Boundaries Within: Predictors and Outcomes of Intrapersonal Boundaries

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Abstract

Individual differences on the number of boundaries and adherence to those boundaries and their impact on important life domains is the central focus of this study. We operationalize "*intra*personal boundaries" as "restrictions I place on myself to accomplish a desired goal." This contrasts with *inter*personal boundaries—agreements between two or more people. A data set of 3,344 participants, paired into 1,672 main participant-informant dyads, answered questions about number of boundaries and adherence to those boundaries in seven life domains: romantic relationships, family and friends, health and vitality, spirituality, finances, academic or professional, and potentially addictive behaviors. Three personal qualities (decisiveness, emotional regulation, self-reflection) and 46 childhood family patterns were also measured. Results found that both number of boundaries and adherence to those boundaries were significantly associated with greater success in each of the seven areas. This suggests that boundaries operates as an individual-difference factor that applies across settings. Family patterns most associated with boundaries were effective discipline, attending church, spending time in devotions, and engagement in shared family activities. Family patterns negatively associated included criticism, home conflict, and time playing video games. Results are discussed, and avenues for future research are explored.

Keywords: intrapersonal boundaries, boundaries, self-regulation, individual differences, childhood family experiences, success outcomes.

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According to the APA, a boundary is defined as “a psychological demarcation that protects the integrity of an individual or group or that helps the person or group set realistic limits on participation in a relationship or activity” (APA, 2018). One type of boundary included in this definition is *interpersonal* boundaries, which involve agreements between two or more people. For example, in therapy, an interpersonal boundary might be that the “therapist and client agree to not violate each other’s personal space;” in a romantic relationship, a boundary might be “a couple agrees to not interact with a former romantic partner.”

A 2026 study (Rebaldo et al., under review) dealing with the impact of outside friendship interaction on couple relationship satisfaction explored a contrasting concept of boundaries: *intrapersonal* boundaries; that is, “restrictions I place on myself to enhance achievement of a desired goal or outcome.”

The distinction between the two types of boundaries is theoretically important. Interpersonal boundaries typically develop through negotiation and often become salient only after a violation or conflict has occurred (e.g., Petronio et al., 1998). In contrast, intrapersonal boundaries reflect proactive self-regulation, shaping behavior before relational strain arises (e.g., Wilson et al., 1998).

The Rebaldo and colleagues study found that intrapersonal boundaries had an unexpected and dramatic impact on relationship satisfaction that achieved bivariate correlations (between intrapersonal boundaries and couple relationship satisfaction) greater than .6 and proved to be the greatest single predictor (direct and mediated) of relationship satisfaction in the structural models for both dating ($b = .50$) and married couples ($b = .59$). Literature is surprisingly thin on the impact of intrapersonal boundaries on success outcomes, and the strength of the findings in the Rebaldo and colleagues study urged further exploration.

Consistent with the idea that setting of and adherence to boundaries may operate as an individual-difference factor, our research team decided to investigate whether boundaries across different settings might have a similar effect. In the present study, we explore the impact of intrapersonal boundaries in seven areas of life in which boundaries are likely to be present: romantic relationships, family and friend relationships, health and vitality, spirituality, financial success, academic or professional success, and managing potentially addictive behaviors. In the text that follows, we will refer to intrapersonal boundaries simply as “boundaries”.

Paralleling the Rebaldo study, boundaries are operationalized as “restrictions I place on myself to enhance achievement of a desired goal or outcome” across those seven major life domains. Restrictions may be activities I choose not to do (e.g., I will not spend outside of budget; I will not interact with a former romantic partner) or something I choose to do when cued by a specific circumstance (e.g., on the first day of each month I will set aside 15% of my net income for investment; if I am more than one hour late I will call or text my partner). Contrasting with *inter*personal boundaries, *intra*personal boundaries are restrictions placed on oneself. The “desired goal or outcome” may or may not involve other people.

Clearly, there is overlap between inter- and intrapersonal boundaries. If, for instance, a couple decides not to interact with former romantic partners (interpersonal), this could then become two intrapersonal boundaries.

1.1 Literature Addressing Boundaries in Each of the Seven Areas

The impact of boundaries has been included in studies in each of the seven domains. This includes boundaries in romantic relationships (e.g., Rebaldo et al., under review; Swain, 1992), family and friends (e.g., Allan, 2005; Jamieson, 2005), health and vitality (e.g., Moradell et al., 2023; Szabo-Reed & Key, 2025), spirituality (e.g., Foxe, 1563); Koenig, 2012), finances (e.g., Horan et al., 2021; Nam et al., 2025), academic or professional (e.g., Allan, 2005; David et al., 2025), and potentially addictive behaviors

(e.g., Kuss, 2013; Copes, 2016). The references cited here are only a fraction of this literature.

