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‘Violating my home boundaries makes me dislike my job’: a multiple mediation model

Bushra Nida^a , Muhammad Shahid Tufail^{a,b}  and Sharjeel Saleem^a 

^aLyallpur Business School, Government College University Faisalabad, Pakistan; ^bDepartment of Economics and Business Administration, University of Education, Lahore, Pakistan

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to understand negative outcomes of boundary violation events or interruptions at home in which the work life crosses the home boundaries. In the line of boundary theory and affective events theory, the aim of this study is to analyze the effect of daily events of boundary violations at home on work interference with family (WIF). Moreover, incorporating the ego depletion theory, we study the impact of WIF on an individual’s emotional state (i.e., emotional exhaustion), and the impact of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction. The data were collected through questionnaires (daily diary method for boundary violations and at one point in time for other variables) from the manufacturing (textile) sector of Pakistan. The results indicate a direct negative effect of average boundary violations at home on job satisfaction and an indirect negative impact through the sequential mediation of WIF and emotional exhaustion. Theoretical and managerial implications are also discussed.

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1. Introduction

Employees worldwide ought to face the challenge of balancing work and family life which can be emotionally, cognitively, and physically taxing for them. Individuals constantly strive to manage the conflict between work and home domains, making it an increasingly interesting topic for researchers to remodel the negative outcomes of this conflict, such as stress, low satisfaction, etc. (Allen et al., 2000).

The research on inter-role conflicts dates back to several decades (e.g., Ernst Kossek & Ozeki, 1998), but initially, the work on the nature of role transitions was very scarce; for example, the psychological and physical movement from one role to another and non-involvement in one role to involvement in another, also called ‘role exit’ and ‘role entry’ (Ashforth et al., 2000; Burr, 1972). Ashforth et al. (2000), in the framework of boundary theory, define these everyday role transitions as ‘micro role transitions’ owing to the temporary nature of these transitions, such as switching from a manager role

CONTACT Sharjeel Saleem  sharjilsaleem@gmail.com

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(work domain) to a father role (family domain), contrary to 'macro role transitions' which is a permanent transition, such as a promotion or retirement.

Individuals have to negotiate the boundary between the work domain and home domain on a daily basis as they carry on their activities. Individual differences, environment, and many other factors disrupt the process of negotiation between boundaries. For example, the ease or difficulty of transition between work and home boundaries depends on the limit of integration or segmentation between the two domains (Kreiner, 2006). The interruptions from one domain/role into another domain/role are defined as boundary violations. With each of the interruptions or boundary violations from work, an amount of time is taken from the family domain for work (Hunter et al., 2019).

Various positive and negative outcomes of boundary violation events might be experienced by the individuals (Hunter et al., 2019). Some of the negative outcomes include work interference with family (WIF)/family interference with work (FIW) (Hunter et al., 2019), increased level of burnout, and reduced flourishing (Carvalho et al., 2021). Most of the past research focused on the inter-role conflict between work and home domains that accumulates employee experiences into a static construct (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Hunter et al., 2019). However, some studies suggest that employee experiences vary significantly from day to day, therefore studies now focus on how employee roles interchange daily to understand the work-home domain better (e.g., Sanz-Vergel et al., 2010; Song et al., 2011). The current research specifically focuses on the daily events of boundary violations at home and its effect on job satisfaction through sequential mediation of WIF and emotional exhaustion, one of the dimensions of burnout.

Many negative individual as well as organizational outcomes have been associated with WIF, such as decreased life and job satisfaction, absenteeism, and decreased productivity levels, thus making it an important variable of study (Allen et al., 2000; Gadeyne et al., 2018). WIF arises when work activities hinder the individual from adequately performing the family liabilities. Similarly, FIW occurs when family activities impede the performance of work responsibilities (Kinnunen & Mauno, 1998). These days, many organizations offer flextime policies and other family-friendly benefits. However, unfortunately, individual differences make it difficult for every employee to benefit from these kinds of policies (Hunter et al., 2019). WIF is a type of work-nonwork conflict. Work-nonwork conflict not only focuses on the family/home domain but also focuses on conflicts arising from social and religious obligations (Frone, 2003). The established background of WIF can be divided into three categories: firstly, the responsibilities of individuals and expectations from them, like taking out time and caring for children or parents; secondly, psychological and emotional demands, like work stress, work pressure, etc.; and thirdly, organizational norms, such as family-friendly policies, flexible work hours, supervisor support, etc. (Judge & Colquitt, 2004).

A considerable surge has been observed in the use of communication and information technology in the last two decades. Undoubtedly, this digitalization of the workplace has served to improve the workplace dynamics; nonetheless, it is also associated with some adverse outcomes for the employees. Previous studies suggest that the use

of work-related communication and information technology (hereinafter CIT) after work hours or at home may disrupt individuals' family life, which can possibly be related to emotional exhaustion (e.g., Boles et al., 1997; Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007; Butts et al., 2015; Derks et al., 2015), commonly recognized as a component of burnout.

