

Social Media, Work and Nonwork Interface: A Qualitative Inquiry

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Abstract

Flourishing social media, easy access to smartphones and tablets, and ready availability of the internet in the past decade have made it possible for people to be connected to social media almost anywhere at any time. In this qualitative study, we interviewed 41 individuals in multiple professions in the United Kingdom to examine the role of social media in how they navigate their personal and professional lives. We find social media to be a virtual domain that has boundaries with nonvirtual personal and professional domains. Focusing on spatial and temporal boundaries, our findings revealed four boundary transition modes employees used to switch between the social media domain and their work and nonwork domains: boundary switch avoidance; disciplined boundary switch; integrated boundary switch; and boundary switch addiction. We also describe 15 mechanisms through which engaging with social media platforms enriches or conflicts with individuals' personal and professional lives. Our findings extend work-nonwork scholarship and boundary theory to include virtual as well as nonvirtual domains.

Keywords: Work-family conflict, work-family enrichment, work-nonwork interface, work-nonwork boundary, social media

Social Media, Work and Nonwork Interface: A Qualitative Inquiry

The work-nonwork interface has been studied for decades, and it continues to receive scholarly attention due to the changing nature of work and nonwork spheres and employee demographics (Powell, Greenhaus, Allen, & Johnson, 2019). Scholars from multiple disciplines have theorized this phenomenon and established that individuals' work and nonwork domains are linked via mechanisms such as conflict, enrichment, spillover, segmentation, and integration (e.g., Allen, 2012; Edwards & Rothbard, 2000; French & Johnson, 2016; Zedeck, 1992). These scholarly endeavors have one thing in common: they explain the interface between two nonvirtual life domains—in most cases, the work and family domains. **Therefore, we still have limited knowledge of work-nonwork theories' applicability to domains of a different nature (i.e., virtual).**

Early discourse on the work-nonwork interface took place a few decades ago when information technology was in its early development, and access to the internet was limited. As internet use expanded, individuals migrated to virtual means to accomplish their tasks (e.g., Olson-Buchanan, Boswell, & Morgan, 2016). For example, email partially replaced traditional means of correspondence, employers offered work-from-home options to their employees (Colbert, Yee, & George, 2016; Raghuram, Hill, Gibbs, & Maruping, 2019), and individuals began online networking and virtual teamwork (Ollier-Malaterre, Jacobs, & Rothbard, 2019; Wilson, Gosling, & Graham, 2012). As the use of virtual means to accomplish work and nonwork activities increased, work-nonwork scholars began to consider this trend in examining how individuals combine their personal and professional lives.

In the past few years, work-nonwork scholars have paid increasing attention to the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) and their application to the work-nonwork interface (Derks, Bakker, Peters, & van Wingerden, 2016). These studies can be

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3 divided into two categories. One group of studies considered ICTs as boundary-influencing
4 features (Siegert & Löwstedt, 2019) and reported ICTs' effects on individual preferences for
5 managing their work–nonwork boundary (e.g., Choroszewicz & Kay, 2019; Park, Liu, &
6 Headrick, 2020). A second group examined the correlational or predictive relationship
7 between technological tool use and the work–nonwork interface (i.e., enrichment or conflict),
8 reporting both positive and negative outcomes (e.g., Wang, Gao, & Lin, 2019).
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11 We complement the findings of previous studies by proposing social media—
12 “computer-mediated tools of the Web 2.0 generation that make it possible for anyone to
13 create, circulate, share, and exchange information in a variety of formats and with multiple
14 communities” (Leonardi & Vaast, 2017, p. 150)— to be a virtual domain¹, rather than a
15 factor or a variable, that can have boundaries with, and enrich or conflict with nonvirtual life
16 domains, such as work and family. A virtual domain is rooted in a virtual environment where
17 information technology capabilities allow individuals to conduct work and interact
18 synchronously and asynchronously (Kirkman & Mathieu, 2005). Within the work–nonwork
19 interface literature, domains have been seen as entities bounded by self-defined boundaries or
20 fostered by social roles (Frone, 2003). Although the term “domain ” has not been exclusively
21 defined, work-nonwork interface scholars have treated the work domain as activities and
22 experiences related to paid work and the nonwork domain as experiences and activities taking
23 place at home (Allen, 2012; Frone, 2003).
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47 The work-nonwork interface theories and conceptualizations assume that it is viable
48 to distinguish between work and family as separate entities and to study how the two domains
49 are linked or related (Kanter, 1977). To date, work-nonwork scholarship has not
50 conceptualized the interface between virtual domains and well-established nonvirtual
51 domains, such as work and family. Our qualitative study among 41 employees from multiple
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¹ We should note that we are presenting this finding upfront for clarity; as we explain in the analysis section, we found social media to act as a virtual domain during data analysis.

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3 professions in the United Kingdom bridges this gap by examining the interface between a
4 virtual domain (social media) and nonvirtual work and family domains. We address the two
5 following questions: (a) what are the modes of transition between social media and work or
6 family domains?; and (b) what are the mechanisms through which social media interfaces
7 with work or nonwork? Informed by work-nonwork boundary theory (Ashforth, Kreiner, &
8 Fugate, 2000), we map four boundary transition modes—boundary switch avoidance,
9 disciplined boundary switch, integrated boundary switch, and boundary switch addition—that
10 our participants used to switch temporal and spatial boundaries between social media and
11 work or family domains. Also, adopting the work-nonwork conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell,
12 1985) and work-nonwork enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) theories lens, our findings
13 capture 15 mechanisms for social media-to-work or family conflict, and social media-to work
14 or family enrichment.

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31 We expand the existing work-nonwork theories in three ways. First, the proposed
32 boundary transition modes extend the existing literature by adopting a broad view toward
33 how employees switch between a virtual domain and their work or family domains—not
34 focusing solely on how employees manage ICTs or social media usage at either work or
35 nonwork. Second, we bring together the findings of studies that either indicated how
36 engagement with social media improves our professional lives (e.g., Charoensukmongkol,
37 2014) or focused on the negative impact of social media on our work (e.g., van Zoonen &
38 Rice, 2017) or nonwork (e.g., Siegert & Löwstedt, 2019). By regarding social media as a
39 domain, similar to the work-nonwork literature that has highlighted bidirectional
40 relationships between work and family (Michel, Mitchelson, Kotrba, LeBreton, & Baltes,
41 2009), we argue for the existence of bidirectionality in the interface between virtual and
42 nonvirtual domains. Finally, we highlight that, due to the increasing use of social media in
43 nonwork domains and the myriad ways social media affects employees' nonwork lives and
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3 spills over into their work world, organization scholars can no longer focus solely on the use
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5 of social media at work or for work-related purposes.
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7 8 **Theoretical Background** 9

10 Work-nonwork interface is an umbrella term that encompasses the nuances and the
11 variety of conceptualizations that examine the relationship between employees' work and
12 nonwork domains. Three prominent theories describe the interface between work and
13 nonwork domains: work-nonwork boundary (Ashforth et al., 2000), work-nonwork
14 enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), and work-nonwork conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell,
15 1985). Below, we will provide a brief description of each theory and how our work
16 contributes to their literature.
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26 **Work-Nonwork Boundary and ICTs** 27

