

DOCTORAL THESIS

Overqualified for a Job or Work Role? A Role Theory Perspective on Antecedents and Consequences of Perceived Overqualification

YU, Bingjie

Date of Award:
2024

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HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY

Doctor of Philosophy

THESIS ACCEPTANCE

DATE: October 25, 2024

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THESIS TITLE: Overqualified for a Job or Work Role? A Role Theory Perspective on Antecedents and Consequences of Perceived Overqualification

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**Overqualified for a Job or Work Role? A Role Theory Perspective on
Antecedents and Consequences of Perceived Overqualification**

YU Bingjie

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Principal Supervisor:
Dr HUANG Guohua Emily (Hong Kong Baptist University)**

October 2024

Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work which has been done after registration for the degree of PhD at Hong Kong Baptist University and has not been previously included in a thesis or dissertation submitted to this or any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

I have read the University's current research ethics guidelines and accept responsibility for the conduct of the procedures in accordance with the University's Research Ethics Committee (REC). I have attempted to identify all the risks related to this research that may arise in conducting this research, obtained the relevant ethical and/or safety approval (where applicable), and acknowledged my obligations and the rights of the participants.

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Date: October 2024

Abstract

The research on perceived overqualification has largely assumed that perceived overqualification is shaped by the comparison between employees' qualifications and qualifications required by the job and has mostly adopted a static approach to studying the consequences of perceived overqualification. However, two issues with previous research make our knowledge of perceived overqualification incomplete: (a) previous studies often conflate quasi-static qualifications required by the job with changeable qualifications utilized on the job and sometimes ignore the latter when conceptualizing and defining perceived overqualification, and (b) existing research mostly does not distinguish between formalized jobs and malleable work roles and overlooks the role of employees' work roles in shaping their changeable perceptions of overqualification. In addressing these two issues, this thesis challenges the dominant view on perceived overqualification by demonstrating it involves the comparison between employees' qualifications and qualifications utilized to perform work roles and adopts a role theory perspective to explore how both employees who feel overqualified and employers shape changeable perceived overqualification.

Specifically, this thesis first draws on role theory and proactive perspectives on work design to propose that perceived overqualification is malleable and employees who feel overqualified may take the initiative to enlarge their work roles, thus utilizing more qualifications at work and reducing subsequent perceived overqualification (Model 1). Second, this thesis draws on the job–role differentiation perspective to differentiate qualifications utilized on the job and perceived overqualification from qualifications required by the job and objective overqualification and proposes a role-based conceptualization of

perceived overqualification. Role-based perceived overqualification is defined as the extent to which the focal employee perceives he or she has surplus education, experience, knowledge, skills, abilities, and other qualifications relative to qualifications utilized at work. This thesis further proposes that employees who have high levels of perceived role breadth and enact broader work roles, irrespective of whether they are objectively overqualified, can utilize more qualifications at work and perceive less role-based overqualification, thus having higher affective commitment and lower turnover intentions (Model 2). Third, this thesis proposes that high-performance work systems (HPWS) and leader-member exchange (LMX) have positive effects on perceived role breadth, thus reducing role-based perceived overqualification and, in turn, leading to higher affective commitment and lower turnover intentions (Model 3).

This thesis conducted three studies to validate the measurements of role-based perceived overqualification and perceived role breadth and to test the theoretical models. The results from two field studies and an experiment provided support for the first and second theoretical models and partially supported the third theoretical model. This thesis found that HPWS and LMX were positively related to perceived role breadth and role-based perceived overqualification was positively related to turnover intentions. However, the negative effect of perceived role breadth on role-based perceived overqualification, the negative effect of role-based perceived overqualification on affective commitment, and the indirect effects of HPWS and LMX were not supported. Finally, the findings, theoretical contributions, and practical implications of this thesis are discussed.

Keywords: perceived overqualification, objective overqualification, job-role differentiation perspective, role theory, perceived role breadth

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my genuine gratitude to all the people who have blessed me throughout my PhD journey. I first extend my heartfelt thanks to my principal supervisor, Dr. Emily Guohua Huang. I feel very lucky and grateful to have started as her research assistant nearly 7 years ago and to have subsequently transitioned into being her PhD student. Over the years, she has guided me in identifying research topics, proposing research questions, theorizing, conducting rigorous research, and so much more. I have learned much from her about being a humble researcher, conducting meaningful research, and delivering high-quality teaching. She has given me unconditional encouragement and support. She gave me wise counsel when needed, boosted my confidence when I doubted myself, welcomed me into her home, and so much more. Without her unwavering love, I would not have navigated this challenging journey.

I am also very grateful to learn from my co-supervisor, Dr. Grace Jia Hui Lim. Her support and guidance have significantly shaped my PhD journey. I recall many happy memories: she saw the potential of the rough idea of this thesis and inspired me to delve deeper, she taught me to conduct experimental studies, she pointed out problems and helped me solve them, her hard work truly motivated me, and so much more. Furthermore, I want to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. Kenneth S. Law. He gave me great training in phenomenon-driven research, theorizing, and research methodology. His kind and insightful suggestions and guidance were beacons during difficult times and inspired me to embrace tomorrow. To my dearest elder sister, Dr. Yolanda Na Li, thank you so much for your unconditional love and support. You accompanied me on this journey of both

laughter and tears. You always encourage me to reflect on previous experiences with a grateful heart and face upcoming challenges with courage and joy.