However, we found three characteristics of the literature that impact the present study. First, boundaries was rarely the focal point of those studies. The desired outcome was central, and boundaries was included among predictors. Second, we found no study that posited boundaries as an individual-difference factor that applies across many settings. Finally, Hutchinson (2024) states that there are no validated instruments that directly assess boundaries in the context of relationships. We were also unable to discover instruments that measure boundaries in other areas.

1.2 Anticipated Outcomes

Based on literature findings we anticipate:

H1. Stricter adherence to boundaries within the seven areas will be associated with greater success in each of those areas.

H2. There will be consistency on the impact of number of boundaries and adherence to those boundaries across the seven areas—suggesting that intrapersonal boundaries operate as an individual-difference factor.

H3. We anticipate that a greater number of boundaries is associated with better adherence to those boundaries.

Method

2.1 Participants

A total of 3,344 subjects, grouped into 1,672 main participant-informant dyads, participated. Gender breakdown found 35% men, 65% women, and < 1% non-binary. The ethnic composition of the entire sample included 69% White, 20% Black, 6% Hispanic, 4% Asian, and less than 1% DTS or other. Religious preference included 29% Catholic, 49% Protestant, 15% Atheist or Agnostic, and 6% other religions. The mean age of participants was 32.2 years (range 18 - 95); Yearly family income averaged $138K (range <$20K to > $200K). Participants averaged 2.5 years of college or

university education (range <HS to doctorate), and participants originated from 46 U.S. states and 14 foreign countries.

This study was approved by the university IRB prior to data collection.

2.2 Materials and Procedures

Participants were recruited by undergraduate students in a large public university research methods class. The students completed CITI ethics training and were certified to collect data in exchange for partial class credit. Initial contacts with potential participants were made in person, by telephone, e-mail, or social media. Questionnaires were administered to all participants through an internet link to a Qualtrics survey. Participants did not receive any compensation other than an expression of appreciation for their contribution.

To ensure data quality and integrity, responses were screened prior to analysis. Participants were excluded if there was no informant to match a main participant, if there were indications of invalid responding, including insufficient completion time, excessive missing data, idiosyncratic or inconsistent response patterns, or duplicate IP addresses. All cases failing to meet the inclusion criteria were removed from the final data set.

The questionnaire was created with gender-neutral wording; hence, all participants completed the same questionnaire. It was structured as follows: The first screen included instructions that identified the sponsoring organization, briefly described the study, assured anonymity, explained informed consent, debriefing information, and additional material required by the IRB. These instructions were followed by 8 demographic items, 46 questions related to childhood family patterns, 48 questions that assessed boundaries in the seven areas described earlier, 24 questions that assessed personal qualities (decisiveness, emotional regulation, and self-reflection), and 7 outcome variables that assessed success in the seven areas in which boundaries were measured.

To control for biases and to create more objective responses, the main participant answered questions about themselves, and a friend of the main participant ("informant") was recruited to answer selected questions about the main participant. Then, the mean of the two responses created the variables used in the study. The informant completed a questionnaire that included the three covariates and overall success in the seven boundary contexts. See Cruitt and Oltmanns (2018) for a discussion of the benefits of informant scores for increasing objectivity.

2.3 Criterion and Predictor Variables

2.3.1 Dependent Variables. The dependent variables were the success in each of the seven areas where boundaries were measured. Both the main participants and the informants answered single questions in each of these areas scored on 7-point Likert scales. For example, a question dealing with health and vitality read "How good is your present overall health and vitality?" with anchors of *pretty miserable* (1) to *healthy and vibrant* (7). The informant's question was "How good is your friend's present overall health and vitality?" measured on the same scale. Similar questions were asked in each of the other six areas.

While the primary attention was on the individual topics, the seven areas were also combined into a general "life satisfaction" measure. The mean of the seven individual areas (across both main participants and informants) provided a composite measure that ranged from low satisfaction (1) to high satisfaction (7).

