23.58% of women did not experience such difficulties, which suggests a lower share of the segmentation style. In the group of men, the distribution is more balanced—48.51% of men declared difficulties, and 36.63% did not experience them. The data indicate that women more often function in conditions of integration of professional and family roles, which may result from a greater burden of caregiving duties. Women more often experience role conflict. This may be related to the unequal distribution of caregiving responsibilities and family duties. Men show a more balanced distribution of styles.

In order to assess employee well-being and satisfaction with work-life balance, a question was used that assessed the level of satisfaction with work and personal life. Of particular interest was the assessment of overall satisfaction with work-life balance, which can be seen as a combined sense of how well work and family life go together.

Table 4. Level of satisfaction with professional life based on gender

Please rate the degree life satisfaction professional	Gender				Line together
	Female	Male	I don't want to say	Other	
1	36	2	0	0	38
	2.62%	1.98%	0%	0%	
2	96	6	1	0	103
	6.98%	5.94%	7.69%	0%	
3	468	26	5	1	500
	34.04%	25.74%	38.46%	50%	
4	584	41	5	0	630
	42.47%	40.59%	38.46%	0%	
5	191	26	2	1	220
	13.89%	25.74%	15.38%	50%	
General	1375	101	13	2	1491

Source: own study; The question uses a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied.

The data shows that the highest level of satisfaction with professional life (score 5) is more often declared by men (25.74%) than by women (13.89%). Women, on the other hand, most often choose a score of 4 (42.47%), which indicates moderately high satisfaction.

Table 5. Degree of satisfaction with personal life based on gender

Please rate the degree life satisfaction personal	Gender				Line together
	Female	Male	I don't want to say	Other	
1	23	2	0	0	25
	1.67%	1.98%	0%	0%	
2	95	6	1	0	102
	6.91%	5.94%	7.69%	0%	
3	361	19	6	0	386
	26.25%	18.81%	46.15%	0%	
4	588	47	2	2	639
	42.76%	46.53%	15.38%	100%	
5	308	27	4	0	339
	22.40%	26.73%	30.77%	0%	
General	1375	101	13	2	1491

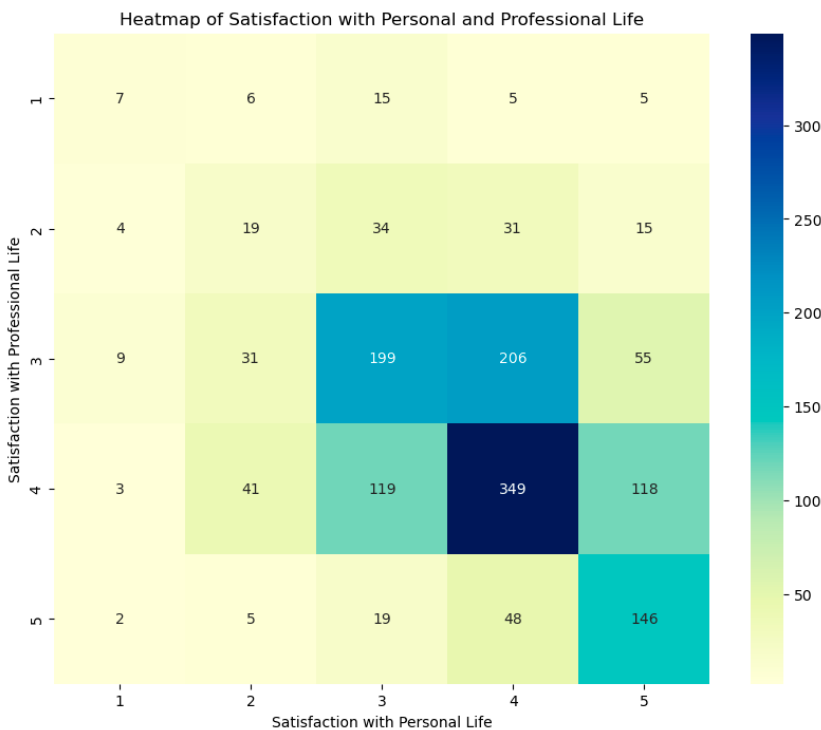
Source: own study; The question uses a 5-point Likert scale, where 1 = very dissatisfied, 5 = very satisfied.

Among women, the highest percentage (42.76%) indicate a rating of 4 as the level of satisfaction with personal life, which suggests a moderately high level of satisfaction. Men also most often choose a rating of 4 (46.53%), but more often than women indicate a rating of 5 (26.73%).