I extend my appreciation to all faculty members in our school and cohorts for their support, encouragement, and company. I also want to express my gratitude to my committee members, Prof. Tingting Chen, Prof. Chia-Huei Wu, Prof. Li-Qun Wei, and Dr. Siting Wang. I truly appreciate all of your time and effort. Your constructive suggestions and comments have been invaluable in further improving the quality of this thesis. In addition, I thank Prof. Berrin Erdogan, Prof. Li Wang, Prof. Li-yun Sun, and other scholars for their support and helpful comments. I am also grateful for the company and support of my family members, friends, and well-wishers.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents and my best friend for their unconditional, unwavering, and endless love.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Gaps

Overqualification refers to a situation where the individual has a higher degree of education, experience, knowledge, skills, abilities, and other qualifications than what the job requires and what is utilized on the job (Erdogan et al., 2011; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). It is a widespread phenomenon. In G20 countries, about 20% of employees experienced overqualification (International Labour Office, 2018). A recent report indicated that about 30% of graduates experienced overqualification in the United Kingdom, and they had lower job satisfaction and life satisfaction, poorer mental and physical health, and higher intention to quit than qualification-matched graduates (CIPD, 2022). In the hiring and selection processes, overqualified job candidates usually face obstacles, and employers often refuse to hire them, given the downside of hiring overqualified job candidates (Forbes Coaches Council, 2022; Morgan, 2024; Whitehead, 2020).

Overqualification has received much attention from scholars. There are two main approaches to operationalizing overqualification: objective and perceived. Objective overqualification involves the comparison between employees' qualifications and qualifications required by the job (i.e., job requirements), whereas perceived overqualification is employees' subjective perceptions of overqualification (Maltarich et al., 2011). Practitioners usually focus on objective overqualification, which is more detectable than perceived overqualification (Erdogan et al., 2011; Maynard et al., 2006). For example, hiring managers usually identify overqualified job candidates based on objective overqualification. In management research, most scholars focus on perceived overqualification because it is a more proximal predictor of employees' attitudes and behaviors than objective

overqualification (Kristof-brown et al., 2005; Zhang et al., 2016). Perceived overqualification has been found to have important effects on employees' attitudes, behaviors, and performance, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, job performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, counterproductive work behaviors, and proactive behaviors (Erdogan, Karaeminogullari, et al., 2020; Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Harari et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2015; Maynard et al., 2006). Scholars frequently assume that the research findings of perceived overqualification can generalize to objective overqualification and conflate objective overqualification and perceived overqualification when discussing practical implications (Arvan et al., 2019).

However, perceived overqualification is different from objective overqualification. Although objective overqualification is a key antecedent of perceived overqualification (Arvan et al., 2019; Harari et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2017), employees who have the same qualifications and comparable job positions may have different perceptions of overqualification (Maltarich et al., 2011; Zhang et al., 2016). The correlation between perceived overqualification and objective overqualification was only .40 in a meta-analysis study (Harari et al., 2017). Thus, it is problematic to conflate perceived overqualification with objective overqualification. Given that it is perceived overqualification that affects employees' attitudes, behaviors, and performance, it is crucial to differentiate perceived overqualification from objective overqualification and explore how perceived overqualification is shaped. Nevertheless, existing studies on perceived overqualification have mostly focused on its outcomes and have paid little attention to its differences from objective overqualification and its antecedents (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Liao et al., 2024). Only a few studies have explored its relationship

with objective overqualification and some influencing factors (e.g., Arvan et al., 2019; Liu & Wang, 2012; Maynard et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2015), but most of them examined the direct effects of influencing factors and rarely adopted theoretical perspectives to differentiate perceived overqualification from objective overqualification and explain the relationships between the influencing factors and perceived overqualification. Thus far, we still have a limited understanding of the difference between objective overqualification and perceived overqualification and how to shape perceived overqualification.

To address the research gaps and establish the bridge across management research and practices in the overqualification field, this thesis adopts the job–role differentiation perspective to differentiate perceived overqualification from objective overqualification and draws on role theory to explore how both employees who feel overqualified and employers shape perceived overqualification.

1.2 Research Objectives

This thesis has three main research objectives. First, this thesis adopts a role theory perspective to study perceived overqualification. Different from objective overqualification, perceived overqualification involves subjectively comparing employees' qualifications with qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized on the job. This thesis adopts the job–role differentiation perspective (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991) to distinguish qualifications utilized on the job and perceived overqualification from qualifications required by the job and objective overqualification. Based on this perspective, the job is a set of established tasks that are primarily specified by formal job descriptions, and it is objective, independent of job incumbents, and quasi-static. In contrast, the work role is a

larger set that includes both established tasks comprising the job and emergent tasks that are self-generated or communicated to job incumbents by various social sources; it is subjective, influenced by job incumbents, and may frequently change. From this perspective, this thesis views qualifications required by the job as qualifications required by established tasks but views qualifications utilized on the job as qualifications utilized to enact work roles or to perform both established and emergent tasks at work. This thesis uses a new term—qualifications utilized at work—to replace qualifications utilized on the job and proposes that perceived overqualification captures employees' surplus qualifications relative to qualifications utilized at work (i.e., qualifications utilized to perform work roles). Therefore, the difference between objective overqualification and perceived overqualification may result from the legitimate difference between qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized at work, which derives from the difference between job and work role, that is, the range of emergent parts of the work role. Further, employees' changeable work roles play an important role in shaping their perceptions of overqualification. Thus, this thesis adopts a role theory perspective to study perceived overqualification and proposes that role breadth, which captures the range of characteristic behaviors within the role (Biddle, 1979), is an important theoretical antecedent of perceived overqualification beyond objective overqualification.