2.3.2 Personal Characteristics. Personal characteristics included decisiveness (e.g., Scott & Bruce, 1995; Frost & Shows, 1993), emotional regulation (e.g., Gross & John, 2003; Garnefski et al., 2001), and self-reflection (Grant et al., 2002; Trapnell & Campbell, 1999). The scoring for these three qualities was identical. For each of the 24 indicators, only the main participant responded. The 24 items were measured on 7-point Likert scales. The anchors varied from item to item to make its meaning clear. For example, one of the emotional regulation questions read: "I have trouble thinking clearly

when I am upset." With anchors of *think clearly when upset* (1) to *difficulty thinking clearly when upset* (7). The main participant score was the mean of the eight indicators for each quality. Informants completed three questions about the main participants' general decisiveness, emotion regulation, and self-reflection. The informants' score was averaged with the main participants' mean score to complete one composite variable for each characteristic.

2.4 Questions that Assessed the Seven Boundary Domains

Boundaries were measured across seven domains: romantic relationships, family and friend relationships, health and vitality, spirituality, finances, academic or professional, and potentially addictive behaviors. For each of these areas, six or seven specific questions measured each construct. Since we found no existing instruments to measure boundaries in each of the seven areas, items were selected from studies cited earlier. Specific items for each construct are included in Table 1. Internal consistency for these items varied between .78 and .88; except for potentially addictive behaviors. The alpha was understandably lower (.60) as it is common for people with addictions in one area to not have addictions in other areas. For each of the 48 questions (across the 7 areas), two questions were asked: First, "Do you have a boundary in this area?" with a response of "yes" or "no". The second question asked "How strictly do you adhere to this boundary?" with a 7-point scale of *no boundary* (1), *frequent exceptions* (2), and *no exceptions* (7).

Table 1

Boundary Domains and Corresponding Measurement Items

Domain	Boundary Topics/Items
Romantic Relationships	Physical or romantic involvement with another person Time spent with a former romantic partner Avoiding individuals who pull one in a negative direction Avoiding individuals who may threaten the relationship Contacting partner when running late

Domain	Boundary Topics/Items
	Respecting partner's personal boundaries Respecting partner's social media boundaries
Family and Friend Relationships	Avoiding individuals who engage in illegal or dangerous activities Not lying to friends or family Not criticizing friends or family Avoiding individuals who do not support one's moral values Avoiding friendships that drain one's energy Contacting family members regularly Avoiding phone/device use during interactions with friends
Health and Vitality	Exercising regularly Drinking sufficient water Avoiding eating after a certain evening time Walking a designated number of daily steps (or equivalent) Limiting calorie consumption Going to bed on time Limiting consumption of "guilty pleasures"
Spirituality	Adhering to the tenets of one's faith Prioritizing spiritual life above competing priorities Engaging in daily prayer, spiritual reading, or meditation Attending church or equivalent fellowship weekly Participating regularly in community service Contributing a designated monthly amount (e.g., tithe) to worthy causes
Financial	Creating or modifying a budget regularly Staying within budget limits Setting aside a percentage of income for investment Avoiding spending beyond personal means Planning regularly for financial future Filing taxes and paying bills on time Maintaining limits on spontaneous or personal spending
Academic/Professional	Never cheating in academic or professional endeavors Creating a weekly accomplishment schedule Establishing clear boundaries between work and family life Staying updated on professional advances Arriving early to school or work-related events Developing positive relationships with colleagues and peers Setting clear goals for future professional accomplishments
Potentially Addictive Behaviors	Using illegal drugs Consuming alcoholic beverages Using social media Gambling Compulsive shopping Playing video games Compulsively viewing entertainment media (e.g., binge watching)

2.5 Childhood Family Patterns

We employed 46 childhood family patterns taken from the Snyder and colleagues (under review) research. These 46 included 35 specific activities, such as playing outdoors, family discussions, church attendance, visitors in the home, hobbies, criticism,

family conflict, and playing video games. These activities were measured on a *never* (1) to *frequent* (7) scale. Then, there were 11 general characteristics of the home environment, such as the quality of the child-parent relationship, parent-parent relationship, effectiveness of discipline, and quality of nutrition. These were measured on a *poor* (1) to *excellent* (7) scale. All 46 family patterns are included in the supplemental material.