Analysis of the data allows us to see some clear relationships and patterns that may be important in the context of psychological well-being and work-life balance. The most striking phenomenon is the relationship between high satisfaction with personal life and high satisfaction with professional life. Among people who rated their personal life at a level of 5, as many as 146 people (i.e. 43.07% of this group) also rated their professional life at a level of 5. Similarly, in the group of people who rated their personal life at a level of 4, as many as 349 people (54.62%) also rated their professional life at a level of 4. This suggests that people who are satisfied with their private life are much more likely to feel satisfied in the professional sphere as well. On the other hand, among people who rated their personal life at level 1, as many as 28% rated their professional life also at level 1. This may indicate the phenomenon of dissatisfaction permeating between spheres of life-lack of satisfaction in private life may negatively affect the perception of work, and vice versa.

The figure below illustrates how important it is to effectively manage the boundaries between work and private life. People who can maintain a balance are more likely to declare high satisfaction in both areas. The high concentration of responses in the lower right corner (ratings 4 and 5) indicates a positive relationship between both spheres of life. In the upper left corner (low ratings in both categories) there is also some concentration, which may indicate the so-called effect of dissatisfaction spillover. The darkest area is at ratings 4 (work life) and 4 (personal life)—as many as 349 people. This confirms that high satisfaction in one sphere often goes hand in hand with high satisfaction in the other.

Figure 1. The relationship between professional and private life satisfaction

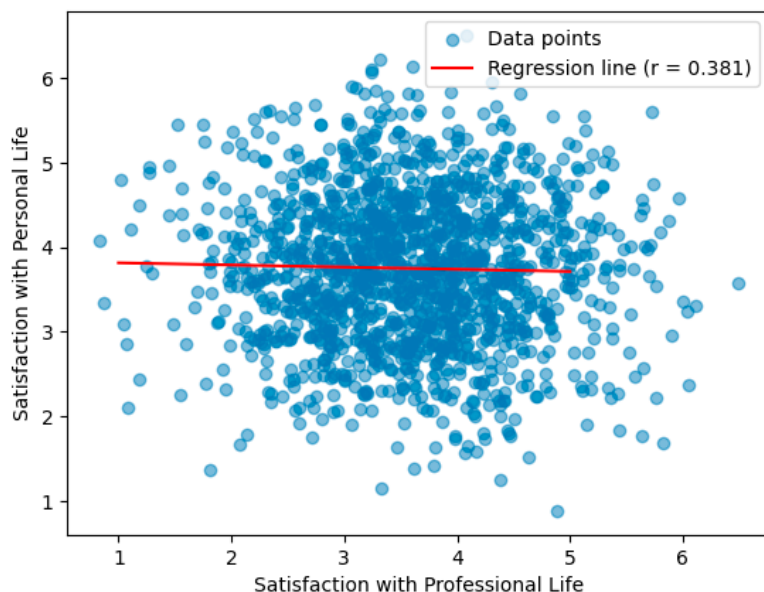


Source: own study. Legend: The horizontal axis (X) shows the level of satisfaction with personal life (from 1—very low, to 5—very high). The vertical axis (Y) shows the level of satisfaction with professional life (also from 1 to 5).

Data analysis also shows that there is a relationship between satisfaction with professional and private life. The data presents the correlation coefficient between satisfaction with professional life and satisfaction with personal life, calculated based on the responses of 1491 people. The average satisfaction with professional life is 3.60 (with a standard deviation of 0.91), while the average satisfaction with personal life is 3.78 (standard deviation of 0.93). Both values are in the upper part of the five-point scale, which suggests a moderately high level of satisfaction in both areas. The most important element of this analysis is the correlation coefficient $r = 0.381$, which is statistically significant at a significance level of $p < 0.05$. This means that there is a moderately positive correlation between satisfaction with professional and personal life. In other words, people who are more satisfied with their work tend to be more satisfied with their private life and vice versa.

From the perspective of managing work-life boundaries, this result confirms the existence of the so-called spillover effect (Lott & Wöhrmann, 2022). Emotions, stress and satisfaction from one sphere of life can affect the other. People who can effectively manage boundaries, e.g. by using controlled flexibility or segmentation—can better protect themselves from the negative impact of one sphere on the other. In turn, people who experience difficulties in separating roles or are forced to their uncontrolled integration may be more vulnerable to lower satisfaction in both areas. It is worth emphasizing that although the correlation does not mean a cause-and-effect relationship, its presence suggests that activities supporting work-life balance—such as flexible working hours, remote work, or an organizational culture supporting work-life balance can have a positive impact on the overall well-being of employees. This emphasizes the importance of activities supporting work-life balance—both at the individual and organizational level.