Second, this thesis draws on role theory to explore how both employees who feel overqualified and employers shape perceived overqualification. On the one hand, this thesis explores how employees who feel overqualified proactively reduce perceived overqualification. Based on role theory (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991; Katz & Kahn, 1978) and proactive perspectives on work design (Grant &

Parker, 2009), this thesis proposes that employees who feel overqualified can take the initiative to expand their work roles, thus utilizing more qualifications at work and reducing subsequent perceived overqualification. Specifically, this thesis examines the indirect effect of perceived overqualification on perceived role breadth via employees' initiative in modifying work roles and the negative effect of perceived role breadth on perceived overqualification. This thesis also tests the serial indirect effect of perceived overqualification on subsequent perceived overqualification via employees' initiative in modifying work roles and perceived role breadth. On the other hand, this thesis explores how organizational and relational factors influence perceived overqualification. This thesis tests the positive effects of high-performance work systems and leader-member exchange on perceived role breadth, their indirect effect on perceived overqualification via perceived role breadth, and their serial indirect effects on affective commitment and turnover intentions via perceived role breadth and perceived overqualification.

Third, this thesis highlights qualifications utilized on the job (or qualifications utilized at work) and proposes a role-based conceptualization of perceived overqualification without conflating qualifications utilized on the job with qualifications required by the job. Role-based perceived overqualification is defined as the extent to which the focal employee perceives he or she has surplus qualifications relative to qualifications utilized at work. This thesis further examines the positive effect of objective overqualification and the negative effect of perceived role breadth on role-based perceived overqualification and compares their effects on role-based perceived overqualification with their effects on perceived overqualification measured using the existing measurement scale (Maynard et al., 2006), which involves both qualifications required by the job and

qualifications utilized on the job. This thesis also tests the effects of role-based perceived overqualification on affective commitment and turnover intentions and the indirect effects of objective overqualification and perceived role breadth on affective commitment and turnover intentions via role-based perceived overqualification.

1.3 Research Contributions

This thesis has three main theoretical contributions. First, this thesis demonstrates the value of theoretically differentiating perceived overqualification from objective overqualification and provides a more theoretical and precise understanding of perceived overqualification. Existing studies on perceived overqualification have mostly conflated quasi-static qualifications required by the job and changeable qualifications utilized on the job, and some studies have even ignored the latter (e.g., Arvan et al., 2019; Harari et al., 2017; Li et al., 2022; Luksyte et al., 2022; Maynard et al., 2006). The dominant view on perceived overqualification is that it is grounded in the comparison between employees' qualifications and qualifications required by the job (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). Scholars generally argue that objective overqualification is a key predictor of perceived overqualification (e.g., Harari et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2017) and relatively overlooks the investigation of how to shape perceived overqualification. Previous research has primarily explored the consequences of perceived overqualification from a static approach (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021) and has frequently assumed that the research findings of perceived overqualification can generalize to objective overqualification (Arvan et al., 2019). However, this thesis suggests that these two sets of qualifications are different and further theoretically distinguishes perceived overqualification from objective

overqualification. Moving beyond the dominant view, this thesis demonstrates that perceived overqualification depends on qualifications utilized at work and employees' work roles. Further, this thesis extends the literature by suggesting that perceived overqualification can be shaped by modifying employees' work roles, even though objective overqualification is relatively static. This thesis also suggests that scholars and practitioners should consider the effects of work roles on perceived overqualification when applying the research findings of perceived overqualification to objective overqualification. For example, although employees who feel overqualified may have negative reactions, objectively overqualified employees who have broad work roles may not feel overqualified and have negative reactions. Moving forward, this thesis adopts a role theory perspective to study perceived overqualification, proposes a role-based conceptualization of perceived overqualification that focuses on qualifications utilized at work, and offers a validated measure that allows scholars to further study perceived overqualification without conflating qualifications utilized at work with qualifications required by the job.

Second, this thesis generates new knowledge regarding how both employees who feel overqualified and employers shape perceived overqualification. Previous studies have paid little attention to the antecedents of perceived overqualification and have rarely adopted theoretical perspectives to explain the relationship between influencing factors and perceived overqualification. Some scholars have called for the investigation of its antecedents in order to enrich the literature on perceived overqualification and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the overqualification phenomenon (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Liao et al., 2024). This thesis adopts role theory to suggest that

perceived role breadth is an important theoretical antecedent of perceived overqualification and that organizations can implement high-performance work systems and encourage leaders and employees to develop good exchange relationships, thus broadening employees' work roles and utilizing employees' qualifications better. Employees who feel overqualified can attempt to enlarge their work roles and fully utilize their qualifications at work. The thesis thus responds to the call and generates new knowledge on how to reduce perceived overqualification.