28 Work-nonwork boundary theory conceptualizes how individuals transition between
29 work and family domains demarcated by physical, temporal, and psychological boundaries
30 (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000). It is rooted in the classic sociological work of Nippert-
31 Eng (1996, 2008), which postulates that people naturally need to draw mental fences and
32 categorize information to make sense of the world around them. The process of drawing
33 boundaries "results in the creation of slices of reality—domains—such as work and home
34 that have particular meaning for the individuals" (Ashforth et al., 2000, p. 474). This theory
35 emphasizes the meaning people attach to work and home domains, and how they transition
36 between different roles and across boundaries (Ashforth et al., 2000).
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49 Boundary theory further explains that individuals engage in boundary management to
50 establish a balance between work and family domains or to reduce boundary-crossing
51 difficulties (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009; Nippert-Eng, 1996). As a result, a central
52 focus of research adopting a boundary theory perspective has been exploring individual
53 preferences and behavioral efforts to separate or integrate their work and family domains
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3 (Allen, Cho, & Meier, 2014). Research findings suggest that, based on the level of perceived
4 boundary control, individuals adopt three styles to manage boundaries between their work
5 and nonwork domains: integration, separation, and alternation (Ammons, 2013; Kossek &
6 Lautsch, 2008; Kossek & Lautsch, 2012; Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999; Kossek, Ruderman,
7 Braddy, & Hannum, 2012). Integrators tend to combine their personal and professional
8 domains, whereas separators keep them separate, and alternators switch back and forth
9 between them. Boundary management styles are developed further to define “role-firsters” as
10 individuals who identify with a dominant role and put that role first so that its demands cross
11 over and interrupt other roles (Kossek, 2016).
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24 In the past few years, work-nonwork researchers have examined the use of ICTs and
25 their impact on the work-nonwork boundary. They argue that technology is making
26 work-nonwork boundaries more “porous” (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2019, p. 426), increasing
27 individuals’ visibility and reducing their privacy (Siegert & Löwstedt, 2019; Walden, 2016).
28 Mazmanian, Orlikowski, and Yates (2013) demonstrated that although using mobile devices
29 offered the professionals they studied short-term flexibility and control over interactions with
30 others, it also increased expectations for their availability and work engagement. Developing
31 “digital cultural capital”—the combination of awareness, motivation, and skill needed to
32 manage technology (p. 427)—has been suggested as a solution to enable individuals to
33 actively manage communication technologies impacting their work-nonwork boundaries
34 (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2019).
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49 Some studies have shown that the use of ICTs has different effects for those who
50 prefer to integrate or separate their work and nonwork (Derks et al., 2016; Piszczek, 2017).
51 Integrators find technology useful to increase their boundary-control power, while
52 segmentors experience less boundary control when using work-related mobile technology at
53 home.
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3 Other scholars have borrowed segmentor and integrator concepts to explain
4 individuals' boundary management differences regarding their use of ICTs and mobile
5 devices. Duxbury, Higgins, Smart, and Stevenson (2014) divided smartphone users into three
6 groups: segmentors, who only used smartphones during work hours; integrators, who used
7 their smartphones for work and nonwork activities with no space limitations; and struggling
8 segmentors, who did not prefer to use smartphones during nonwork time, but felt they were
9 expected to do so by their organizations. Choroszewicz and Kay (2019) built upon this work
10 by studying mobile technology use among male lawyers and identified three boundary
11 management styles—struggling segmentors, struggling integrators, and integrators— that was
12 associated with varying models of fatherhood and family.
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26 Some scholars have studied the ICTs users' communicative boundary management
27 that involves handling expectations of other people in the work or family domain (Caporael
28 & Xie, 2003; Derks, van Duin, Tims, & Bakker, 2015; Gadeyne et al., 2018; Hislop & Axtell,
29 2011). Communicating expectations helps employees reduce ICT-related interruptions: for
30 example, designating when colleagues or family members can contact them during work or
31 nonwork hours (Park et al., 2020).
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40 More directly relevant to our research is the limited literature (Kühnel, Vahle-Hinz, de
41 Bloom, & Syrek, 2020) on the work-family boundary and engagement with social media.
42 Focusing on social media (Facebook and Twitter) usage among employees of non-
43 governmental organizations (NGOs), Siegert and Löwstedt (2019) outline three boundary
44 work tactics—prohibitive, reactive, and active—their participants adopted to protect their
45 private lives from social media scrutiny. We conclude that, so far, ICTs have been mainly
46 regarded as boundary-influencing features and that scholars have typically been concerned
47 about the impact of using work-related mobile devices during nonwork hours. These studies
48 usually describe strategies employees implement to reduce ICT-related interruptions that
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originate from work and impact the family domain. Our study extends these studies by identifying social media as a virtual domain that interfaces with both work and nonwork domains. Social media users can engage with both personal and professional activities while at work or nonwork due to the omnipresence of social media and the possibility of its users' constant connectivity (Walden, 2016; Yang, 2020). So far, we know little about how individuals transition between virtual (social media in our case) and nonvirtual domains (work or family); we explore this question in the first section of our findings.

Work-Nonwork Enrichment, Conflict, and ICTs

Work-nonwork enrichment proposes that experiences in either work or nonwork domain can lead to favorable outcomes in the other domain (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Work-nonwork conflict explains the tension between work and nonwork domains when people face excessive and incompatible demands in their lives (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Researchers have established the **bidirectionality** of enrichment and conflict and have distinguished between work-to-nonwork and nonwork-to-work effects (Allen, French, Dumani, & Shockley, 2020; Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; McNall, Nicklin, & Masuda, 2010; Michel et al., 2009; Zhang, Xu, Jin, & Ford, 2018).

Empirical findings suggest that ICTs potentially have both negative and positive effects on the work-nonwork interface (Wang, Gao, & Lin, 2019). On the one hand, researchers have shown that ICTs provide employers with the possibility of connecting with their employees at all hours, which encourages work problems to override time reserved for nonwork/family life (Butts, Becker, & Boswell, 2015; Mullan & Wajcman, 2019; Schlachter, McDowall, Crompton, & Inceoglu, 2018). This stream of research suggests that the use of ICTs for work during nonwork time is positively associated with work-nonwork conflict (Derks et al., 2015; Gadeyne et al., 2018). On the other hand, researchers have also found that ICTs add flexibility or "novel opportunities" to help employees manage their work-nonwork interface

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3 (Wajcman, Bittman, & Brown, 2008, p. 636). This line of research has shown that using ICTs
4 for personal and professional purposes outside the workplace improves the balance between
5 work and nonwork domains (Christensen, 2009; Wajcman, Rose, Brown, & Bittman, 2010).
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10 Derk and colleagues (2016) argue that for integrators using smartphones to accomplish work-
11 related tasks at home is associated with reduced work-family conflict, while for separators it
12 might have no impact on work-family conflict. These studies have examined the role of
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There exists limited research relevant to social media usage and the work-nonwork interface (Siegert & Löwstedt, 2019). Studies have found social media to have both negative and positive impacts on employees' work-nonwork interface and some work-related variables. Liu, Zhang, Chen, Guo, and Yu (2015) found social media usage to be associated with work-nonwork conflict, and other researchers have argued that social media can interrupt work, decrease employee performance (Kühnel et al., 2020), and increase stress (Bucher, Fieseler, & Suphan, 2013). However, another group of studies has underlined positive outcomes of employees' engagement with social media, including work-nonwork balance (Kühnel et al., 2020), co-worker networks and friendships (Yang, 2020; Yang & Wong, 2020), job satisfaction (Charoensukmongkol, 2014), work engagement (Syrek, Kühnel, Vahle-Hinz, & De Bloom, 2018), and recovery from work (Kim et al., 2019).