Results

3.1 Psychometric Soundness and Internal Consistency

Skewness and kurtosis, the internal consistency (alpha), and the number of indicators for primary variables are displayed in Table 2 below. Psychometrics for all variables fell into the excellent category (skewness and kurtosis between ± 1). Each variable is the composite of the main participant and the informant. Also, the 46 family patterns demonstrated excellent (between ±1) to good (between ±2) skewness or kurtosis values for all patterns. See George and Mallory (2024) for a discussion of psychometric validity.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics and Reliability for Key Variables

Variable	α	# of items	Skewness	Kurtosis
Decisiveness	.83	8	−0.20	−0.13
Emotional regulation	.81	8	−0.23	−0.03
Self-reflection	.74	6	−0.35	−0.23
Romantic relationships	.79	7	−0.08	−0.55
Family and friend relationships	.76	7	−0.23	−0.25
Physical health and vitality	.79	7	−0.24	−0.38
Spirituality	.88	6	−0.18	−0.26
Financial success	.82	7	−0.03	−0.30
Professional success	.80	7	−0.12	0.00
Potentially addictive behaviors	.60	7	−0.17	−0.37

3.2 Correlational Outcomes

The initial form of analysis was to compute bivariate correlations between each of the seven outcome variables, the three covariates (decisiveness, emotional regulation, self-reflection), the number of boundaries, and the mean strength of (adherence to) those boundaries. To simplify statistical copy, all significance values were < .001; the N for all correlations was 1654. These data are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlations Between Success Domains and Personal Characteristic, Number of Boundaries, and Adherence to Boundaries

Success Domain	Decisiveness	Emotional Regulation	Self-Reflection	Number of Boundaries	Adherence to Boundaries
Romantic Relationships	.27	.28	.14	.18	.24
Family and Friends Relationships	.21	.35	.25	.19	.23
Health and Vitality	.23	.35	.25	.18	.23
Spirituality	.25	.28	.29	.36	.44
Financial	.32	.28	.10	.29	.34
Academic/Professional	.27	.27	.29	.18	.25
Potentially Addictive Behaviors	.25	.30	.27	.17	.29
Combined Across All Seven Areas	.32	.36	.24	.29	.40

3.2.1 Correlation Between Number of Boundaries and Adherence to Them.

The bivariate correlation between the number of boundaries and adherence to those boundaries (collapsed across all seven areas) was r = .732. Since causality is clear (a boundary must be present to adhere to it), this means that 54% of the adherence to boundaries is predicted by the number of boundaries. When the three personal qualities (decisiveness, emotional regulation, self-reflection) were included as covariates, the correlation dropped slightly (r = .700). These results suggest that setting a boundary is robustly associated with adherence to that boundary.

3.2.2 Internal Consistency across the Seven Domains. Providing support that intrapersonal boundaries serve as an individual difference factor that operates consistently across domains, internal consistency measures (Cronbach's alpha) were calculated. For number of boundaries, a = .75; for adherence to boundaries, a = .79. Deletion of a variable would not have improved the alpha in either of the analyses.

3.2.3 Partial Correlations. Partial correlations were conducted in each of the seven settings using decisiveness, emotional regulation, and self-reflection as covariates. The relationship between the number of boundaries and the strength of boundaries with success in each of those areas was similar to the bivariate correlations, rarely varying by more than .01 or .02; hence, partial correlations are not reported here.

3.3 Demographic Differences

3.3.1 Gender. Men differed from women across several of the key variables. Each difference is significant at the .001 level; the degrees of freedom for all are 1643. For each comparison, we listed the t value and Cohen's d. Women were found to have more self-reflection (t = -6.09, d = -.32), have a higher number of family and friend boundaries (t = -4.66, d = -.25), and stricter adherence to those boundaries (t = -4.66, d = -.25). Men were found to be more decisiveness (t = 5.81, d = .30), have higher emotional regulation (t = 6.15, d = .32), and be more financially successful (t = 4.15, d = .22).

3.3.2 Age, Education, and Income. Older individuals were found to have higher life satisfaction (r = .18), stricter adherence to boundaries (r = .18), to be more decisive (r = .28), and have higher emotional regulation (r = .20). Those with more education displayed a similar profile: greater life satisfaction (r = .23), stricter adherence to

boundaries (r = .12), more decisiveness (r = .17), and higher emotional regulation (r = .13). A higher income was associated with greater life satisfaction (r = .23) but was not significantly correlated with any other variables.

3.3.3 Religious Preference. One-way ANOVAs compared Catholics, Protestants, and Atheists/Agnostics (combined into a single group). While there were significant differences across all six of the primary variables, only differences associated with life satisfaction [F(2, 1559) = 12.48], number of boundaries [F(2, 1559) = 31.60], and adherence to boundaries [F(2, 1559) = 32.43] were dramatic. Post hoc analyses using the Bonferroni method with an alpha of .001 found that Catholics and Protestants, when compared with Atheists/Agnostics, had higher life satisfaction (4.74 & 4.83 vs. 4.58), more boundaries (32.3 & 32.6 vs. 28.1), and better adherence to boundaries (4.17 & 4.20 vs. 3.67).