Burnout is a 'prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job' (Maslach et al., 2001). There are three main characteristics of burnout: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment (Leiter & Maslach, 1988). Emotional exhaustion is believed to be an essential component (van Daalen et al., 2009) and also the most extensively reported element of burnout (Tang et al., 2016). Emotional exhaustion can be defined as 'feeling of being overextended and depleted of one's emotional and physical resources' (Maslach et al., 2001). Previous research categorizes emotional exhaustion as psychological and physical stress (Cox et al., 1984). Therefore, it usually sets in when a person experiences persistent emotional as well as physical stress. It also limits a person's capability to take the initiative and fulfill the demands of work (Leiter & Maslach, 2005). Chen et al. (2019) suggest that emotional exhaustion is a fundamental characteristic of burnout. Individuals describing themselves or others as having burnout typically refer to their experience with emotional exhaustion (Schaufeli et al., 2009). Therefore, burnout can be assessed in terms of emotional exhaustion (Lee et al., 2020). Leiter et al. (2015) propose that exhaustion is the most frequent complaint among individuals experiencing job burnout. 'Exhaustion is the core symptom of burnout and its most obvious manifestation' (Leiter et al., 2015, p. 1). Additionally, emotional exhaustion has a better link with job-related outcomes than the other two components of burnout (Lee & Ashforth, 1996) and has been demonstrated to be the best indicator of burnout (Chen et al., 2019; Donahue et al., 2012; Piko, 2006). The previous work done on emotional exhaustion shows many negative individual and organizational outcomes of emotional exhaustion, such as poor attitude towards work, reduced job performance, increased turnover intention, etc. (Boles et al., 1997; Cropanzano et al., 2003; Lee et al., 2013; Maslach & Jackson, 1981).

This study contributes to the existing literature in several aspects. Firstly, this study aims to explore all types of boundary violation events at home and their effects not only on WIF but also on emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Most of the past researchers have focused on one form of boundary violations and its impact on job satisfaction; for example, some studies have only focused on electronic communication or telework as a contributory factor to work-family conflict (Butts et al., 2015). This study aims to evaluate not just one but all types of interruptions from work and role transitions on a daily basis and its effect on job satisfaction as an outcome variable, thus making a substantial contribution to the literature. The work of Hunter et al. (2019) shows the cognitive process of the effect of boundary violations on work-family conflict through negative and positive affective reactions. Still, the direct effect of boundary violations on job satisfaction has (to the best of our knowledge) not been investigated before.

Secondly, the day-to-day approach for boundary violation events does not require individuals to remember the conflicts that arose over long periods of time (Hunter

et al., 2019; Maertz & Boyar, 2011). However, this study is the first to combine the day-to-day experiences of boundary violations and the traditional between-person approach of research. The aim of this study is to link these daily experiences of boundary violations to overall constructs of WIF, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction.

2. Theoretical foundation

The model of this study is built on the concept taken from two main theories: boundary theory and affective events theory (AET). Boundary theory suggests that individuals occupy different work and home-related roles/boundaries (Ashforth et al., 2000; Delanoëje et al., 2019). These boundaries are socially constructed, and individuals create, maintain, and modify boundaries around those roles which can be psychological, physical or behavioral boundaries (Hunter et al., 2019). Depending on individual preferences, these boundaries are described by the degree of permeability, that is, the ease of switching between roles, also called role transitions. The more permeable the boundaries are, the more likely it is for individuals to switch between roles (Ashforth et al., 2000; Delanoëje et al., 2019). Weak boundaries are permeable (e.g., a meeting after work hours or to leave work to take a sick child to hospital) and integrating. In contrast, firm boundaries are impermeable and segmenting (Kreiner et al., 2009).

According to Ashforth et al. (2000), boundary theory describes work-family conflict as the accumulation of daily boundary violation events at the end of the day. For instance, a business meeting conducted after work hours can violate the home/family boundary. Similarly, a phone call from home during working hours can violate the work boundaries (Hunter et al., 2019; Kreiner et al., 2009). In the context of this study, boundary violations are measured as daily events for five consecutive days, and its effect is seen on the WIF.

AET, on the other hand, states a cause and effect relationship between affective experiences at work and job satisfaction. This means that job satisfaction is partially the result of one's judgment (affective reactions) about his/her job based on emotional experiences at work (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). While the main phenomena in the focus of AET are affective experiences, it states that affective experiences may affect job satisfaction; therefore, job satisfaction is one of the consequences of affective experiences. Moreover, according to AET, different events/things happen to people while at work, and people react to these events with different emotions. These experiences have a direct influence on individual behavior and attitudes (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996).

This theory is used in this model because it proposes that affective reactions to daily experiences have an influence on overall feelings/judgment about one's job as well as discrete behaviors at work. This framework also focuses on boundary violations (specific events that violate home/work boundaries) which have a negative reaction (WIF) which again leads to specific negative emotions (emotional exhaustion), which affects an individual's judgment about one's job (job satisfaction).

In the context of this study, boundary violations are the work events that cause affective reactions leading to job satisfaction/dissatisfaction. AET can also be built on boundary theory because the main focus of AET is also on events/experiences; therefore, it supports the episodic methodology of boundary management (Hunter et al., 2019). Therefore, in the context of this study, the literature supports the fact that AET applies to both the boundary theory and work-family interface.