Also, a few studies have highlighted both positive and negative outcomes from employees' social media use subject to specific conditions. One example is Bizzi (2020) that used data on the blogging activity of a Canadian health-care provider's employees and found

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3 that the positive or negative impact of using social media at work depends on whether the
4 employees use it to engage with organizational members or outsiders. Engagement with
5 outsiders had a negative relationship with intrinsic work motivation and proactive behavior,
6 while engagement with colleagues was positively associated with those variables.
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12 To date, as evident in the descriptions of the three prominent theories above and
13 reflected in the scales developed to measure work-family conflict (e.g., Michel, Kotrba,
14 Mitchelson, Clark, & Baltes, 2011; Michel et al., 2009) or work-family enrichment (e.g.,
15 McNall et al., 2010), work-nonwork interface scholarship has predominantly examined
16 domains that exist in the physical world. In this study, we extend this literature by focusing
17 on social media as a virtual domain, and we borrow from work-nonwork conflict and
18 enrichment theories to explore the mechanisms through which social media enriches or
19 conflicts with work and nonwork.
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30 **Methodology**

31 Our epistemological lens for this study was constructivism. Constructivists believe
32 that meaning is born as a result of human engagement with world realities—that “meaning is
33 not discovered but constructed” (Crotty, 1998, p. 9). We adopted a qualitative methodology,
34 which is appropriate when the research purpose is exploratory (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010).
35 This approach allowed us to explore the experiences and multiple realities of our participants'
36 experiences. It also enabled us to understand how our participants made sense of their
37 experiences (Merriam, 2009)—in this case, the interface between participants’ personal and
38 professional domains.
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50 **Participants**

51 Forty-one employed adults from various occupations in the United Kingdom
52 participated in this study. More than 80% of the participants were in their 30s (15), 40s (10),
53 or 50s (8); the rest were between 18-20 (1), or in their 20s (2), 60s (3), or 70s (2). 51% of the
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3 participants' identified as female, 71% had children, and 66% were white. Thirty participants
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5 were married, and 11 were single or in a relationship (see appendix for participants'
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7 demographic information). We engaged with data analysis as we were conducting the
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9 interviews. In the final stages of our analysis, and after we reached saturation, we decided to
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11 include participants below 30 or above 60, which was aligned with selecting confirming cases
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13 to help us examine if their experiences would fit into patterns that emerged in our study
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15 (Patton, 2002).
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19 We began the recruitment process from our personal and professional contacts and
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21 continued with snowball sampling (Patton, 2002). Our rationale for using snowball sampling
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23 was that our network was limited to academic jobs, and we wanted to diversify our
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25 population to include individuals from multiple occupations and age groups in the UK. We
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27 selected a broad range of participants from varied professional backgrounds including
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29 consulting, engineering, management, teaching, medicine, library, food service, and
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31 academia. However, due to our having a wider network among higher education
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33 professionals, our participants from higher education slightly outnumber the others. All but
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35 six participants worked fulltime. Those who worked part-time worked at least 20 hours per
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37 week; they included two full-time undergraduate students who worked part-time and a full-
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39 time housewife who did part-time volunteer work.
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44 **Data Collection**

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46 We used semi-structured face-to-face interviews as our primary data collection
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48 method. Interviews were conducted in public places, offices, or homes depending on
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50 participants' preferences. We recorded the interviews with the participants' consent.
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53 Interviews lasted from 30 to 80 minutes; interview questions are available as an appendix.
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Data Organization and Analysis

We transcribed interview recordings using professional transcription services (1,121 pages of transcript). We started the study with a broad focus to explore how engagement with social media affected the work-nonwork interface. During data analysis, we realized that social media could be regarded as a domain in a virtual environment, which slightly changed the focus of our data analysis. Treating social-media as a domain enabled us to apply boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000) to the virtual environment and examine **boundary transition modes** adopted by social media users (SMUs) to **switch** between the social media domain and work and non-work domains. In addition, informed by work-family enrichment theory (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006) and work-family conflict theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), we decided to adjust our research focus and examine social media-to-work and social media-to-nonwork enrichment and conflict; therefore, we analyzed the current study's dataset informed by three work-nonwork theories. Our approach is aligned with Jackson and Mazzei's (2011) recommendations to borrow theoretical concepts from the literature and apply them in the analytic process to integrate theory and data.

After reviewing the dataset, we entered the data in NVivo software and began our analysis using the constant comparative method (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). First, we read the transcripts line-by-line and coded the transcriptions (open coding). Then, we classified the codes into categories; the categories were given conceptual labels informed by work-family boundary, work-family enrichment, and work-family conflict theories. However, we did not limit our categories to the concepts discussed in those theories, and we allowed the data to speak for itself (Table1). Both authors engaged with the process of developing interview questions, data collection, and making sense of the data. To analyze the data, one author analyzed the whole dataset, and the other author reviewed the subcategories and categories and raised questions when there was an inconsistency between the two authors' data

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3 interpretations; we continued this process until we reached an agreement. We did not quantify
4 the inter-rater reliability process because both authors engaged with the whole process, were
5 familiar with the dataset, and had conversations in cases of disagreement (Armstrong,
6 Gosling, Weinman, & Marteau, 1997).
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18 **Credibility**

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20 Qualitative researchers emphasize credibility, which seeks to understand whether the
21 multiple realities in participants' minds are consistent with what the researcher has attributed
22 to them (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993). In this research, we ensured credibility
23 by utilizing three strategies outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985). First, we had multiple
24 readings of our data and followed a constant process of revisiting the data and referring to the
25 literature to enable us to look at our data through multiple theoretical lenses. Second, we used
26 peer debriefing by asking two of our peers who had sufficient qualitative research knowledge
27 to give us feedback on our first draft. Finally, we kept a reflexive journal as a means to
28 document the research process, our observations, interactions with the participants, and
29 reflections. Also, we interviewed eight individuals whose age range was different from the
30 participants we had initially interviewed as confirming cases to examine if their experiences
31 matched patterns that emerged in our data analysis. Doing so enabled us to fine-tune our
32 themes, and to be aware of our research journey, our positionality, and potential biases we
33 could bring to the data collection and analysis.
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52 **Boundary Transition Modes**

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54 Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Pinterest were social media
55 platforms that our participants frequently mentioned in the interviews; WhatsApp, Facebook,
56 and Twitter were the platforms most frequently used. With WhatsApp, we focused only on its
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3 social aspect (e.g., group chats) and did not analyze occasions where this platform was used
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5 for one-on-one text messaging. The SMUs' engagement with social media platforms ranged
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7 from extremely high to extremely low, and we did not find any age or gender patterns in our
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9 participants' social media usage; however, only 20% of our participants were below 30 or
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11 above 60, and having more participants from these two age groups might have revealed
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13 differences not captured in our work. Depending on their usage pattern, our interviewees'
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15 work and nonwork domains ranged from immersion in social media platforms to having little
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17 interaction with them.
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21 Our findings comprise two sections. Section one is informed by boundary theory and
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23 discusses four modes of transition our participants adopted to switch between the social
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25 media domain and their work or nonwork domains. Section two is informed by work-family
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27 conflict and work-family enrichment theories, and illustrates how engaging with the social
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29 media domain enriched or conflicted with our participants' work or nonwork. In other words,
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31 the first section attends transitioning between the virtual and nonvirtual domains, while the
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33 second section focuses on their content, tasks, and activities.
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37 **Virtual-Nonvirtual Domain Boundary Transition Modes: Social Media Domain and** 38 39 **Work or Nonwork Domains** 40 41