Last, this thesis deepens our understanding of employees' reactions to perceived overqualification by exploring the active role of employees in reducing malleable perceived overqualification. Previous research on the consequences of perceived overqualification has mostly ignored malleable perceived overqualification and adopted a static approach to exploring how employees respond to perceived overqualification based on the person–environment fit theory, relative deprivation theory, and capability-based perspective. Few studies have drawn on proactive perspectives on work design to propose that employees who feel overqualified may take the initiative to modify their work roles. However, they still explored the impact of employees' initiative in modifying work roles on employees' attitudes, behaviors, and performance but ignored its possible impact on subsequent perceived overqualification. This thesis proposes that perceived overqualification is changeable, and employees who feel overqualified can take the initiative to enlarge their work roles in order to utilize more qualifications at work and reduce perceived overqualification.

In sum, this thesis advances our understanding of perceived overqualification by challenging the dominant view—perceived overqualification

is grounded in the comparison between employees' qualifications and qualifications required by the job—and adopting a role theory perspective to explore how to shape malleable perceived overqualification. This thesis proposes that perceived overqualification involves employees' subjective comparison between their qualifications and qualifications utilized at work. This thesis further emphasizes the active roles of both employees who feel overqualified and employers in shaping perceived overqualification and proposes that they can modify employees' work roles and change qualifications utilized at work and, in turn, shape perceived overqualification, thus affecting employees' reactions to overqualification.

1.4 Organization of the Thesis

The remainder of this thesis is organized as follows. In Chapter 2, I review the literature on objective overqualification, perceived overqualification, and the consequences and antecedents of perceived overqualification. I also review the research on the job–role differentiation perspective, the model of positive work role behaviors, and perceived role breadth for work behaviors and further propose the holistic operationalization of perceived role breadth. In Chapter 3, I explore how employees who feel overqualified proactively reduce perceived overqualification and develop the first theoretical model. I validated the measurements of perceived role breadth and conducted a field study with a multiwave design to test this theoretical model. In Chapter 4, I distinguish perceived overqualification from objective overqualification, develop role-based perceived overqualification, and explore its antecedents and consequences. I validated the measurement of role-based perceived overqualification and conducted an experiment to examine its antecedents and consequences. In

Chapter 5, I explore how organizational and relational factors influence role-based perceived overqualification and, in turn, employees' reactions to overqualification and develop the third theoretical model. I conducted a field study with a multiwave, multisource design to test this theoretical model. In Chapter 6, I discuss the findings, theoretical contributions, practical implications, limitations, and future directions and present the conclusion.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

In this section, I review two topics related to this thesis: (a) overqualification and (b) jobs and work roles. The first part provides a comprehensive review of research on the conceptualization and operationalization of overqualification and the consequences and antecedents of perceived overqualification and identifies important research gaps. The second part covers the job–role differentiation perspective and the model of positive work role behaviors, which provides the theoretical foundation for the proposed theoretical models. In the second part, I also review the literature on perceived role breadth for work behaviors and further propose the holistic operationalization of perceived role breadth.

2.1 Overqualification

2.1.1 *Objective and Perceived Overqualification*

Scholars have operationalized overqualification using two main approaches: objective overqualification and perceived overqualification. Objective and perceived overqualification are related but different. Perceived overqualification was correlated with objective overqualification ($r = .40$) in a meta-analysis study (Harari et al., 2017). Arvan et al. (2019) found that the correlations between different forms of objective overqualification and perceived overqualification ranged between .32 and .54. In the following sections, I will first introduce objective overqualification and its measurements, followed by perceived overqualification.

Objective Overqualification. Objective overqualification derives from the comparison between employees' qualifications and qualifications required by the job (i.e., formal job requirements; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). Given the

complexity of overqualification, the objective measures of overqualification usually capture some forms of overqualification rather than a holistic picture, and many scholars focus on overeducation (Erdogan et al., 2011). There are usually four distinct measurement approaches for overeducation (Verhaest & Omey, 2006). The first approach measures perceived overeducation and is a *direct self-assessment*, which involves employees' perceptions of whether they are over-, under, or rightly educated for their job. The second approach is an *indirect self-assessment*, which measures overeducation by comparing employees' education and the appropriate education for the job, both of which are reported by employees themselves. The assessment of the appropriate education for the job is subjective to some degree. The third approach is the *realized matches approach*, which defines employees having an education that is atypical for the job (e.g., one standard deviation above the mean education level within an occupation) to be overeducated (e.g., Hung, 2008). The possible education inflation in an occupation may cause bias when using this approach to measure overeducation (Erdogan et al., 2017). In addition, some scholars thought that the cutoff point (e.g., one standard deviation above the mean) was arbitrary (Verhaest & Omey, 2006; Wilkins & Wooden, 2011). The fourth approach is the *job analysis method*, which measures overeducation using the difference between employees' education and job requirements provided by a job analysis. For example, Arvan et al. (2019) measured overeducation using the difference between respondents' education level (in years) and job requirements provided by O*NET or the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) for a given occupation. The job analysis approach also has limitations: it assesses the job requirements at the occupation level and may not capture the true job requirements in a specific organization (Erdogan et al., 2017);

the assumptions about homogeneous jobs within the same occupation and static job requirements are unrealistic (Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2011; Wilkins & Wooden, 2011). In order to allow required education to vary by job, some scholars measured required education based on hiring standards (e.g., Groeneveld & Hartog, 2004; Grunau & Pecoraro, 2017; Maynard et al., 2015).