3.4 Family Patterns

The impact of family patterns on adherence to boundaries (summed across the seven areas) was substantial. The impact of childhood family patterns on adherence to boundaries (all results significant at p < .001) include effective family discipline (r = .27), personal devotions (r = .26), church attendance (r = .26), conflict resolution in the home (r = .24), emotional health of the family (r = .24), the quality of the parent-child relationship (r = .23), family chores (r = .21), good sibling-sibling interaction (r = .20), family meals together (r = .20), and the quality of the parent-parent relationship (r = .19).

On the negative side, family patterns associated with poorer adherence to boundaries (p < .001) included criticism (r = -.23), conflict in the home (r = -.22), drinking (r = -.17), playing with electronic devices (r = -.17), use of prescription drugs (r = -.16),

time in front of a computer (r = -.14), children being unsupervised (r = -.10), time in front of the TV (r = -.09), and smoking (r = -.09).

Discussion

In the discussion that follows, topics will be addressed in the following order: (a) confirmation of hypotheses, (b) the discrepancy between results of the present study and the Rebaldo study, (c) the impact of demographics, (d) the impact of family patterns, (e) strengths and weaknesses of the study, and (f) applications and implications for future studies.

4.1 Confirmation of Hypotheses

4.1.1 Stricter Adherence Associated with Greater Success. Results supported hypotheses across all seven life domains. For each of the seven, success in those areas was associated with having a greater number of boundaries and stronger adherence to those boundaries. Across all seven settings, adherence to boundaries was a stronger predictor of success than the number of boundaries. This pattern was especially pronounced for addictive behaviors, where the disparity between number and adherence to boundaries was even greater. These findings suggest that therapists seeking to improve outcomes for clients suffering with addictions may benefit more from strengthening adherence to existing boundaries than from adding new ones. The heightened effect observed for addictive behaviors indicates that, although many individuals may set boundaries to restrict such activities, consistent adherence exerts a more substantial influence on actually reducing them.

4.1.2 Consistency of Impact Across the Seven Areas. The hypothesis that intrapersonal boundaries operate as an individual-difference factor that applies across

many domains was supported. The correlations between number of boundaries and life satisfaction were remarkably consistent across five of the domains (romantic, family & friends, health & vitality, academic & professional, and potentially addictive behaviors) with correlation values varying between .17 and .19. Across the same five areas the association between adherence to boundaries and life satisfaction was stronger but parallel with correlations varying between .23 and .29. The other two areas (spirituality and finances) displayed the same pattern but were much more robust: spirituality providing a .36/.44 pattern and finances with a .29/.34 pattern. The strength of the spirituality outcome is addressed later in the discussion.

Combine those findings with the solid internal consistency ratings across the seven domains (for number of boundaries, a = .75, for adherence to boundaries, a = .79) and there is a strong argument that setting and adhering to boundaries operates as a trait or an individual difference quality that applies in many settings.

4.1.3 Greater Number of Boundaries Associated with Stronger Adherence. The strong correlation between number of boundaries and adherence to them is noteworthy. A bivariate correlation between them (.732) is substantial. Because causality is clear (a boundary must exist before one can adhere to it), it is safe to say that 54% of the variance in adherence is accounted for by the setting of boundaries. The implications for personal self-regulatory or goal-oriented behavior is great. Simply setting the boundary appears to be half the battle towards adherence to that boundary.

4.2 Comparisons with the Rebaldo Study

Certain aspects of the present study, as they relate to boundaries in romantic relationships, were identical to the Rebaldo study. The seven questions that measured

adherence to boundaries in both studies were identical. Yet the Rebaldo study showed bivariate correlations between adherence to those boundaries and couple relationship satisfaction greater than .60; the parallel value in the present study was .24. Since the scale used to measure adherence to boundaries was identical, and the samples were similar in size and diversity, we needed to look in other places to understand why this discrepancy occurred.

The solution lies in the way relationship satisfaction was measured. In the present study, the main participant rated (on a 7-point scale) the success of their romantic relationships over their life span, typically including several different relationships. Their rating was moderated by the informant (a close friend), who also rated the success of the main participant's romantic relationships over time. Notice how differently this quality is measured in the Rebaldo study.