Along with boundary theory and AET, the ego depletion theory also explicates this framework. According to ego depletion theory, when an employee faces conflicting demands from work and home domain at the same time, WIF/FIW increases, and his/her personal resources start to deplete (Wang et al., 2021). An imbalance between job demands and resources leads to emotional exhaustion (Galletta et al., 2019). Moreover, when the individuals dedicate more of their personal resources, like time and energy, the amount of personal resources left for home/family life are less than needed, which causes an increased level of emotional exhaustion (Allen et al., 2000; Hall et al., 2010; Wang et al., 2021).

3. Hypothesis development

3.1. *Boundary violations and job satisfaction*

The AET suggests that boundary violation events may hinder achieving goals in a domain that may trigger an adverse affective reaction. These negative reactions to goal obstruction cause a decrease in one's satisfaction in that domain (Hunter et al., 2019). According to Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), an event is defined as a significant occurrence or something that occurs in a specific location at a specified time period. Additionally, it indicates a change in the environment or in what a person is now experiencing. Certain occurrences are emotionally significant enough to alter an individual's emotions and mood. When one event, of an affective significance, results in a sequence of subevents, also of affective significance, it can be described as an emotion episode. All of this happens because the individual perceives those events to diminish his/her satisfaction with the investment with the people and goals associated with that domain. For example, after attending an official meeting after work hours (boundary violation event), an individual might feel that he/she has less time left for family and children which will decrease his/her satisfaction of investment with the family domain. Similarly, other boundary violations such as continuous calls from the boss/coworkers after work hours may obstruct one's family goals and trigger negative affective reactions to the events interfering with the family time (Hunter et al., 2019).

However, in this study, we aim to focus on how these negative reactions to boundary violation events in the family domain impact not only the satisfaction with the family domain but the overall job satisfaction of an individual. Chen and Spector (1992) also support the fact that events that create work-related frustration have negative reactions, which leads to a decrease in job satisfaction. In a meta-analysis by Bowling et al. (2010), longitudinal studies provided evidence that the causal relationship between overall positive/negative affect and job satisfaction is more profound than the causal relationship of job satisfaction and positive/negative affect. AET's central premise is that one's affective experiences have an effect on one's overall job

satisfaction. According to Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), numerous earlier ideas regarding job satisfaction support the notion that an individual's evaluative judgment about his or her job is the product of two components: affective and belief components that interact to influence attitudes. However, among these two components, the belief component has received more attention in the past than the affect component. Therefore, we suggest the following hypothesis:

H1: Boundary violations at home negatively influence job satisfaction.

3.2. Boundary violations and work interference with family

Work-family conflict has been studied worldwide due to its unfavorable outcomes. Work-family conflict includes both WIF and FIW (Gutek et al., 1991; Lee et al., 2013). To better understand the process of how violations affect conflict, recent studies have focused on boundary violations pulled apart from work-to-family conflict. To differentiate between these two concepts, we define boundary violations as daily events which can include minor things such as a phone call from home at work or a meeting after working hours (Hunter et al., 2019). In contrast, work-family conflict can be defined as the accumulation of boundary violation events at the end of the day (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kreiner et al., 2009). The more boundary violations at work, the more individuals will appraise the events as FIW. Similarly, more boundary violations at home will lead to more WIF (Hunter et al., 2019). The framework presented in the current study, however, would only focus on boundary violations at home and WIF.

In past studies, many types of boundary violations have been linked to WIF. For example, Butts et al. (2015), as well as Boswell and Olson-Buchanan (2007), have linked communication technology usage at home (e.g., email and mobile phone) to WIF. Similarly, Smit et al. (2016) have found that the greater an individual thinks about the family at work (also called cognitive role transitions), the lower is one's job performance. Together, these studies suggest that people perceive boundary violation events as interference in their experiences with the current domain (Hunter et al., 2019). Keeping in view the literature about boundary violations and WIF, we suggest the following hypothesis:

H2: Boundary violations at home positively influence work interference with family.

3.3. Work interference with family and emotional exhaustion

We chose to include only emotional exhaustion into our model instead of burnout because the literature suggests that FIW is most likely to be related to all three dimensions (emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment) of burnout than WIF. Past studies suggest that WIF is mainly linked to emotional exhaustion only and indicates conflicting results for the other two components of burnout. For instance, Chen et al. (2018) have reported a positive relationship between FIW and all three dimensions of burnout, but they found WIF to be positively related to emotional exhaustion only and negatively related to reduced

personal accomplishment among Chinese doctors. They suggest that upon experiencing WIF, a person devotes more time and energy to work which leads to more sense of accomplishment. However, when employees experience more FIW, they devote more time to family, depriving them of the feeling of accomplishment at work. Similarly, Asiedu et al. (2018) also reported FIW as positively related to burnout whereas WIF was not significantly related to burnout. They also suggest that when individuals experience demands from family as interfering with their ability to perform well at work, they struggle to achieve job-related goals and, therefore, are more likely to feel burned out. Therefore, in this study, only the emotional strain caused by WIF is taken into account as the mediating variable.