Scholars also measured other forms of objective overqualification. For example, Lin et al. (2017) created a dichotomous variable to measure overqualification. They coded respondents who had higher education levels and longer work experience than job requirements as “overqualified” and coded other respondents as “just qualified.” Arvan et al. (2019) measured skill overqualification as the difference between the sum of O*NET ratings of the importance of skills to respondents’ occupations and the sum of respondents’ ratings of their competence in the corresponding skills. They measured cognitive ability overqualification by standardizing respondents’ SAT scores and O*NET ratings of the cognitive demands of their occupations and then calculating the difference between them.

In sum, scholars have tried to measure overqualification by using different objective measures that capture some forms of overqualification. However, given the complexity of overqualification, it is hard to capture a holistic picture using objective measures (Erdogan et al., 2011). Although Arvan et al. (2019) measured objective overqualification by combining three indicators (i.e., overeducation, skill overqualification, and cognitive ability overqualification), there are still some limitations in their measure. For example, the measure ignored the possible overqualification in the aspects of experience and knowledge; it involved job

requirements for the occupations, rather than jobs; the measure of skill overqualification involved self-ratings.

Perceived Overqualification. Previously, scholars have conceptualized perceived overqualification based on different theoretical perspectives. The common theoretical perspective is *person–environment fit*. Misfit refers to the incompatibility between individual characteristics and work environment characteristics (Follmer et al., 2018). Based on the person–environment fit framework, overqualification is considered a type of person–job misfit and is defined as the extent to which employees feel they have a higher level of education, experience, knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) than qualifications required by the job (Maynard et al., 2006).

Besides person–environment fit, Johnson and Johnson (1996) adopted a *job demands–control model*. They modified Khan and Morrow’s (1991) measurements and measured two dimensions: perceived mismatch, which was based on person–environment fit, and perceived no grow, which was based on the job demands–control model and involved the lack of opportunities for learning, growth, and change in the job. Perceived mismatch was positively related to perceived no grow ($r = .34$; Johnson & Johnson, 2000). Most scholars have only used perceived mismatch to measure perceived overqualification (Hu et al., 2015; Zhang et al., 2016).

The measurements of perceived overqualification usually adopt the direct self-assessment approach and capture a more holistic picture than objective measures of overqualification. The most commonly used measurement scales of perceived overqualification are perceived mismatch (Johnson & Johnson, 1996) and the scale of perceived overqualification (SPOQ; Maynard et al., 2006).

Perceived mismatch (4 items) involves employees' qualifications exceeding job requirements or qualifications utilized on the job, such as education, experience, talents, and skills (Johnson & Johnson, 1996). Because of the marginal reliability of perceived mismatch, Maynard et al. (2006) developed SPOQ (9 items), which captured employees' surplus education, experience, training, and KSAs relative to qualifications required by the job or utilized on the job. SPOQ ($\alpha = .92$) was positively related to perceived mismatch ($\alpha = .78$; $r = .70$) and perceived no grow ($\alpha = .64$; $r = .48$).

A few studies have measured other-rating perceived overqualification. For example, Triana et al. (2017) measured paired participant-rating perceived mismatch and reported that its correlation with self-rating perceived mismatch was .54. Debus et al. (2020) measured supervisor-rating perceived mismatch and its mean was low (mean = 2.78, $SD = 1.09$, 7-point rating scale). In management research, a few studies have also explored perceived overqualification that only captured one form. For example, based on Johnson and Johnson's (1996) measurement, Fine and Nevo (2008) measured perceived cognitive overqualification, which includes two factors (i.e., cognitive mismatch and cognitive no-grow), and found that it correlated with perceived overqualification, which was measured using three items that separately represented overeducation, skill underutilization, and over-experience ($r = .69$).

In sum, most scholars considered perceived overqualification as person–job misfit. The measures of perceived overqualification usually adopt the direct self-assessment approach and provide a more holistic picture than the objective measures.

Summary and Research Gaps. Overqualification is a holistic concept that involves employees' different forms of qualifications. Usually, the measurements of perceived overqualification incorporate more forms than the measurements of objective overqualification. Perceived overqualification is employees' direct self-assessment of the comparison between employees' qualifications and qualifications required by and utilized on the job, whereas objective overqualification results from the objective comparison between employees' qualifications and qualifications required by jobs. Perceived overqualification and objective overqualification are related but different. Thus, it is problematic to conflate perceived overqualification with objective overqualification.