42 Our analysis revealed four transition modes adopted by the SMUs to switch spatial or
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44 temporal boundaries between their social media domain and work or nonwork domains:
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46 boundary switch avoidance, disciplined boundary switch, integrated boundary switch, and
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48 boundary switch addiction. Our findings did not reach saturation regarding other types of
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50 boundaries, such as relational or cognitive. Below, we describe each transition mode,
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52 supported by quotations from the interview transcripts.
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56 ***Boundary switch avoidance:*** Among the 41 participants, seven were not interested in
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58 the social media domain, and minimized their use of it; however, all the SMUs used social
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3 media to some extent. In cases where the SMUs preferred not to engage with social media,
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5 they were forced to use it to gain access to information available only through such platforms,
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7 or they were asked by their workplace or family to join social media to promote work-related
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9 events or to remain in contact. This group of SMUs avoided social media as much as they
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11 could, had minimum boundary switch between the social media domain and their work or
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13 nonwork domains, and rarely needed to cross boundaries.
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17 The following example is from SMU₁₆, who was on Facebook and Twitter only to
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19 find out about her children's school and afterschool clubs, and did not post anything other
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21 than functional messages. She describes why she adopted a boundary switch avoidance
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23 mode:
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26 "I just feel [social media] is an invasion, because people are on it all the time and I
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28 think it has changed people's behaviors. Because I could be speaking to someone, this
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30 is unusual that you're speaking to me and not looking at a device, and I think the
31
32 manners have just gone ... and I'm battling it. It's an ongoing battle."
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36 The SMUs who adopted a boundary switch avoidance mode did not belong to a
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38 particular generation, and their ages ranged from SMU₂₅, an engineer in his 20s, to SMU₂₇, a
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40 business developer in his thirties, SMU₃₄, a trader in his forties, SMU₂₅, an engineer in her
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42 fifties, and SMU₁₁, a secretary in her seventies.
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45 ***Disciplined boundary switch:*** Eighteen SMUs managed the boundaries between their
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47 social media domain and their work or nonwork spheres by putting limitations on when
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49 (temporal boundary) and where (spatial boundary) they checked their social media profiles;
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51 we have labeled this mode as disciplined boundary switch. SMU₃₆ and SMU₃₁ described their
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53 disciplined-boundary switch mode as "... when I get to work, except during my break times,
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55 [my two phones and my iPad] are in my locker ... [and I] focus on my job. When I'm on my
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57 break, I check ... what's going on." (SMU₃₆), and "I know what I'm doing on Facebook ...
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3 I've set a boundary. There's time for everything ... I'm just trying to lead a balanced life”
4
5 (SMU₃₁).
6

7
8 It is noteworthy that in this group, less than half had prior experiences of not being
9
10 mindful about their social media usage, or had extensive engagement with it for a while, and
11
12 then made a conscious decision to create a social media domain usage pattern that matched
13
14 their needs and preferences. Deciding to create patterns for engagement with social media
15
16 occurred when individuals became self-aware of their social media usage after being
17
18 distracted (e.g., SMU₃₀) or not able to concentrate when needed (e.g., SMU₃₉). As a result,
19
20 those participants decided to create disciplined temporal or spatial boundaries between the
21
22 social media domain and their work or nonwork domains. The majority of participants in this
23
24 group practiced this mode without having faced any prior problems.
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28
29 ***Integrated boundary switch:*** The third transition mode, integrated boundary switch,
30
31 was adopted by 11 interviewees who switched between the media domain and work or
32
33 nonwork domains during their work and nonwork hours without setting any temporal or
34
35 spatial boundaries for their social media usage. A few participants said they had “no specific
36
37 time ... for social media. It just runs across the whole day,” (SMU₂₉). Participants
38
39 categorized under integrated boundary switch mode did not find it hard to switch boundaries
40
41 and did not believe that engaging with social media affected their personal or professional
42
43 lives, as described by SMU₂₈ and SMU₁₀:
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47 If I'm spending time with my family, that doesn't mean that I should lose touch with
48
49 the world ... Spending quality time with my family doesn't necessarily mean that if I
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51 get a message [on social media], I shouldn't read it until I've finished spending quality
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53 time. (SMU₂₈)
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3 I check WhatsApp and Twitter during work ... When I'm in work, I leave my phones
4 out, so I can clearly see the screens ... Obviously, if there's an emergency going on, I
5
6 wouldn't say, "Stop the emergency. I just need to check my [social media]." (SMU₁₀)
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10 **Boundary switch addiction:** Five participants struggled with managing boundaries
11 between the social media domain and work or nonwork domains, could not control the
12 frequency of switching between them, and checked their social media platforms anywhere
13 and anytime; we labeled this mode as boundary switch addiction. Those participants found it
14 difficult to regulate how they engaged with social media and found themselves constantly
15 checking social media during their waking hours. In some cases, participants with boundary
16 switch addiction tried to limit the frequency of their social media engagement, but failed, as
17 described in these two examples: "Yes. I have at times thought, 'Right, I'm going to have a
18 week where I check Facebook once a day or I don't check it at all.' That has not lasted more
19 than half an hour" (SMU₂₂), and "because I know I'm addicted, I know that sometimes it's
20 easy for me to get sucked into [Facebook], and so that's why I talked about needing some
21 boundaries ... I definitely have difficulty with self-regulation" (SMU₄₁).
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38 In one of our interview questions, we asked the SMUs if they preferred to separate
39 their work and nonwork spheres. This allowed us to compare the SMUs' transition mode for
40 switching boundaries between social media and their work or nonwork domains with their
41 work-nonwork boundary strategies (which is extensively studied in the literature). At the time
42 of the interview, two common strategies used by the SMUs when managing boundaries
43 between their nonvirtual work and nonwork domains were integration and separation. When
44 switching boundaries between the social media domain and their work and nonwork domains,
45 the majority of the integrators (52.4%) practiced an integrated boundary switch mode and the
46 rest practiced disciplined boundary switch (19.05%), boundary switch addiction (19.05%), or
47 boundary switch avoidance (9.5%) modes. When the work-nonwork domain separators
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3 switched boundaries between the social media domain and work or nonwork domains, the
4 majority (70%) adopted a disciplined boundary switch mode, while the rest used boundary
5 switch avoidance (25%) or boundary switch addiction (5%) modes. We can conclude that the
6 SMUs' boundary transition mode between a virtual and a nonvirtual domain and between two
7 nonvirtual environments did not necessarily follow similar patterns.
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14 **Social Media-Work/Nonwork Enrichment**

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16
17 Engagement with the social media domain enriched our participants' work or
18 nonwork domains in many ways. Below, we describe mechanisms through which social
19 media enriched the SMUs' work and nonwork domains, respectively. We contend that both
20 social media-to-work and social media-to-nonwork enrichment should be considered by
21 organization scholars because work and nonwork domains interface with one another, and the
22 enrichment experienced by the SMUs in nonwork spills over to their work domain.
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30 We highlight that our findings depict solely social media-to-work/nonwork
31 enrichment mechanisms described by the SMUs. Our interview protocol did not include
32 questions about the interviewees' work-to-social media or nonwork-to-social media
33 enrichment, because the role of social media as a virtual domain was revealed to us during
34 data analysis. We argue that, similar to work-nonwork literature, the interface between social
35 media and work or nonwork can be a two-way relationship, and a few interviewees referred
36 to **this relationship**; however, we could not capture the nuances of work-to-social media or
37 nonwork-to-social media enrichment due to a lack of data.
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49 **Social Media-to-Work Enrichment**

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51 Engagement with the social media domain while physically at work or working from
52 home enriched the SMUs' work in three ways we describe below. More than 30 interviewees
53 asserted that the social media domain enriched their work domain, but the mechanisms
54 described below were not common to all of them.
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3 ***Maintaining contact with family.*** Our interviewees, especially parents or those who
4 had family members living overseas, believed that social media enabled them to reduce their
5 concerns about their families while at work. Although it is possible to use non-social media
6 modes, such as phone calls, to receive family information, many participants said they used
7 social media platforms, especially WhatsApp family groups, because of their efficiency,
8 continuity, and the capacity to exchange group messages and photos. The SMUs appreciated
9 that access to social media while at work helped them feel they were available for
10 emergencies. For example, SMU₂₈ said, “I use WhatsApp ... to keep in touch with my family
11 ... it helps me because once I know that they're fine, then I can concentrate more on work.”
12
13

14 ***Facilitating self-promotion and professional opportunities.*** SMUs who used social
15 media platforms to share their professional updates and achievements, believed that those
16 platforms enriched their professional lives. SMU₃₂, an author, shared updates about her books,
17 which could lead to having more readers; and SMU₃₀ used social media to share her
18 academic achievements: “When I publish a paper I just put it on Facebook for my few friends
19 ... to help publicize because it's free communication and free promotion. That could be
20 regarded as empowerment, couldn't it?”
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When participants revealed their professional qualifications on social media platforms, or contributed to relevant conversations, it could lead to unexpected professional opportunities. These opportunities did not necessarily arise because the participants intentionally promoted themselves, but because the SMUs shared their views on certain topics and contributed to an ongoing discourse. For example, SMU₄₁, who researched equity and diversity and engaged in conversations from that lens, told us: “Facebook has also brought me business as an independent consultant with someone who has recognized some of the things I'm saying, and they say, ‘Do you do consulting work around blah blah?’ ... I got some work from her because of that.”