First, all participants in the Rebaldo study were currently in a romantic relationship (434 married couples, 498 dating couples), and the study employed a criss-cross methodology in which the man rated himself and his partner across all variables and the woman rated herself and her partner across all variables. The measure of relational satisfaction was based on two relationship satisfaction instruments and included 11 questions for each participant. Thus, the relationship satisfaction score for each partner involved responses to 22 questions.

Add up all the elements, and the reason for the discrepancy emerges: (a) a single current relationship versus potentially several relationships over time, (b) 11 ratings by each member of the couple versus a self rating and an informant rating, and (c) an intimate partner rating the quality of a current relationship versus a friend of the

participant estimating how good their friend's romantic relationships may have been over time. In the future, we might replicate the Rebaldo study with romantic couples rated in the same way.

4.3 Impact of Demographics

In only one area did demographics have a dramatic impact on the number of boundaries and adherence to those boundaries: denominational preference. There were scattered gender differences; generally, those who were older and achieved higher levels of education created more boundaries and adhered to them better. But comparisons between Protestants, Catholics, and Atheists/Agnostics yielded F values from ANOVA analyses in the 30s. For life satisfaction, number of boundaries, and adherence to those boundaries, the Atheists/Agnostics group scored dramatically lower than both Catholics and Protestants. These findings are consistent with a large body of research that suggests that those who maintain a spiritual faith do better across many life domains than those who do not (see Koenig, 2012). The present study expands those findings into the area of setting and adhering to boundaries.

4.4 Impact of Family Patterns

The greatest predictor of adherence to boundaries was effective discipline in the home. Nearly as strong, attending church and family devotions, ranked #2 and #3 on the positive impact list. Several ideas provide insights into why the impact of church attendance and family devotions rank so high. First off, of the seven areas explored, spirituality was the area in which the relationship between spiritual success and the number of boundaries and adherence to boundaries was strongest. We have already noted the power of boundaries in church history (Foxe 1563). Further, adherence to

spiritual boundaries is often taught more systematically than boundaries in any other life domains (see Allsop, et al., 2021). Another idea is the influence of spirituality mixed with family patterns. Families that go to church together immerse themselves with others who share a similar perspective, further strengthening the effect. Also, church leadership of most denominations encourage interaction with those of similar faith—strengthening the effect further. The implications of these findings can guide parents in more effective interactions with their children and aid marriage and family therapists in counseling.

4.5 Strengths and Weaknesses

Some strengths of the study are worthy of notice: First, a large (N = 3,344) and diverse (participants from 46 US states and 14 foreign countries) sample adds validity and generalizability to the present findings. Second, the research team's willingness to address intrapersonal boundaries as the central construct and explore its impact across a number of life domains is noteworthy. Also, efforts to increase objectivity through informant scores across a number of variables are noted.

But there are weaknesses. Perhaps the greatest is suggested by the discussion of why the Rebaldo results are so much stronger than the present results. The seven dependent variables are based on a self-rating and an informant rating in each of the seven areas. With this format, the area with the greatest challenge would be romantic relationships. The main participant is required to think back over the quality of several past relationships, and the informant is typically unaware of that history. In the six other areas, both the main participant and the informant are more aware of one's own and a friend's health and vitality, spirituality, academic or professional success, and so forth.

Nevertheless, strengthening the outcome variables would rank high in a future study—allowing a more detailed look at the differential impact of specific boundaries and components of those boundaries.

There also may be some who think that our operational definition of intrapersonal boundaries, which includes both “things I choose to not do,” and “things I choose to do when cued by circumstances,” extends beyond the traditional meaning of boundaries. This area alone suggests future studies that could systematically compare the “avoid” versus the “do” types of boundaries.

4.6 Key Takeaways and Directions for Future Research

First, findings provide strong support for intrapersonal boundaries as an individual-difference construct. Second, across all areas there is benefit from establishing and adhering to boundaries—a concept that can be applied to individual self improvement or by therapists instructing others. Future studies should come up with more stable dependent variables and should also include standard outcome variables, such as life satisfaction, quality of friendships, or magnitude of accomplishments. Also, it may be interesting to contrast how the impact of boundaries differentially affects contrasting cultures such as a comparison of independent cultures versus collectivist cultures and their use of boundaries.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Manuscript Preparation Process

During the preparation of this work, the authors used ChatGPT to assist in creating APA-styled tables and as a reference for how to make certain paragraphs

clearer and more concise. After using this tool/service, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the published article.

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