



Bounded Flexibility

Time-Spatial Flexibility, Boundary Management and Work-Life Balance

PURPOSE

Employing the Job Demands-Resources Model as a theoretical framework, this study aims to contribute to the work-life balance and flexibility debate by analyzing the relationship between Dutch working women's use of work-related time-spatial flexibility and segmentation as a boundary-management strategy (i.e., limiting work-life and life-work interruptions), on the one hand, and work-life balance (time-based, strain-based and positive work-home interference), on the other hand. Moreover, we will investigate whether segmentation moderates the relationship between time-spatial flexibility and work-life balance.

DESIGN/METHODOLOGY

Multiple regression analyses were conducted using data collected in 2011 by means of an e-questionnaire among employed and self-employed Dutch women (N = 448) registered at a work agency for virtual work.

RESULTS

Time-spatial flexibility and work-private segmentation were shown to have negative relationships with time-based work-home interference. Time-spatial flexibility and work-private and private-work segmentations were shown to have negative relationships with strain-based work-home interference. However, the interaction effect showed that private-work segmentation was less effective in reducing strain-based work-home interference when women worked more flexibly. Furthermore, it was found that only time-spatial flexibility enhanced positive work-home interference.

LIMITATIONS

The study mainly comprised highly educated and part-time working Dutch women. Future research could focus on other labor market groups, and from different national contexts.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS:

It was concluded that both flexibility and segmentation have the potential to help women workers to improve their work-life balance. Therefore, we recommend that organizations and women employees may gain from developing 'bounded flexibility strategies.'

ORIGINALITY/VALUE

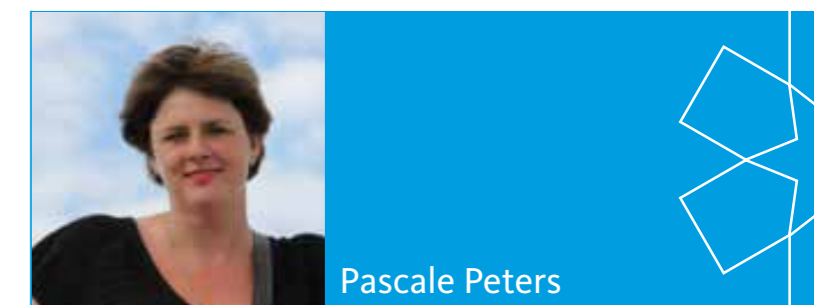
The study focused on two seemingly contradicting concepts: flexibility and segmentation. Moreover, it applied recent insights regarding boundary management by distinguishing between two types of segmentation strategies. Moreover, it included both employed and self-employed women.

KEY WORDS

boundary management; time-spatial flexibility; women workers; work-life balance; HR-management.

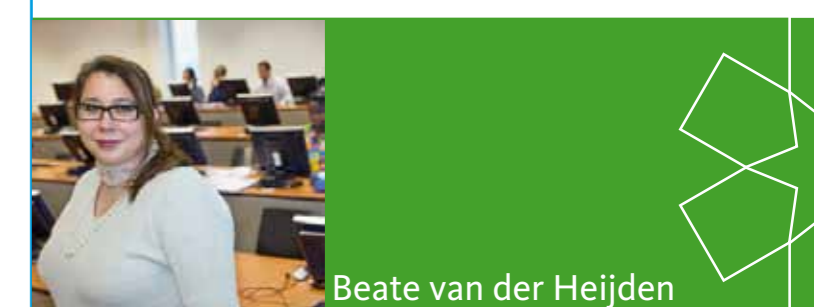
COLLABORATION

The data were collected through a DIVA voucher and in collaboration with Moneypenny, a temporary work agency and consultancy firm specialized in virtual working and new ways to work.



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Pascale Peters and Beate van der Heijden work on joint studies focusing on drivers and consequences of work-life policies and strategies in general and flexible working (such as teleworking, New Ways to Work, and working carer policies), boundary management strategies and employability in particular.