WIF and emotional exhaustion relationship can be better explained by understanding the concept of ego depletion theory (Wang et al., 2021). Ego depletion theory suggests that the depletion of self-regulatory resources not only changes an individual's self-perception but also negatively affects one's self-control (Baumeister et al., 1998). When an individual faces conflicting demands between work and family, the personal resources are consumed at a rapid rate, resulting in the depletion of personal resources and emotional exhaustion (van Daalen et al., 2009). Wang et al. (2021) argue that when an individual experiences work demands while performing his/her family duties, he/she struggles to maintain a balance between the two roles, which results in additional loss of energy. As the personal resources continue to deplete and are not replenished at the same rate, the loss increases the possibility of emotional exhaustion (Sonnentag et al., 2010). Therefore, we suggest the following hypothesis:

H3: Work interference with family positively influences emotional exhaustion.

3.4. Emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction

Research in the past has time and again shown that as individuals experience emotional exhaustion, they also experience reduced job satisfaction (McDowell et al., 2019; Rutherford et al., 2009) and reduced organizational commitment (Cho et al., 2013). Past studies also show that when emotional exhaustion sets in, individuals experience helplessness, and might feel reduced self-esteem and a reduced sense of accomplishment (Moore, 2000). As a result, they might feel uneasy or frustrated about going to work and might also lose interest or enthusiasm in their job (Babakus et al., 1999).

AET suggests that based on employees' affective experiences, they exhibit various emotions, including joy, anger, happiness, frustration, etc. Each of these emotions leads to a different behavior (Koon & Pun, 2018). Pleasant emotions require conscious or unconscious efforts, which lead to an increase in job satisfaction (Dugguh & Dennis, 2014). However, as burnout is anticipated to affect job satisfaction adversely, so would be the effect of emotional exhaustion on job satisfaction (Babakus et al., 1999). This elucidates why a decline in the job satisfaction level might be induced by emotional exhaustion. Hence, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H4: Emotional exhaustion negatively influences job satisfaction.

3.5. Boundary violations, job satisfaction, work interference with family and emotional exhaustion

Most previous studies have found that the antecedents of WIF are family-domain variables, whereas the antecedents of FIW are work-domain variables. Hunter et al. (2019) have linked boundary violations at home to WIF and boundary violations at work to FIW. Similarly, Kinnunen and Mauno (1998) found that WIF is best explained by family-domain variables; likewise, work-domain variables serve to explain FIW. However, they have also found that WIF had more negative consequences on one's occupational well-being than family well-being. According to Kinnunen and Mauno (1998), the most significantly correlated consequences of WIF are job anxiety, job exhaustion, and psychosomatic symptoms. Therefore, we hypothesize WIF as the first mediator in our sequential mediation model.

Therefore, in the light of previous literature, we propose that WIF acts as an underlying mechanism in the boundary violations at home and emotional exhaustion relationship. The proposed mediation is also backed by Hobfoll and Wells (1998) conservation of resources (COR) theory, which suggests that individuals pursue to gather and retain resources, and when unwarranted demands or insufficient resources are identified, stressful consequences such as WIF might emerge (Lee et al., 2013). The COR theory posits that employees' resources for problem-solving and coping start to shrink when interference occurs between their work and home lives. In the context of this study, when boundary violations at home are high, the individuals might perceive high demands or insufficient resources to perform their job. As a result, WIF may increase, which might also trigger an increase in emotional exhaustion, another stressful outcome.

The literature shows that emotional exhaustion is linked to many adverse outcomes. For example, emotional exhaustion is widely accepted as an essential component of job burnout (Demerouti et al., 2001; Maslach, 1982; Shirom, 2003). Furthermore, earlier research also shows that emotional exhaustion is linked to many behavioral problems and decreased job performance. We suggest emotional exhaustion as second mediator resulting in a sequentially mediated model. The study of Koon and Pun (2018) supports the mediating role of emotional exhaustion; their study suggests that job demands influence workplace incivility through the sequential mediation of emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Therefore, we suggest the following hypothesis:

H5: The negative impact of boundary violations at home on job satisfaction is sequentially mediated through work interference with family and emotional exhaustion.

The conceptual model is presented in [Figure 1](#).

4. Methodology

4.1. Sample and procedure

This research is a combination of descriptive and explanatory research as it attempts to test certain hypotheses using sample data to evaluate the hypotheses about a population. Hypothesis testing is an appropriate research design for this study as we have proposed hypotheses drawing on the relevant theoretical background, and the results

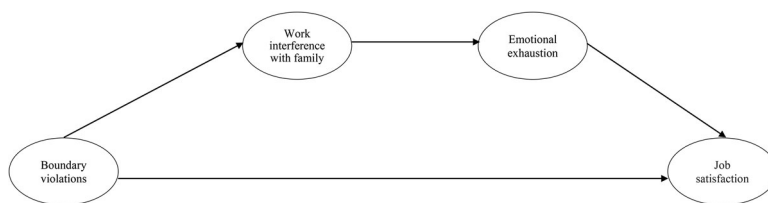


Figure 1. Conceptual model.