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3 Interviewees managed to find jobs, get professional information, promote themselves,
4 or recruit employees via their social media platforms. An example was given by SMU₃₄:

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7 LinkedIn and ResearchGate have empowered me ... because I'm looking for a job
8 now and most of the time when I look on LinkedIn, they're sending me links that this
9 job is something you might like to do. I apply for them, sometimes I get an interview,
10 sometimes I get a response.
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17 ***Accommodating non-traditional professional communication.*** For a few
18 participants, specifically those who worked for small businesses, social media was regarded
19 as a platform to house or facilitate non-traditional professional communications. Also, many
20 participants followed individuals or communities on twitter or Facebook to update their
21 professional knowledge:
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28 There are active coaching professionals across Twitter that share a lot of information,
29 share a lot of new ideas ... there are a whole load of health and wellbeing people that
30 I follow. I do find that I have a lot of ex-students that then follow me and have
31 exchanges as well (SMU₁₄).
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37 **Social Media-to-Nonwork Enrichment**

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39 Engagement with social media enriched the SMUs personal lives through six
40 mechanisms described below.
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45 ***Facilitating socialization and efficient communication.*** Social media platforms
46 facilitated the SMUs social lives. In some cases, interviewees mentioned that they used social
47 media to have conversations with their extended family and friends, like-minded people, or
48 those who shared their common interests and hobbies. Examples include SMU₂, who used
49 Twitter to exchange updates about football games; SMU₂₂, who simultaneously watched a
50 cooking show and exchanged views with her connections interested in the show; and SMU₁₆,
51 who said, "I have WhatsApp groups for my friendship groups, for the sporting groups, for the
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3 sporting mums who I socialize with.” The following examples from SMU₄₀, who was an
4
5 immigrant in the United Kingdom, and SMU₇, a part-time employee and full-time student,
6
7 illustrate how social media can facilitate socializing with family and nonfamily circles.
8
9

10 My family has this WhatsApp group and has really been very helpful ... We've got
11
12 family in America, ... in UK, ... in Africa. Social media actually brought us all
13
14 together, so it helps us to carry out projects, things that we need to do back home in
15
16 Africa, and it's been very useful. (SMU₄₀)
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18

19 I was really shy as a teenager. I wouldn't know how to speak to somebody, even if it
20
21 was people at school. I wouldn't sit at the back of the class ... and I just kept my head
22
23 low. Then social media was introduced, so it did make an impact, in a way, for me.
24
25 Because it did bring me out of my shell, and I'd speak to people that I'd never speak
26
27 to. (SMU₇)
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29

30 ***Giving voice.*** Participants, especially those who were active on their social media
31
32 platforms, argued that social media can give voice to those who might not have the
33
34 opportunity to be heard otherwise. SMU₁₉ mentioned how social media enables individuals to
35
36 reach out to others and be heard.
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38

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40 If you look at Brexit, post-Brexit ... lots of people who were against leaving [shared]
41
42 their posts and their viewpoints like, “We need to come together, we need to work
43
44 through this” ... Maybe without social media ... those guys wouldn't have a voice ...
45
46 I can definitely see its value in that respect. (SMU₁₉)
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49 Another example is SMU₂, who found it “...exciting when somebody re-tweets what [I] say
50
51 ... that's quite a boost ... And then other people ... contact ... me off the back of that ... So, I
52
53 [will] obviously [have] new people following ... So that's ... quite empowering.”
54
55

56 ***Providing social support mechanisms.*** Interviewees gave us examples from situations
57
58 where social media helped them seek support or provide support to someone who needed it.
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3 Social media facilitated support for friends who were grieving (SMU₂₃) or friends who
4 experienced a personal crisis (SMU₂). SMU₃₁, who lived in a foreign country and was
5 moving to a new city with no connections, describes how Facebook helped her receive
6 support:
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12 When I was moving ..., I didn't know anybody in [this city]. ... I spoke to a friend of
13 mine ... on Facebook ... She said, "Not to worry. I also know another lady who lives
14 in [this city] ... The lady sent me a friend request on Facebook and then that was how
15 we connected ... My coming to [this city], she made it very comfortable for me.
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21 ***Inspiring through positivity and fun.*** Some SMUs believed that social media feeds
22 boosted their positivity and inspired them. However, in most cases, such inspiration came
23 from selected pages or forums that they chose to visit, rather than from random social media
24 feeds. For example, SMU₃₂ said, "I really love Pinterest ... I read a lot of quotes ... you pin
25 images on Pinterest and there are these motivational or inspirational quotes, and they're just
26 fantastic," or SMU₄₁ shared with us, "if I get to the point where I'm just drained of positivity,
27 I'll go to [a couple of friends'] page[s] ... and they will usually have something ... [that] can
28 be really uplifting."
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40 Social media feeds could also enrich our participants' personal lives by putting them,
41 and sometimes their families, in a good mood:
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44 Some of [the feeds] can be very funny and humorous, so most times when I just want
45 to laugh I go on social media because I will always find something that will make me
46 laugh either ... When my wife comes in ... We'll just laugh over it. It's a way for us
47 to unwind. (SMU₂₉)
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53 ***Keeping Informed.*** Social media enabled the SMUs to remain informed and follow
54 news about the topics they cared about in a fast-paced world. Accessing such news became
55 more important when an important public decision, such as this example: "Brexit vote, and
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3 the build-up to that. The recent election, I think that was quite interesting. It's nice to be able
4 to find out very quickly what was happening, and there are some links that you find to
5 various things" (SMU₁₁).
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10 **Social Media-Work/Nonwork Conflict**

11
12 All the SMUs mentioned that engagement with social media platforms had some sort
13 of conflict with their work or nonwork domains; below, we describe mechanisms through
14 which this conflict occurred, supported by quotations from interview transcripts. We argue
15 that both social media-to-work and social media-to-nonwork conflict should be examined by
16 organization scholars, because ultimately, work and nonwork interface with one another, and
17 the conflict between social media platforms and the nonwork domain spills over to the work
18 domain as well.
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28 **Social Media-to-Work Conflict**

29
30 ***Decreasing productivity.*** Checking social media platforms while at work made it
31 difficult to concentrate on their job for a few participants, which negatively impacted their
32 productivity. While most participants said they did not spend much time on social media
33 while at work, some found it difficult to disengage from it. For example, SMU₃₇ described
34 checking social media at work as:
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42 I'm always on [social media] ... so it takes it away from what you're meant to be
43 doing. You're constantly checking up your phone ... Your productivity is declining
44 slightly because you're not really focused on what you're doing.
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49 ***Breaching Privacy.*** Many interviews shared with us their concerns about how their
50 social media profiles could breach their privacy at work or have other negative
51 consequences for them. Enabling the social media location function with or without being
52 aware of the consequences, sharing pictures or having pictures shared by others, and being
53 pinned to locations and revealing backgrounds that participants did not necessarily want to
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3 share with their co-workers or managers could cause serious penalties for employees, as
4 highlighted by our participants. The majority of our interviewees were concerned about
5 how their current or prospective workplaces reacted to their social media posts, even if they
6 were personal posts. SMU₂₃ told us she was very careful to not accept work colleagues on
7 Facebook because she witnessed this example:

14 [A colleague] put something [on his personal twitter account] ... it was football banter
15 conversation between him and some other fans about a football match that was going
16 on. One of the staff ... printed a screenshot of it ...and gave it to his boss so he was
17 disciplined and was sacked from the business.