However, existing management research on overqualification frequently assumes that the research findings of perceived overqualification can generalize to objective overqualification, and scholars mostly conflate objective overqualification and perceived overqualification when discussing practical implications (Arvan et al., 2019). Moreover, management scholars have focused primarily on perceived overqualification, which is the more proximal predictor of employees' attitudes, behaviors, and performance, and have mostly explored its outcomes but relatively overlooked objective overqualification and the antecedents of perceived overqualification (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Liao et al., 2024), whereas practitioners tend to focus on objective overqualification, which is more detectable than perceived overqualification (Erdogan et al., 2011; Maynard et al., 2006). To date, although scholars argue that objective overqualification is a key predictor of perceived overqualification, we still have a limited understanding of the difference between them. Thus, our current knowledge of the overqualification phenomenon is incomplete, and there is a need for future research to extend the overqualification

literature and establish a bridge across management research and practices in the overqualification field by investigating the difference between objective overqualification and perceived overqualification and how to shape perceived overqualification.

2.1.2 Consequences of Perceived Overqualification

Some review papers have comprehensively summarized the outcomes of perceived overqualification, such as job attitudes; job performance; innovative behaviors; organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs); counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs); turnover and job search; career outcomes; health and well-being; interpersonal relationships; and marital, family and social relationships (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Harari et al., 2017; Liu & Wang, 2012; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011). Overall, perceived overqualification is a double-edged sword and generates both positive and negative outcomes. Although existing review papers have categorized the related studies based on different outcomes of perceived overqualification, they did not separately elaborate on the dark side and bright side of perceived overqualification and the theoretical mechanisms and underlying assumptions. Thus, whether perceived overqualification brings benefits or harms becomes ambiguous. To clarify the ambiguity, I will separately review the dark side and bright side of perceived overqualification based on the major theoretical perspectives brought to bear on perceived overqualification. I will first review the related studies that focused on the dark side based on person–environment fit theory and relative deprivation theory, followed by the research that explored the bright side based on capability-based perspective and proactive perspectives on work design.

Person–Environment Fit Theory. Person–environment fit is an important theoretical framework for perceived overqualification (Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Maynard et al., 2006). Based on person–environment fit (Van Vianen, 2018), individuals have an innate need to achieve person–environment fit. They strive for compatibility between personal attributes (e.g., qualifications, needs, goals, and values) and environmental attributes (e.g., demands, supplies, and values). Fit generates positive outcomes, whereas misfit reduces positive outcomes and even generates negative outcomes. Fit generally has stronger effects on attitudinal outcomes (e.g., satisfaction and commitment) than behavioral outcomes (e.g., performance and turnover).

Person–job fit is a kind of person–environment fit. There are two kinds of person–job fit: demands–abilities fit, which refers to the compatibility between employees’ KSAs and what the job requires, and needs–supplies fit, which captures how well the jobs meet employees’ needs, desires, or preferences (Edwards, 1991). Perceived overqualification reflects poor fit and is a type of person–job misfit (Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Maynard et al., 2006). Thus, perceived overqualification may reduce positive outcomes and generate negative outcomes. Employees who perceive overqualification are expected to strive for fit. Based on person–environment fit theory, scholars have found the effects of perceived overqualification on job attitudes, work behaviors, turnover and job search, and well-being. For example, perceived overqualification led to negative job attitudes, such as *poor job satisfaction*, *low affective commitment*, and *low work engagement* (Luksyte et al., 2022; Maynard et al., 2006; Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013). For work behaviors, perceived overqualification resulted in *less OCBs targeting others* and *voice* (Erdogan, Karaeminogullari, et al., 2020) and more

CWBs (Liu et al., 2015; Luksyte et al., 2011). For turnover and job search, perceived overqualification led to higher *turnover intentions* (Maynard et al., 2006), *intentions to leave the current job* (Wu & Chi, 2020), *voluntary turnover*, and more *active job search behaviors* (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013; Wu & Chi, 2020). For well-being, perceived overqualification resulted in lower *life satisfaction* (Luksyte et al., 2022).

The effects of perceived overqualification are contingent on some boundary conditions. For example, scholars have examined the moderating effects of individual factors, such as competence and growth work value and collectivism orientation. For employees with high competence and growth work value, the negative effect of perceived overqualification on affective commitment and its positive effect on active job search behaviors were stronger (Maynard & Parfyonova, 2013). The negative effects of perceived overqualification on person–environment fit (i.e., demands–abilities fit, needs–supplies fit, and person–group fit) were weaker when *collectivism orientation* was high (Luksyte et al., 2022). For contextual factors, scholars have examined the moderating effects of perceived organizational support, perceived ease of movement, and employee development-oriented organizational culture. Luksyte and Spitzmueller (2016) found that when employees perceived high levels of organizational support, perceived overqualification was positively related to supervisor-rated *creative performance*, and the relationship was negative when *perceived organizational support* was low. Wu and Chi (2020) found that when *perceived ease of movement* was high, employees who felt overqualified had higher intentions to leave their current jobs. Zhang, Wang, and Li (2021) found that the negative effect of perceived

overqualification on organizational identification was significant only when *employee development-oriented organizational culture* was weak.