Source: produced by the authors based on the original data.

support a particular theory that applies to a population. This research is executed in the textile sector of Pakistan. We chose this industry because the textile sector of Pakistan is considered the country's backbone, with 57% of the country's total export revenues. It employs approximately 45% of the labor force of Pakistan. Most textile manufacturing companies are concentrated in Karachi and Faisalabad (38% and 18%, respectively) (*Textile industry in Pakistan*). Data for this study was gathered from the managerial level employees of 19 textile mills located in Faisalabad and surrounding areas.

In order to qualify for participation in this survey, the employees were selected based on their qualifications and marital status. The participants were required to at least have a bachelor's degree and must be married. We limited our sample to married individuals only because married individuals have more responsibilities towards their families, and they might despise being disturbed at home to a greater extent as compared to the single/unmarried individuals. Therefore, married individuals are more helpful in measuring the variables under study.

Data were collected through a self-administered questionnaire. The participants were required to fill the questionnaire for 'boundary violations at home' every night before going to sleep for 5 consecutive days from Monday to Friday. The data for all other variables (WIF, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction) were collected at one time at the end of the 5-day period of diary study. Qualification and marital status were also asked in the questionnaire to minimize any bias. Since the data for the independent variable boundary violations was to be collected for five consecutive days through the daily diary method, the participants who volunteered to participate in the survey were sent a consent form first, followed by the questionnaire. Confidentiality of the information was ensured to the participants because of the sensitive nature of the topic and questions.

In total, 580 questionnaires were delivered to the prospective respondents; and 410 were received back. Forty of the questionnaires were received blank, whereas 70 were partially filled, leaving us with a final sample size of 300 questionnaires with a 51.7% response rate. Out of 300 respondents, 5.7% were female, and most (94.3%) were male. All participants were married and were holding different designations in different departments. Around 48.3% of the respondents had a graduation degree and 51.7% had a master's degree.

4.2. Measures

4.2.1. Boundary violations

Boundary violations was measured by the scale developed by Hunter et al. (2019), based on the definition of boundary violations explained by Kreiner et al. (2009) and

the definition of microrole transitions described by Ashforth et al. (2000). It is a three-item scale measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. A sample item is: 'Since leaving work today work has interrupted my family life more than I desire'.

4.2.2. Work interference with family

WIF was assessed with Gutek et al. (1991) four-item work interfering with life scale. Items were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. A sample item includes: 'On the job I have so much work to do that it takes me away from my personal interests'.

4.2.3. Emotional exhaustion

It was measured through a four-item scale developed by Kreitner and Kinicki (1992) and adopted by Rutherford et al. (2009) to measure emotional exhaustion. Respondents were asked to answer the questions on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. One of the items include: 'I feel emotionally drained from my work'.

4.2.4. Job satisfaction

We measured job satisfaction through a five-item scale from Judge et al. (1998). The items were measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Sample item includes: 'I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job'.

5. Analysis and results

5.1. Analytical strategy

According to Ohly et al. (2010), aggregation is the preferred method when examining the effects of a level 1 variable (within-person level) on a level 2 variable (between-person level). Similarly, we examine the direct and indirect effects of daily boundary violations at home (a level 1 variable) on overall job satisfaction, which is classified as a level 2 variable by Ohly et al. (2010) (see also Weiss et al., 1999 for a similar study). Therefore, data on boundary violations were aggregated to person level, and the average score (across observations for each respondent) was used to examine the effect of boundary violations on the overall constructs of WIF, emotional exhaustion, and job satisfaction. Bolger et al. (2003) suggest that the usual alternative to using aggregated diary data has been to use single reports in which participants try to recall their experiences. Such general point of view is frequently influenced by biases. Due to respondents' limited recall abilities, they frequently provide retrospective aggregate responses that represent an inaccurate reconstruction of the phenomena under investigation. Shiffman et al. (1997) established that subjective aggregates fit actual (diary-reported) experiences less well than empirical aggregates based on these responses. Thus, even for such straightforward queries, one advantage of diary-based data is the elimination of systematic and random causes of measurement error, resulting in an increase in validity and reliability (Bolger et al., 2003). Therefore, for this study, regressions of average boundary violations predicting overall job satisfaction were

Table 1. Factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha (α), composite reliability, and AVE.

Constructs	Items	Loading	CR	α	AVE
Boundary violations	BV1	0.84	0.89	0.89	0.72
	BV2	0.88			
	BV3	0.83			
Work interference with family	WIF1	0.78	0.88	0.88	0.65
	WIF2	0.78			
	WIF3	0.84			
	WIF4	0.81			
Emotional exhaustion	EE1	0.80	0.86	0.86	0.67
	EE2	0.82			
	EE3	0.85			
Job satisfaction	JS1	0.77	0.85	0.85	0.58
	JS2	0.79			
	JS3	0.73			
	JS4	0.77			

Note. All factor loadings are significant at .01.

CR = Composite reliability, AVE = Average variance extracted.

Source: produced by the authors based on the original data.

computed, as well as average boundary violations predicting WIF and emotional exhaustion were computed (as suggested by Weiss et al., 1999).

5.2. Confirmatory factor analysis

First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed. The results of CFA showed that measurement model achieved a good fit to data ($\chi^2(71) = 100.47, p < .05; \chi^2/DF = 1.42; RMSEA = .037; SRMR = .040; GFI = .95; NFI = .96; TLI = .98; CFI = .99$). All of the factor loadings were significant and greater than 0.70 (except for one item of job satisfaction which was removed). Further, alpha reliabilities and composite reliabilities were above 0.70, and average variance extracted values (AVE) were above 0.50 (see Table 1). These results provided evidence that the measurement model achieved convergent validity.