24 **Social Media-to-Nonwork Conflict**

25
26 Conflict between the social media and nonwork domains was more frequent among
27 those who said they were often engaged with their social media platforms and those who
28 found it hard to disengage from such platforms. It is noteworthy that the majority of the
29 participants who experienced conflict mentioned that using a smartphone to access social
30 media increased their social media engagement and lead to more conflict than using a desktop
31 or laptop.

32
33 *Disengaging from family and personal activities.* Engagement with social media
34 when participants were supposed to be spending time with family and loved ones was
35 common among most of the participants who frequently checked social media platforms.
36 Disengagement from family due to engagement with social media was common among
37 participants for all age groups and demographic categories. Examples of this kind of
38 conflict included arguments with spouses or partners (e.g., SMU₂₅, SMU₂₃, SMU₂₂),
39 missing quality time with grandchildren (SMU₆), receiving comments such as “You’re not
40 bloody listening to me, are you?” (SMU₂), or “we have a 'Twittergate' in the house,” when
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3 a participant was on Twitter a lot (SMU₂₃). Engagement with social media platforms could
4
5 be negatively associated with the time parents devoted to their children as well:
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8 We were ... having dinner one night, and we were all sitting around. I was playing on
9
10 my phone, and my husband was playing on his. I noticed that we weren't talking to
11
12 the kids. I was thinking, "Well, this is a bit rubbish, isn't it? (SMU₂₃)
13

14
15 When you have kids, you have to look after and then you concentrate on social media.
16
17 You may not have the time to actually know what the kids are doing ... because you
18
19 are just so much engrossed in using social media. (SMU₄₀)
20

21
22 For some participants, taking a phone to bed or charging a phone next to their bed led
23
24 to them not getting enough rest due to their immersion in social media and engaging with it in
25
26 the middle of the night or early morning. All those actions could lead to a lack of sleep,
27
28 inability to go back to sleep, or failing to engage in their morning routines. SMU₁₈ shared
29
30 with us an extreme example where she planned to go for a run and to make herself a healthy
31
32 breakfast every morning, but after waking up early, she convinced herself she could spend 15
33
34 minutes to check social media. After checking social media, she was so depressed from
35
36 comparing herself with others that she skipped both her run and her healthy breakfast.
37
38

39
40 Interviewees also said they read fewer books (e.g., SMU₁₂), did not do their laundry
41
42 (e.g. SMU₁), and paid less attention to cleaning their homes (e.g., SMU₄₁) due to extensive
43
44 engagement with social media. Another example of social media taking time from personal
45
46 activities was shared by SMU₄: "The garden is not very well maintained, I could paint the
47
48 walls a bit more and maybe I could do more with other hobbies and things, yes, I think [social
49
50 media] probably has distracted from that or taken away that time, yes."
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54 A few SMUs said they were asked by their employers to support and take an active
55
56 role in their workplace social media pages through their personal social media accounts.
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3 Participants typically did it at home during their family time, and sometimes felt stressed
4
5 when receiving updates from such pages. SMU₁₇ shared the following example:
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7
8 One of my challenges that [my line manager] has given me for my professional
9
10 development is to be more active on the [university] side of Facebook and the [team]
11
12 Facebook page [which happens at home]. I think the number of things I posted on
13
14 Facebook could probably be counted on one hand. Two of those were the birth of [my
15
16 children] and the other three had to do with [work].
17
18

19
20 ***Taking extensive time.*** Many participants asserted that their engagement with social
21
22 media led to wasting time. Our interviewees believed that engaging with the increasing
23
24 number of social media platforms and the high frequency of social media posts took so much
25
26 time, and, in cases where major national events were happening, it became unmanageable.
27
28 SMU₁, who had recently developed strategies to limit the time she engaged with social media,
29
30 shared with us,
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33 Well, because you go on and you see, “Oh, I’ve not seen Liz for years. I wonder how
34
35 she’s getting on.” Then you look at all her posts, and the photographs, and you look at
36
37 your watch and two hours has gone. You suddenly think, “Oh, my goodness. What
38
39 have I been doing for the last two hours?” (SMU₁)
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41

42
43 Some participants were personally interested in limiting their social media use to a
44
45 few platforms, but they felt overwhelmed when they were asked to join new platforms when
46
47 their friends used such platforms to communicate with them, as evident in the example
48
49 below.
50

51
52 [A]s more and more people have individual modes of communication ... through
53
54 social media, ... I’m being forced to have to open up other modes, because I have
55
56 friends that like to use [those modes] ... And I’m finding that because of their
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3 preferences I have to now have access to all of those, which is becoming
4
5 overwhelming. (SMU₁₃)
6

7
8 A few participants highlighted that their network expected them to respond to all the
9
10 messages they received, even if they did not have time to do so. Some social media platforms
11
12 allow message senders to check whether their messages have been seen or not; some
13
14 participants said they were tempted to see the messages but did not have enough time to react
15
16 to all of them. As SMU₂₈ put it, “I haven't been on Facebook for the past eight years or nine
17
18 years. I just found it too stressful. People keep messaging and you have to reply. If you don't
19
20 reply, people will see that you have not replied and it just became too much. I just said no and
21
22 stopped.”
23
24

25
26 ***Arousing negativity and frustration.*** A common theme shared by the SMUs who
27
28 frequently used social media platforms or had done so for a while was provoking negative
29
30 thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Some participants shared with us that they banned
31
32 themselves from certain social media platforms or deactivated their accounts due to the
33
34 negative thoughts that frequently arose when participants checked social media first thing in
35
36 the morning as evident below:
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38

39
40 I found that's how I was starting my day off: either scrolling through other people's
41
42 things and thinking, “Oh, she's got a great life, look at her clothes. Look what holiday
43
44 she's been on, look how great she looks.” ... So, I wasn't starting the day feeling
45
46 good about myself, I was comparing myself to people that I didn't really know. Then,
47
48 the side of a lot of doom and gloom, people tend to share quite a lot of negative things
49
50 ... So, I thought, “Just get rid of it all.” (SMU₁₉)
51
52

53
54 One common frustration among the participants was seeing random things in social
55
56 media such as stories, images, or posts that left them with in a negative feeling when they
57
58 were no longer engaged with social media. Examples include seeing gothic images with
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3 violence, or someone ran over by a bus or similar examples that could not be forgotten (e.g.,
4
5 SMU₃₃, SMU₅).

6
7
8 Negative feelings were also aroused in participants when they experienced personally
9
10 hurtful political, religious, or other ongoing debates on social media. Some participants who
11
12 read those comments, typically made by friends, were hurt but did not respond (SMU₅) and
13
14 just grumbled in their minds (SMU₂₂); some responded; and some terminated their friendship,
15
16 as evident in the following quotation: “[I unfriended] a friend of mine [on Facebook who]
17
18 was ... going into what I would call white supremacy ... no matter how you respond back,
19
20 it's just going to create more negativity, more hate, more junk ... I don't need negativity in my
21
22 life.” (SMU₁₃)
23
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25

26
27 Our participants also expressed frustration with seeing pictures about individuals or
28
29 things they did not care about. Interviewees shared with us that in some cases they
30
31 unfollowed posts from certain connections to avoid such frustrations, but some ended up
32
33 scrolling them and feeding their frustration without being interested; SMU₈ describes a
34
35 common situation: “I just got annoyed with [those] posting so much crap ... because it was
36
37 just like they were living their lives through social media, like, ‘I'm having this for breakfast,’
38
39 ‘I'm doing this now,’ and I was like, So what? Everyone else is doing this as well”.

