

An Exploration of the Interplay of Main Job Role Centrality and Hybrid Work in the Motivation to Hold Multiple Jobs

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Madeleine Isabel Tiefenthaler

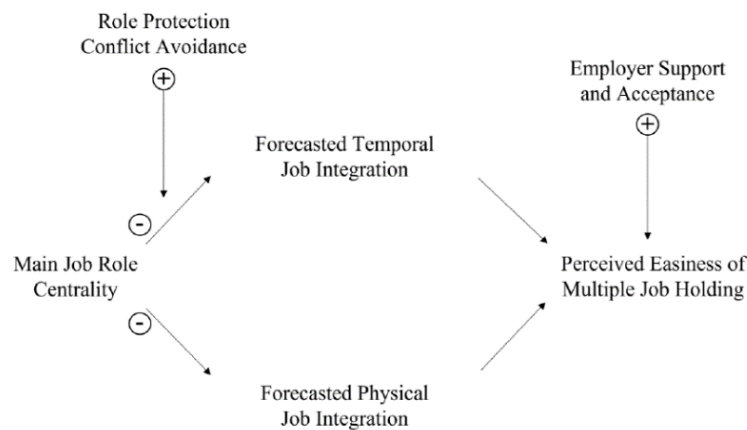
madeleine.tiefenthaler@web.de

Purpose/Motivation: More and more people choose to hold more than one job, and the trend is upward. The main reason for this is the greater ease resulting from the boom in online platforms, the increase in employment opportunities (Sessions, Nahrgang, Vaulont, Williams, & Bartels, 2021; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022), and hybrid work (ETR, n.d., Wikibon, n.d., in Statista, 2021). However, holding multiple jobs also means that people need to properly manage and reconcile their different work identities. The management of identities and the factors that influence the choice of a particular strategy had been extensively researched in the work-home and work-nonwork life literature (e.g., Clark, 2000; Hecht & Allen, 2009). However, there is little knowledge about this in the work-work domain, which raises the question of how multiple job holders manage their different identities and which factors influence the decision.

Theories: The concept of identity management is based on two main theories from the work-home/work-nonwork life domain, namely *boundary* and *border theory*. Both assume that people have boundaries between their different roles and identities, which can be flexible (allowing the transfer of components from one role to another) or rigid (prohibiting the exchange of elements between identities) (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Clark, 2000; Lewin, 1951, in Hall & Richter, 1988). Thus, people manage their identities by separating their different roles, reflecting rigid boundaries, or by integrating them with flexible boundaries (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000). In this regard, factors such as the importance or centrality of a role (e.g., Ashforth et al., 2000; Hecht & Allen, 2009), communication technologies (e.g., Ramarajan & Reid, 2013), and organizational support (e.g., Matthews, Barnes-Farrell, & Bulger, 2010) influence whether people adopt the integration or separation strategy (Ramarajan & Reid, 2013).

Approach/Methodology: A framework consisting of the findings from the literature was identified. Since the theoretical framework is mainly based on findings from other research areas (e.g., work-home domain) rather than the work-work domain, a revised model was created with the results of several interviews conducted with the relevant target group, namely individuals planning or seeking to hold multiple jobs.

Findings: Individuals with and without main job role centrality preferred to separate their multiple jobs in terms of time with the intention to protect their roles from interruptions and to avoid time conflicts between their job roles. In addition, individuals with main job role centrality wanted to physically separate their roles. Hybrid work didn't influence the temporal or physical identity management strategy of individuals with main job role centrality. For individuals without main job role centrality, the influence of the hybrid work model could not be ruled out for the physical identity management strategy. Besides, the results suggested that employer support and acceptance facilitate the pursuit to hold multiple jobs.



Research Limitations: The findings are unclear due to a small sample size. In addition, the target group consisted of people who were only planning to take on an additional job but were not yet doing so at the time of the survey. Therefore, no concrete statement can be made about their actual behaviour in the case of multiple employment.

Research Implications: In contrast to the drawn findings in the work-home and work-nonwork life literature, individuals with main job role centrality were not motivated to integrate an additional job into their main one in terms of time and space. Because of the small sample, the results cannot be guaranteed, and researchers should uncover the phenomena with a larger sample and even test the hypotheses quantitatively.

Practical Implications: Companies should work with their employees to find a solution for organizing their multiple jobs, as this trend is on the rise.

Contribution: My paper contributes to the identity literature and fills the gap in the multiple job holding field by transferring and examining findings from the work-home and work-nonwork life literature domain.

Paper type: Conceptual

Further readings:

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