Next, in order to ascertain the discriminant validity of the constructs, we compared the four-factor solution with different alternative models (see Table 2). The model fit of the hypothesized four-factor model was superior than the fit of the alternative models. A series of chi-square difference tests showed a significant difference in chi-square, indicating a worsening of model fit for the two-factor and one-factor model. Moreover, 'the square root of the AVE of each construct was greater than its correlations with all the other constructs' (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), thus establishing the discriminant validity (see Table 3).

5.3. Common method bias

To reduce the potential problem of common method bias (CMB), we relied upon various procedural remedies. The instructions were given to respondents to remain honest while answering the questions. Furthermore, it was ensured to the respondents that their identities would remain anonymous at all levels. These measures helped

Table 2. Comparison of alternative measurement models for main constructs.

Model	Factors	χ^2 (df)	χ^2 /df	RMSEA	SRMR	GFI	NFI	TLI	CFI	Model Comparison	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δ df
1	Hypothesized four-factor model Boundary violations; WIF; EE; Job satisfaction	100.47*(71)	1.42	.037	.040	.95	.96	.98	.99			
2	Two-factor model Boundary violations + WIF + EE; Job satisfaction	945.03*** (76)	12.44	.196	.154	.68	.58	.51	.59	2 versus 1	844.56**	5
3	One-factor model Boundary violations + WIF + EE + Job satisfaction	1257.11*** (77)	16.33	.226	.168	.58	.44	.35	.45	3 versus 1	1156.64**	6

Note: WIF = Work interference with family; EE = Emotional exhaustion.

*** $p < .01$.

** $p < .05$.

Source: produced by the authors based on the original data.

Table 3. Validation of the measurement model—discriminant validity.

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 Gender	1.06	0.23						
2 Qualification	1.52	0.50	-.02					
3 Boundary violations	5.28	0.90	-.05	-.08	(0.85)			
4 Work interference with family	3.50	1.07	-.14*	.05	.24**	(0.80)		
5 Emotional exhaustion	3.04	1.08	.04	.05	.20**	.26**	(0.82)	
6 Job satisfaction	2.82	1.00	.16**	.01	-.25**	-.41**	-.27**	(0.76)

Note. N = 300. Diagonals in parenthesis under Fornell-Larcker Criterion represent the square root of average variance extracted (AVE); while below the diagonal the estimated correlations are represented.

Gender (1 = Female, 2 = Male); Qualification (1 = Bachelors, 2 = Masters).

* $p < 0.05$.

** $p < 0.01$.

Source: produced by the authors based on the original data.

decrease the social desirability bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Next, reverse coding for some of the items was done, along with positioning the dependent and independent variables at separate places within the questionnaire, thus further reducing the risk of CMB (Malhotra et al., 2006; Podsakoff et al., 2003). Additionally, Harman's single-factor test was utilized to eliminate the existence of CMB. The single factor explained only 35% of the total variance, which is within the acceptable range (Podsakoff et al., 2003).

5.4. Descriptive statistics and correlations

Preliminary support to our hypotheses was extended by the correlations reported in Table 3. We controlled for gender and qualification. Boundary violations had a positive correlation with WIF and emotional exhaustion ($r = 0.24$ and 0.20 , respectively, $p < .01$) and a negative correlation with job satisfaction ($r = -0.25$, $p < .01$). WIF and emotional exhaustion negatively correlated with job satisfaction ($r = -0.41$ and -0.27 , respectively, $p < .01$).

5.5. Hypotheses testing

The PROCESS macro for SPSS developed by Hayes (2017) was used to test the study hypotheses. Regression results revealed that boundary violations showed a negative relationship with job satisfaction ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .01$). Thus, H1 was supported. Boundary violations were found to be related positively to WIF ($\beta = .28$, $p < .01$), and WIF showed a positive relationship with emotional exhaustion ($\beta = .23$, $p < .01$). H2 and H3 were, therefore, supported. Finally, emotional exhaustion revealed a negative relationship with job satisfaction ($\beta = -.14$, $p < .01$), thus lending support to hypothesis 4. These results are reported in Table 4 and Figure 2.

5.6. Tests of mediation

H5 proposed sequential mediation of WIF and emotional exhaustion between the relationship of boundary violations and job satisfaction. We employed the PROCESS macro model 6 in order to examine the sequential mediating effect. Path value for the indirect effect for sequential mediation was -0.009 ($0.28 \times 0.23 \times -0.14 = -0.009$,

Table 4. Parameters estimates.

Path from	To	Parameter estimate	SE	t-value
Boundary violations	Work interference with family	.28**	.07	4.21
Work interference with family	Emotional exhaustion	.23**	.06	3.97
Emotional exhaustion	Job satisfaction	-.14**	.05	-2.78
Boundary violations	Job satisfaction	-.16**	.06	-2.62

Note. N = 300.

**p < 0.01.

Source: produced by the authors based on the original data.