40
41
42 A group of participants who were connected to their work colleagues through social
43
44 media and checked social media first thing in the morning had concerns about the impact of
45
46 those messages on how they started their day. In cases of crisis, some work colleagues
47
48 reached participants through their social media platforms. Even if the participants were not
49
50 available for help, hearing the problem could affect their personal life routine or their rest
51
52 quality. SMU₃₇ described,
53
54

55
56 Recently ... I woke up in the morning to see a message put down [on social media] by
57
58 the store manager ... It wasn't really a good message ... I'd say it probably puts you
59
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2
3 in a mood or a bad mood. It's not a very positive outlook when you already have that
4
5 information first thing in the morning."
6
7

8 ***Causing addictive habits.*** Although only five participants could be categorized as
9
10 extreme cases of having a boundary-switch addiction when crossing boundaries between
11
12 social media and their work and nonwork domains, more than half of the participants said
13
14 they felt they were somehow addicted to their phones or had developed the addictive habit of
15
16 constantly checking social media notifications. In many cases, the participants did not expect
17
18 specific messages when checking their phones; they simply did it because that was the first
19
20 thing to come to their mind when they were bored or needed a rest. We also found extreme
21
22 cases of checking social media in the middle of the night while in bed, as shown in the
23
24 example below.
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26
27

28 [Checking Facebook frequently is] completely illogical ... especially when the people
29
30 that I care about most in my life aren't really on [it] and... a lot of the people that
31
32 come up on my feed, are not really people I care about, so why do I go into it? I don't
33
34 know. It's bizarre. I ask the same question. And my logical brain is, like, "Why are
35
36 you doing it? Why do you need to go into Facebook right now?" And I don't know
37
38 what the answer is. And that's why I feel ... it's like an addictive habit more than
39
40 anything. (SMU₂)
41
42
43

44 ***Hindering concentration.*** The instant nature of social media platforms and constant
45
46 message notifications interrupted participants or shifted their focus from their intended
47
48 activities to social media feeds. A group of participants said they turned off their notifications
49
50 to reduce such interruptions, but carrying a smartphone, and speculating there might be new
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52 messages, tempted them to check their phones frequently. Below is one example:
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55 I do some Bible reading and I use a Facebook group to access the Bible excerpts and
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57 the notes ... I guess, because of the way Facebook is set up, it pushes that news story
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3 to my top every morning ... normally, if I'm really tired and I don't want to
4 concentrate, my plan is to look at what I'm planning to look at, but I instead scroll
5 through other things. (SMU₂₂)
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10 **Discussion and Theoretical Implications**

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12 Our findings extend work-nonwork scholarship to include virtual domains and to
13 inform future researchers who might explore several mediators and moderators that might be
14 associated with the interface between virtual and nonvirtual domains. In this research, we
15 focused solely on the social media domain and examined its interface with work and nonwork
16 domains. Future research can examine other virtual domains such as a virtual leisure domain
17 (e.g., online multiplayer games) or a virtual professional domain (which complements the
18 existing studies on teleworking and technology-mediated working, such as online job search,
19 online personal branding campaigns, or online continuing education). In addition,
20 conceptualizing social media as a virtual domain makes it possible to examine the
21 bidirectional relationships between virtual and nonvirtual domains. We were unable to
22 capture the nuances of work-to-social media or nonwork-to-social media relationships
23 because the idea of assuming social media to be a virtual domain emerged during data
24 analysis, but we highlight an important gap that can be addressed by future researchers. In
25 other words, future research can explore work/nonwork-to-social media enrichment and
26 conflict to develop a broader understanding of this phenomenon.
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47 Our findings extend work-nonwork boundary theory by developing a more
48 comprehensive grasp of the SMUs' boundary management profiles. We identified four
49 transition modes adopted by our participants to transition between their social media and
50 work/nonwork domains that add a dimension to the existing work-nonwork boundary
51 literature. We provided evidence that the SMUs did not necessarily follow the same patterns
52 in transitioning boundaries between two nonvirtual domains as between a virtual and a
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3 nonvirtual domain. This means that future studies should widen their lens to capture the
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5 nuances of employees' boundary preferences when managing domains of different natures. In
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7 addition, we encourage future researchers to examine boundary management between two
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9 virtual domains, which will complement our findings.
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12 We argue that the interactive, fluid, and dynamic nature of the social media domain
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14 as well as the possibility of constant connectivity to it while at work or nonwork have led to
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16 the emergence of boundary-switch addiction—an extreme case of failure in boundary
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18 management—that has been seen as a potential mental health problem for some users (Kuss
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20 & Griffiths, 2011). Previous research has addressed addiction to social media to some extent
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22 (e.g., Sriwilai & Charoensukmongkol, 2016); we contend that treating social media as a
23
24 virtual domain that can have boundaries with other domains, and impacts and is impacted by
25
26 its users, might provide more insight into this issue.
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30 Our findings on social media-to-work enrichment and conflict illustrate that there is
31
32 no one-size-fits-all strategy that organizations can adopt for employees' social media usage at
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34 work. The social media domain was shown to both enrich and conflict with the SMUs' work
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36 domain, depending on their contingencies and experiences. The strengths of the enrichment
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38 and conflict mechanisms between social media and work domains can be further explored to
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40 enable practitioners to make more informed decisions regarding social media use at work.
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44 We found ten mechanisms through which social media enriched or conflicted with
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46 the SMUs' nonwork domains, and five mechanisms through which it enriched or conflicted
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48 with their work domains. At first glance, organization scholars might perceive these findings
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50 to be more relevant to the nonwork domain than to the work domain, but we disagree.
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52 Extensive literature has shown that employees' work and nonwork domains impact one
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54 another; for example, from research we know that lack of sleep and sleepiness at work impair
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56 employees' ability to interpret information, interact with others effectively, and contribute
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3 fully to the organization (Budnick & Barber, 2015; Swanson et al., 2011). We argue that
4 social media-to-nonwork enrichment or conflict will eventually spill over to the work
5 domain, and this is what future researchers need to address. The majority of existing studies
6 focus solely on social media use at work or work-related ICT usage at home; however, an
7 employee who has devoted extensive time to social media use at home, has disengaged from
8 their family due to social media addiction and will not perform at work the same as
9 employees without such an addiction. Another example is an immigrant employee who
10 manages to socialize with distant family and friends through social media in an affordable
11 manner, or who receives social support through social media during nonwork time and
12 manages to overcome typical challenges faced by similar employees (e.g., Ladkin, Willis,
13 Jain, Clayton, & Marouda, 2016). Therefore, we suggest future researchers become
14 simultaneously mindful of the interface between social media and both work and nonwork
15 domains so they can address conflicts that might arise from employees' engagement with
16 social media and reinforce social media-to-nonwork or work enrichment mechanisms.