Relative Deprivation Theory. Relative deprivation arises when subjective comparisons to different standards, such as other people, groups, or themselves in different points, indicate that people or their group are disadvantaged, and they experience the disadvantage as underserved and then respond with angry resentment (Smith et al., 2012; Smith et al., 2020). Reactions to relative deprivation represent people's intentions and behaviors to improve or rectify their situations and include: (a) collective behaviors (e.g., rioting); (b) intergroup attitudes, which include attitudes toward outgroups (e.g., prejudice), the social system (e.g., organizational commitment), and ingroups (e.g., ingroup identification); (c) internal states (e.g., psychological stress, depression, physical health, and attitudes toward the self); and (d) individual-oriented behaviors, which include deviant behaviors (e.g., absence), achievement behaviors (e.g., participation in individual professional development activities), and escape behaviors (e.g., gambling; Smith et al., 2012).

Employees who perceive overqualification may experience disadvantaged comparisons to their desired employment situations and other people who are not overqualified and believe they deserve better employment situations and then feel deprived (Erdogan et al., 2018; Luksyte et al., 2022). Based on relative deprivation theory, scholars have found the effects of perceived overqualification on job attitudes, job performance, work behaviors, turnover and job search, career outcomes, and health and well-being. For example, scholars found that perceived overqualification led to negative job attitudes, such as *low job satisfaction*, *affective commitment*, and *work engagement* (Alfes et al., 2016; Erdogan & Bauer,

2009; Feldman et al., 2002; Luksyte et al., 2022). For job performance, perceived overqualification was negatively related to *self-rated job performance* (Lee et al., 2021). For work behaviors, perceived overqualification was positively related to *job withdrawal, knowledge hiding, and CWBs* (Li et al., 2022; Schreurs et al., 2021; Triana et al., 2017). For turnover and job search, perceived overqualification led to *lower intention to remain, higher voluntary turnover, and more job search* (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Feldman et al., 2002). For career outcomes, perceived overqualification led to *lower career satisfaction and perceived career performance* (Erdogan et al., 2018; Gkorezis et al., 2019). For well-being, perceived overqualification had negative effects on *life satisfaction and positive affect* and had positive effects on *somatic symptoms and negative affect* (Erdogan et al., 2018; Gkorezis et al., 2019; Luksyte et al., 2022; Triana et al., 2017).

Scholars have also explored some boundary conditions on which the effects of perceived overqualification are contingent. For example, scholars have examined the moderating effects of *individual factors*, such as career centrality, ambition, and occupational instrumentality. Erdogan et al. (2018) found that the positive effect of perceived overqualification on relative deprivation was stronger when *career centrality* was higher, and the positive effect was not significant only when career centrality was very low. Schreurs et al. (2021) found that *ambition* strengthened the positive effect of perceived overqualification on relative deprivation, thus leading to more CWBs. Lee et al. (2021) found that *occupational instrumentality* weakened the positive effect of perceived overqualification on relative deprivation. For *contextual factors*, scholars have examined the moderating effects of peer overqualification, leader–member exchange, team cohesiveness, and empowerment. Hu et al. (2015) proposed that when *peer*

overqualification was high, employees who perceived overqualification were less likely to feel deprived. They found that when peer overqualification was high, the positive effects of perceived overqualification on *task significance* and *person–group fit* were stronger, thus leading to higher *in-role performance* and more *taking charge*. Alfes et al. (2016) found that *leader–member exchange* and *team cohesiveness* weakened the negative relationship between perceived overqualification and job satisfaction. The negative effects of perceived overqualification on job satisfaction and intention to remain and its positive effect on voluntary turnover were significant only when *empowerment* was low (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009).

Capability-Based Perspective. According to the capability-based perspective, employees who perceive overqualification have superior qualifications and positive self-assessments and may utilize their superior qualifications at their work, thus benefiting themselves, teams, and organizations (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021).

Scholars have explored the benefits resulting from the superior capabilities and positive self-assessments of employees who feel overqualified. For example, Zhang et al. (2016) argued that employees who perceived overqualification might feel competent in engaging in a broader range of work activities. Based on the self-regulatory perspective, they found that perceived overqualification had a positive effect on *role-breadth self-efficacy*, thus leading to more *pro-other and pro-organizational proactive behaviors*. They also found that when *performance goal orientation* was high and learning goal orientation was low, the indirect effects were significantly positive; when performance goal orientation was low and learning goal orientation was high, the indirect effects were nonsignificant. Based

on the self-concept-based motivation model, Ma, Lin, et al. (2020) found that when both *empowering leadership* (social feedback) and *felt role clarity* (task feedback) were high (three-way interaction), perceived overqualification had a positive effect on *work engagement*, thus leading to higher *task performance* and more *personal initiative*. Ma, Ganegoda, et al. (2020) argued that positive self-views can help employees who feel overqualified develop strong career identities. Drawing on role identity theory, they found that perceived overqualification had a positive effect on *career identity*, which then led to less *career distress* and higher *career planning*. They also found that the indirect effects were significant when *leader humility* was high and nonsignificant when it was low. Lee et al. (2021) found that perceived overqualification was positively related to *task mastery*, thus leading to higher *job performance*. The indirect effect was stronger when *occupational instrumentality* was high. Liu et al. (2024) found that perceived overqualification had a positive effect on constructive deviance, thus leading to higher task performance and more creativity, and team-focused transformational leadership strengthened the positive indirect effects.