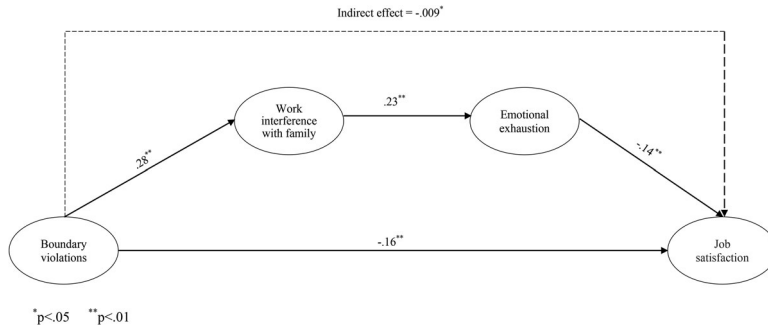


Figure 2. Path-analytic model of the sequential mediating effects.

Source: produced by the authors based on the original data.

Table 5. Total, direct and indirect effects of boundary violations on job satisfaction.

Effect	Point estimate	SE	BC 95% CI	
			Lower	Upper
<i>Indirect effect</i>				
Boundary violations → WIF → Job satisfaction	-.090**	.026	-.147	-.045
Boundary violations → Emotional exhaustion → Job satisfaction	-.025*	.013	-.055	-.004
Boundary violations → WIF → Emotional exhaustion → Job satisfaction	-.009*	.004	-.019	-.002
Total indirect effect	-.124**	.033	-.193	-.065
<i>Direct effect</i>				
Direct effect of boundary violations on job satisfaction (c')	-.157**	.060	-.274	-.039
<i>Total effect</i>				
Total effect of boundary violations on job satisfaction (c)	-.280**	.063	-.404	-.157
<i>R-square</i>				
WIF				.056
Emotional exhaustion				.089
Job satisfaction				.216

Note. N = 300, WIF = Work interference with family.

*p < .05.

**p < .01.

Source: produced by the authors based on the original data.

p < 0.05) (see Figure 2). This indirect effect was negative and significant ($\beta = -0.009$, CI = $-.019$ – $-.002$). Table 5 shows the PROCESS macro results regarding direct and indirect effects of boundary violations on job satisfaction. These results showed that the impact of boundary violations on job satisfaction was sequentially mediated by WIF and emotional exhaustion. H5 was, thus, supported. Further, the direct effect of boundary violations on job satisfaction (path c') was negative and significant (-0.157, p < 0.01), and so was the total effect (-.280, p < 0.01).

6. Discussion

The findings of the first hypothesis are consistent with what was hypothesized. Boundary violations' direct effect on job satisfaction has not been researched before. This study adds to the literature by reporting a direct negative link between boundary violations at home and job satisfaction. We found that if employees experienced more daily boundary violation events at home, their overall job satisfaction would significantly suffer. The indirect effect of this relationship can be seen in previous studies; for example, job-related stress like heavy workload and conflict have been negatively linked to job satisfaction (Khamisa et al., 2015; Trivellas et al., 2013). Moreover, the use of smartphones after work hours (also a type of boundary violations) is also known to blur work-home boundaries and is linked to stressful consequences and decreased family satisfaction (Chesley, 2005).

In hypothesis 2, we have proposed a positive relationship between boundary violations at home and WIF. Our findings support this hypothesis, and it is also consistent with the past literature. Previous studies show a significant direct link between boundary violations at home and work-family conflict (Hunter et al., 2019). The indirect relationship can also be found in the past studies; for example, frequent daily use of smartphones after work hours is also a type of boundary violations at home, which leads to WIF (Derks et al., 2015) and adversely affects employees' well-being (Gombert et al., 2018). Similarly, the affective tone and time required on electronic communication also lead to WIF through anger (Butts et al., 2015).

Our third hypothesis proposed a positive association between WIF and emotional exhaustion. We found that when employees feel that their work is interfering with their family lives, they will feel emotionally exhausted as a result. This is also consistent with and adds to the existing literature. As the WIF increases, an individual can feel that job demands are more than the required resources. The impact of high job demands can make employees feel emotionally drained and exhausted (McDowell et al., 2019). This is also in line with the ego depletion theory, which states that recurrent conflict between work and family causes a rapid decrease/depletion in an individual's resources. If the loss of resources is more than the resources being immediately replenished, it results in negative consequences such as emotional exhaustion and decreased job performance (Wang et al., 2021).

Our findings also support the fourth hypothesis, in which we stated that emotional exhaustion leads to lowered job satisfaction. Extensive research has been done on job satisfaction in order to comprehend employees' behaviors and attitudes. Research shows that employees become emotionally exhausted when they perceive their abilities to be inadequate to do their job. As a result, they become frustrated, and dissatisfaction sets in (Mulki et al., 2006). Moreover, to release their negative emotions, employees who are emotionally exhausted refrain from exhibiting productive behaviors (Koon & Pun, 2018). Some studies have failed to significantly link emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction (e.g., Boles et al., 1997), while many studies have found a significant relationship between the two variables (see, for instance, Babakus et al., 1999; Jaramillo et al., 2006).