35 **Limitations and Practical Implications**

37 Due to the qualitative nature of our research, we cannot generalize our findings, but
38 our explorations can inform individuals and organizations engaged with social media in
39 similar contexts. All our participants resided in the United Kingdom, which is a Western
40 country where individuals and organizations have had access to social media for more than a
41 decade. Individuals in other geographical areas, where public access to broadband internet
42 and social media is fairly recent, or where certain social media platforms are filtered, might
43 have different experiences with the social media and work or nonwork interfaces.
44 Furthermore, the majority of our participants represented employees with professional jobs;
45 employees with precarious jobs might provide a different picture of the impact of social
46 media on their personal and professional lives.
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3 Our findings revealed how social media enriched or conflicted with our participants'
4 personal and professional lives. This is of value to many groups, including employees who
5 engage with social media, human resource management (HRM) professionals in charge of
6 developing social media-related policies and training, and organizations using social media
7 for business purposes. We argued that the interface between the social media domain and
8 nonwork domain deserves further attention, as the majority of enrichment and conflict
9 mechanisms occurred in the interface between those two domains. It is important for
10 organizations not to limit their interventions to social media usage at work, but to help
11 employees become mindful of their social media behaviors in general. HRM professionals
12 might invest in initiatives that raise employee awareness about personal social media usage
13 and help them reflect on usage behaviors that might conflict with their nonvirtual domains.
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28 One of the four boundary transition modes identified in our findings was boundary-
29 switch addiction. Organizations should provide support mechanisms and relevant training for
30 employees who find it challenging to manage their social media usage, as it might have
31 detrimental effects on their personal and professional lives. Creating an environment where
32 individuals feel safe to share these issues and ask for help is a prerequisite for providing
33 support. Learning about conflict mechanisms, such as being penalized for personal ideas,
34 organizations might re-evaluate and revise their relevant policies to protect employees from
35 these negative experiences.
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Table 1. Social Media Domain and Work and Nonwork Domains Enrichment and Conflict

Social Media-to-Work/Nonwork Enrichment	
Social Media-to-Work Enrichment	Social Media-to-Nonwork Enrichment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining contact with family • Facilitating self-promotion and professional opportunities • Accommodating non-traditional professional communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling socialization and efficient communication • Giving voice • Providing social support mechanisms • Inspiring through positivity and fun • Keeping informed
Social Media-to-Work/Nonwork Conflict	
Social Media-to-Work Conflict	Social Media-to-Nonwork Conflict
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreasing productivity • Breaching privacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disengaging from family and personal activities • Taking extensive time • Arousing negativity and frustration • Causing addictive habits • Hindering concentration

Appendix 1. Interview Questions

1. Would you please describe a typical day in your life? Please be as specific and detailed as possible.
2. How about weekends? How would you describe your typical weekend?
In the two above questions we want to see if they mention anything about using social media in their work-family without being asked about it.
3. How do you describe your use of social media? (Here we look for the history, pattern and frequency of their social media use; we might ask some additional questions based on the interviewee's responses; for example, we might ask what social media platforms they use most, if they take their mobile phone to their bed, if checking social media is the first thing they do in the morning- In cases where the interviewee was not using social media frequently or at all, we will ask why)
4. What is the role of social media in your family/personal life? (Based on the interviewee's response we can encourage them to share both positive and negative aspects)
5. In what ways do you use social media for work/professional purposes when you are spending time with family? (Might want to include something along the lines of – what impact if any does your use of social media have on your family/family time)
6. What is the role of social media in your work/professional life? (Based on the interviewee's response we can encourage them to share both positive and negative aspects)
7. In what ways do you use social media for family/personal purposes when you are at work? (Might want to include something along the lines of – what impact if any does your use of social media have on your professional/work time)
8. How would you feel if you were asked to spend a day or few days without using social media at all?
9. Is there anything about your use of social media in managing your work-family responsibilities that you might want to share and I did not ask?

Appendix 2. Participants' Demographic Information

Random Participant #	Sex	Age	Occupation	Marital Status	Children	Race
1.	Female	50s	School Teacher	Married	2	White
2.	Female	60s	HR administrator	Married	1	White
3.	Female	50s	Teaching-oriented Lecturer	Married	3	White
4.	Male	50s	IT professional	Married	3	White
5.	Female	30s	HR professional	Married	2	White
6.	Female	30s	Full-time housewife + charity volunteer	Married	4	White
7.	Male	20s	Fulltime Student- Part time employee	Single	0	White
8.	Male	30s	Administrative job	Married	0	White
9.	Female	60s	Self-employed + Part-time Lecturer	Single	0	White
10.	Male	30s	Planner	Married	1	White
11.	Male	70+	Accounts and admin	Married	2	White
12.	Female	70s	Secretary	Married	2	White
13.	Male	50s	Teaching-oriented academic	Married	2	White
14.	Female	60s	Self-employed Coach	Married	2	White
15.	Female	50s	HR Manager	Single mom	2	White
16.	Female	50s	Self-employed Consultant	Married	2	White
17.	Male	30s	Teaching-oriented academic	Married	4	White
18.	Female	40s	Business Adviser	In a relationship	0	White
19.	Female	30s	Business Adviser	Married	0	White
20.	Male	40s	Project Manager	Single	0	White

21.	Male	19	Fulltime Student+ Part-time employee	Single	0	White
22.	Female	30s	Librarian	Single	0	White
23.	Female	30s	Change Manager	Married	2	White
24.	Male	50s	Engineer	Married	2	White
25.	Male	20s	Engineer	Partner	0	White
26.	Female	30s	Researcher	Single mom	1	Non-White
27.	Male	30s	Business Developer	Married	2	White
28.	Female	40s	Doctor	Married	3	Non-White
29.	Female	30s	Carer	Married	2	Non-White
30.	Male	40s	Retail	Married	3	Non-White
31.	Female	30s	Author	Married	2	Non-White
32.	Male	40s	Teacher	Married	2	Non-White
33.	Male	40s	Banker	Married	2	Non-White
34.	Male	40s	Trader	Married	4	Non-White
35.	Female	30s	Research Assistant	Married	4	Non-White
36.	Male	30s	Retail manager	Engaged	0	Non-White
37.	Female	30s	Researcher	Married	0	Non-White
38.	Male	40s	Senior lecturer	Married	4	Non-White
39.	Male	40s	Lecturer	Married	2	Non-White
40.	Male	40s	Lecturer	Married	3	Non-White
41.	Female	50s	Professor	Single	0	White

Associate Editor's Comments

#	Comment	Response
1.	Reviewer 1 noted that some typos would need to be fixed, and I agree.	We have now addressed this comment. The manuscript is now professionally proofread and the typos have been fixed.
2.	I also feel that there are a few ambiguities in the presentation. For example, I do feel that "...it enabled us to find participants with matching demographic information who we could not otherwise access" (p. 16) is a bit confusing. A clearer statement, probably with a more specific example, would be helpful to improve the readership.	We removed the sentence referred to in this comment and expanded the sentence after it, pasted below, to cover both age and occupational diversity (Page 11, Paragraph 3). Our rationale for using snowball sampling was that our network was limited to academic jobs and we wanted to diversify our population to include individuals from multiple occupations and age groups in the UK.
3.	There are also other places that you need to pay particular attention to. For instance, the sentence beginning with "Derks and colleagues (2016) argue that for integrators and separators using smartphones to accomplish work-related tasks..." reads confusing (p. 9). Should "separators" be deleted?? Indeed, Derks et al.'s (2016) findings did not support that smartphone use have any impact on segmentors' work-family conflict (although they did propose such an impact). This is just an example. All similar issues need to be examined and correctly carefully throughout the paper.	You are right. Separators needed to be removed from this sentence. We revised the second half of the sentence about the impact of smartphone use on separators' WFC (Page 9): Derk and colleagues (2016) argue that for integrators using smartphones to accomplish work-related tasks at home is associated with reduced work-family conflict, while for separators it might have no impact on work-family conflict. We confirm that we have double checked all the other in-text citations and our interpretations.
4.	I request that: (1) you fix the issues mentioned above	We made sure we fixed the issues mentioned above.
5.	(2) you thoroughly check the content of the paper to ensure that prior literature is interpreted correctly	We confirm that we thoroughly checked the content of the paper to ensure that prior literature is interpreted correctly.

6.	(3) you get the paper professionally proofread for grammar/spelling mistakes and any typos.	We have had the paper professionally proofread and the submitted manuscript has been checked for typos and grammatical issues.
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Reviewer 1's Comment

#	Comment	Response
1.	A couple of typos noted (page 4, line 19/20; page 11, line 35/6). There may be more. This may be resolved in proof-reading for publication.	We have now fixed those typos in the manuscript.

For Peer Review

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