Figure 2. Correlation between satisfaction with professional life and satisfaction with personal life



Source: own study

The points in the figure represent the responses of individual people. The more they are clustered along the line, the stronger the relationship. The red regression line shows the general trend: the higher the satisfaction with work life, the higher the satisfaction with personal life. The correlation coefficient $r = 0.381$ indicates a moderate, positive relationship—it is not a very strong relationship, but it is clearly present. In practice, this suggests that improvements in one sphere of life may be associated with improvements in the other. This once again highlights the importance of effectively managing the boundaries between work and private life—both in the context of individual strategies and organizational policies.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS FROM THE RESEARCH

The above are only a few examples of research results on work-family boundary management. In this study, it was assumed that the style of managing work-family boundaries plays a key role in shaping the experience of work-family conflict and the level of well-being of an individual. The starting point for formulating hypotheses were boundary management theories (Clark, 2000; Kossek & Lautsch, 2012), which assume that people differ in how they organize and regulate the flow of roles and responsibilities between the professional and private spheres. Two styles can be distinguished here: integrating, in which the boundaries between roles are fluid and often overlap, and segmenting, in which an individual tries to maintain a clear division between work and personal life.

Hypothesis H1 assumes that the boundary management style is significantly related to the level of work-family conflict. People with an integrating style, who more often combine professional and family responsibilities, are more susceptible to role overload and difficulties in reconciling them, which leads to a higher level of conflict. In turn, people using a segmenting style, who maintain clear boundaries between work and home, can more effectively protect themselves from role interpenetration, which promotes a lower level of conflict. The verification of this hypothesis is based on the analysis of data on difficulties in combining work with childcare and the need to limit professional responsibilities, variables that can be treated as indicators of work-family conflict.

Hypothesis H2 refers to the consequences of work-family conflict for an individual's well-being. It has been repeatedly emphasized in the literature that conflict between professional and family roles can lead to lower life satisfaction, a sense of imbalance, and increased stress (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Allen et al., 2000). Therefore, it was assumed that a higher level of conflict will be negatively associated with the assessment of work-life balance and general well-being—both in the professional and private spheres. The study used data on the subjective assessment of satisfaction with professional and personal life as indicators of well-being. The analysis showed that people declaring greater difficulties in combining roles and the need

to limit professional work are less likely to indicate the highest levels of satisfaction, which confirms the assumptions of the hypothesis.

The obtained results support theoretical assumptions about the importance of boundary management styles in the context of work-family conflict and their impact on the well-being of working parents. The boundary management style not only determines the level of experienced conflict, but also indirectly affects the quality of professional and family life.

SUMMARY

In the context of rapid changes in the labor market driven by digitalization, the spread of remote work, and growing organisational flexibility, the boundaries between professional and private life are becoming increasingly blurred. This situation creates new challenges for employees and organizations, particularly in managing roles that often overlap and compete for time and emotional resources.

The findings indicate that a more integrative approach to managing work-family boundaries is associated with higher levels of work-family conflict. In contrast, greater separation between work and private life is linked to lower reported difficulties in combining professional and family responsibilities and to a stronger sense of balance. The results also suggest that work-family conflict is associated with lower levels of satisfaction with both professional and personal life. Individuals experiencing greater difficulties in reconciling work and family roles were less likely to report high levels of well-being, which is consistent with previous research on the work-family interface.

These findings have important practical implications. First, boundary management is not solely an individual matter but is strongly influenced by organisational structures, managerial practices, and workplace culture. Employees who are expected to remain available outside standard working hours or who face excessive work demands may experience greater difficulties in maintaining clear boundaries between work and private life. Creating conditions that support boundary control, including clear working hours, limits on after-hours communication, flexible arrangements tailored to employees'

needs, and practical “right to disconnect” solutions, may help reduce role conflict.

Second, since work-family conflict is associated with lower levels of well-being, investments in work-life balance initiatives may benefit not only employees but also organizations. Lower levels of conflict are linked to higher satisfaction, stronger engagement, lower turnover intentions, reduced absenteeism, and better overall functioning. Measures such as flexible working hours, remote and hybrid work options, temporary adjustments during periods of increased caregiving responsibilities, and training in time and boundary management may therefore support both employee well-being and organisational effectiveness.

Third, the results also have implications for social policy. Women more frequently reported difficulties in combining paid work with childcare responsibilities, which may contribute to persistent labor market inequalities. Although the survey was open to all working parents, women constituted the majority of respondents. Nevertheless, the findings highlight the continuing importance of accessible childcare services, support for parental leave arrangements, and policies aimed at creating family-friendly workplaces.