Our findings also support hypothesis 5, suggesting a chain of effects from boundary violations at home to job satisfaction through WIF and emotional exhaustion. Employees who experience, on average, more boundary violations at home on daily basis experience more WIF. The interruptions from the work domain into the home domain make them struggle to maintain a balance between work and home. As a result, employees feel emotionally drained and dissatisfied with their job.

6.1. Theoretical implications

This study contributes to the literature in a number of ways. First, it contributes to the literature on boundary violations and extends the study of Hunter et al. (2019). Hunter et al. (2019) reported the positive association of boundary violations at home with work-family conflict within the framework of AET, whereas this study extends it to a chain of effects from WIF to emotional exhaustion and job satisfaction. Moreover, this is the first study to establish a direct empirical link between boundary violations at home and job satisfaction. This is an extremely important relationship because literature supports the fact that there are many negative consequences of job dissatisfaction, such as employees' engagement in deviant behavior that can be harmful to organizations (De Clercq et al., 2020), intent to leave the job (Dutra et al., 2018) and increased mental health problems (Extremera et al., 2020). So, job dissatisfaction is worthy of concern for organizations.

Second, this study contributes and extends the literature on boundary theory, AET, and ego depletion theory in one framework. In this study, boundary theory defines boundary violations as daily events or experiences in which the boundary of one domain is violated by the encroachments extended by the other domain. Our findings are consistent with the proposition of boundary theory, that the daily boundary violation events together form work-family conflict, thus linking the daily boundary violations at home to the existing literature on WIF and endorsing the work of Hunter et al. (2019). The AET links the negative reactions of daily boundary violations at home to one of the consequences (i.e., WIF). Furthermore, ego depletion theory posits that when employees struggle to balance between work and home domains, their personal resources start to deplete rapidly and they experience emotional exhaustion, thus leading to lowered job satisfaction.

Third, this is the first study to our knowledge that establishes a unique sequentially mediated framework that links boundary violations at home to job satisfaction through WIF and emotional exhaustion. This is also our contribution as this unique mediation has not been tested before.

Lastly, this study has been conducted in Pakistan, an extensively family-oriented culture, where people find peace and harmony in their family lives and value their family traditions (Ahmad et al., 2020). According to Hofstede (1983), Pakistan is a country with collectivistic culture. A collectivistic country is different from the individualistic culture in terms of demands faced in the work-family domain. In a collectivistic culture, people have responsibilities towards their families and extended families, both financially and emotionally (Ahmad et al., 2020). Therefore, the execution of this study in a collectivistic culture is a significant contribution.

6.2. Practical implications

Our study can help practitioners in many ways. It not only sheds light on the adverse effects and consequences of interruptions on employees' lives, including their emotional state and their overall job satisfaction, but it will also be beneficial for the organizations. Hunter et al. (2019) argue that organizations, these days, are focusing on policies like flextime, daycare facilities and encouraging the use of electronic communications to make boundaries more flexible and permeable for employees. However, most of the time, organizations fail to focus on the daily consequences of integrated boundaries. This study will help the policymakers to see the negative side of blurred boundaries and design strategies to help employees manage their work-home boundaries while minimizing the consequences such as conflict, emotional exhaustion, and job dissatisfaction.

This study is also helpful for employees in a way that they can themselves devise some strategies to decrease permeability in their work-home boundaries. For example, employees can manage the expectations of their employers/coworkers of their availability after work hours by conveying them their availability hours after work and also the specific type of communication, for example, text message if there is no emergency and call if the matter is urgent. This will help minimize interruptions/boundary violations at home. Similarly, they can set a few hours every day specifically for family and limit smartphone use in those hours. Moreover, they can complete any work task after the kids are asleep or after the family goals are accomplished (Hunter et al., 2019).

7. Limitations and future research directions

One limitation of our study is that the data were collected only from one sector (i.e., the textile sector), limiting the generalizability of the findings. In the future, this framework can be tested on other sectors such as the banking sector and for professions that require more permeable boundaries, long working hours, and frequent telecommunication after work hours, specifically doctors and IT professionals.

Second, although a strength of our research is that we have studied the respondents across multiple days regarding boundary violations, the data for other variables were collected at one point in time. Due to the fact that data for all variables except boundary violations were collected once and not on a daily basis, we were unable to examine the within-person effects of boundary violations on WIF and job satisfaction. Future research could study the outcomes of boundary violations with the daily diary method and examine the within-person effects as well.

Third, this study only includes the boundary violations at home and does not include the boundary violations at work. Therefore, in the future, the consequences of boundary violations at work and FIW can also be studied. Fourth, this study only reports the negative side/consequences of boundary violations at home; therefore, in the future similar framework can be used to investigate the positive effects of boundary violations. Kreiner et al. (2009) suggest that there are two types of violations. This study only includes the 'intrusion violations' in which the boundaries are blurred more than the employee's desire. In the future, similar framework can be used to

examine the ‘distance violations’, in which the boundaries are blurred less than the employees desire.

Disclosure statement

There are no relevant financial or non-financial competing interests to report.

ORCID

Bushra Nida  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2594-6137>

Muhammad Shahid Tufail  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2347-8475>

Sharjeel Saleem  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4890-5805>

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