Overall, the study confirms that work-family boundary management remains an important factor associated with work-family conflict and well-being among working parents. As the boundaries between work and private life continue to evolve, understanding how individuals manage these boundaries becomes increasingly important for organizations, policymakers, and researchers seeking to promote sustainable working conditions and support individual well-being. Future research should further explore these relationships using more comprehensive measures of boundary management and well-being and should examine the role of organisational and family-related factors in shaping employee experiences.

REFERENCES

- Allen, T.D., Merlo, K., Lawrence, R.C., Slutsky, J., & Gray, C.E. (2021). Boundary management and work-nonwork balance while working from home. *Applied Psychology*, 70(1), 60–84. DOI: 10.1111/apps.12300
- Ashforth, B.E., Kreiner, G.E., & Fugate, M. (2000). All in a Day's Work: Boundaries and Micro Role Transitions. *Academy of Management Review*, 25(3). DOI: 10.5465/amr.2000.3363315
- Carvalho, V., Chambel, M., & Marta, B. (2023). "Lines demarked": a way to foster occupational health in police officers. *Sustainability*, 15(24), 16940. DOI: 10.3390/su152416940
- Chung, H., & van der Lippe, T. (2020). Flexible Working, Work-Life Balance, and Gender Equality: Introduction. *Social Indicators Research*, 151, 365–381. DOI: 10.1007/s11205-018-2025-x
- Clark, S.C. (2000). Work/family border theory: A new theory of work/family balance. *Human Relations*, 53(6), 747–770. DOI: 10.1177/0018726700536001
- Fontes, A., Pinho, J.C., Santos, G.G., & Menezes, C. (2025). Work-Family Conflict, Stress, and Job Satisfaction: The Mediating and Moderating Roles of Stress, Influence and Meaningful Work. In C. Machado (Eds.), *Human Resource Management in a Disrupted World. Lecture Notes on Multidisciplinary Industrial Engineering* (p. 141–159). Cham: Springer. DOI: 10.1007/978-3-031-89948-5_6
- Greenhaus, J.H., & Beutell, N.J. (1985). Sources of Conflict between Work and Family Roles. *The Academy of Management Review*, 10(1), 76–88. DOI: 10.2307/258214
- Handelzalts, J.E., Kalfon-Hakhmigari, M., & Garthus-Niegel, S. (2024). Work-family conflict: emphasis on families in modern work environments. *Journal of Reproductive and Infant Psychology*, 42(2), 139–141. DOI: 10.1080/02646838.2024.2303870
- Kossek, E., & Lautsch, B. (2012). Work-family boundary management styles in organizations. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 2(2), 152–171. DOI: 10.1177/2041386611436264
- Kreiner, G.E. (2006). Consequences of work-home segmentation or integration: A person-environment fit perspective. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 27(4), 485–507. DOI: 10.1002/job.386
- Lott, Y., & Wöhrmann, A.M. (2022). Spillover and crossover effects of working time demands on work-life balance satisfaction among dual-earner couples. The mediating role of work-life conflict. *Current Psychology*, 42(2), 1–17. DOI: 10.1007/s12144-022-03850-0

- Molina, J.A. (2021). The Work-Family Conflict: Evidence from the Recent Decade and Lines of Future Research. *Journal of Family and Economic Issues*, 42(1), 4–10. DOI: 10.1007/s10834-020-09700-0
- Mroczkowska, D., & Kubacka, M. (2019). W kieracie codzienności – dynamika obszarów granicznych wśród osób zatrudnionych na etat i samozatrudniających się, Uniwersytet im. A. Mickiewicza w Poznaniu. *Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej*, XV(1). DOI: 10.18778/1733-8069.15.1.08
- Nippert-Eng, C. (1996). *Home and work: Negotiating boundaries through everyday life*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Szczudlińska-Kanoś, A. (2024). The work-life balance of public sector employees in Poland in the context of available legal regulations. *Journal of Public Governance*, 67(1), 19–30.
- Szczudlińska-Kanoś, A., & Marzec M., (2022). *Instrumenty Work Life Balance w Polsce. Teoria i praktyka*. Kraków: Instytut Spraw Publicznych UJ.
- Szczudlińska-Kanoś, A., & Marzec, M. (2024). *Work and childcare* [Own research]. Research conducted on the Librus platform.
- Voydanoff, P. (2005). Toward a Conceptualization of Perceived Work-Family Fit and Balance: A Demands and Resources Approach. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67(4), 822–836. DOI: 10.1111/j.1741-3737.2005.00178.x
- Wang, Y. (2024). Work-family conflict and balance strategies-an analysis based on the work-family resources model. *Open Journal of Business and Management*, 12(02), 1228–1239. DOI: 10.4236/ojbm.2024.122064

Copyright and License



This article is published under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution – NoDerivs (CC BY- ND 4.0) License
<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/>