Some scholars also found extremely high perceived overqualification may bring harm. For example, based on the social cognitive theory of self-regulation, Duan et al. (2022) found an inverted U-shaped relationship between perceived overqualification and constructive voice via work engagement and the moderating effect of leader consultation. When *leader consultation* was high, for employees who perceived low levels of overqualification, perceived overqualification was positively related to *work engagement* due to a sense of mastery and superiority, thus leading to more *constructive voice*, and for employees who perceived high levels of overqualification, the indirect effect was not significant. When leader

consultation was low, for employees who perceived high levels of overqualification, perceived overqualification was negatively related to work engagement, thus leading to less constructive voice, and the indirect effect was nonsignificant for employees who perceived low levels of overqualification.

Proactive Perspectives on Work Design. Work design refers to “the content and organization of one’s work tasks, activities, relationships, and responsibilities” (Parker, 2014, p. 662). Work design arises from both top-down processes in which organizations and managers shape employees’ work and bottom-up processes that arise from employees’ initiative in modifying work (Parker, Van DenBroeck, et al., 2017). Proactive perspectives on work design focus on informal and emergent processes and capture how employees take the initiative to change their work (Grant & Parker, 2009). Job crafting and negotiating idiosyncratic deals are two important types of employees’ initiative in modifying work (Grant & Parker, 2009; Parker, Van Den Broeck, et al., 2017).

Job crafting refers to self-initiated actions that employees take to change their work. Some scholars focused on the positive effect of perceived overqualification on job crafting. For example, Zhang, Wang, Qian, et al. (2021) investigated two types of job crafting driven by different personal goals—*job crafting towards strengths* and *job crafting towards interests*. They argued that employees who felt overqualified were more likely to craft their jobs because they wanted to restore person–job fit. They also found that employees who perceived overqualification may engage in more job crafting towards strengths than job crafting towards interests when *organizational identification* was high. Furthermore, the paper explored the different effects of two types of job crafting on well-being and task performance. They integrated job crafting perspective with

self-determination theory and found that two types of job crafting led to higher *subjective vitality*. They also integrated job crafting perspective with strengths use theories and found that job crafting towards strengths led to higher *supervisor-rated task performance*.

Some scholars found the negative influence of perceived overqualification on job crafting. For example, Sesen and Ertan (2020) found the negative effect of perceived overqualification on job crafting measured using the scale developed by Tims et al. (2012), and the negative effect was significant when *psychological capital* was low. However, the findings may not be convincing. This paper used a 5-point Likert scale and SPOQ (Maynard et al., 2006) to measure perceived overqualification. The mean of perceived overqualification was 1.44 ($SD = 0.35$). That is, most respondents in the sample did not feel overqualified.

Lin et al. (2017) found an inverted U-shaped relationship between perceived overqualification and task crafting. They argued that employees who felt overqualified engaged in task crafting (e.g., rearranging equipment) to assert a positive self-image because their positive self-image was hampered in jobs that they were overqualified for. As perceived overqualification increased, task crafting became less helpful. This paper also found that when *organizational identification* was high, employees who felt overqualified were more likely to engage in task crafting and then perform more *creativity* and *OCBs contributing to the organization*.

Some papers explored the moderating effect of job crafting. For example, Andel et al. (2022) found that the positive effect of perceived overqualification on *boredom* was weaker when task crafting was high. Sánchez-Cardona et al. (2020) found that increasing structural resources strengthened the positive influence of

perceived overqualification on *job boredom* while increasing challenging demands weakened the positive effect, but this study adopted a cross-sectional design, and most respondents were not overqualified (Mean = 1.52, *SD* = 1.39; 7-point Likert scale).

Beyond job crafting, employees may also modify their work via idiosyncratic deals (i-deals), which refer to “voluntary, personalized agreements of a nonstandard nature negotiated between individual employees and their employers regarding terms that benefit each part” (Rousseau et al., 2006, p. 978). I-deals received less attention than job crafting in the research on perceived overqualification. There was only one study that examined the effect of perceived overqualification on i-deals (Jahantab et al., 2022). They found that i-deals, which were measured using the scale adapted from Rosen et al. (2013), mediated the positive influence of perceived overqualification on *task performance* and *OCBs* and that *group overqualification* and *workgroup team orientation* weakened the positive indirect effects. Some scholars have examined the moderating effects of i-deals. For example, Luksyte and Spitzmueller (2016) found that when employees who felt overqualified successfully negotiated developmental i-deals, they were more *creative*; otherwise, they were less creative. Howard et al. (2022) found that when employees successfully negotiated task i-deals, the negative effects of perceived overqualification on *demands–abilities fit*, *needs–supplies fit* (marginally significant), and *boredom sensations* were weaker.

Summary and Research Gaps. Traditionally, most scholars explored the dark side of perceived overqualification based on person–environment fit theory and relative deprivation theory. The underlying mechanisms are person–job fit and

relative deprivation separately. The underlying assumptions are that the contents of jobs are fixed, it is difficult to utilize employees' surplus qualifications and address the discrepancy between their qualifications and qualifications required by the job, and employees passively and negatively react to perceived overqualification.

Recently, scholars have explored more about the bright side of perceived overqualification. The main theoretical perspectives are capability-based perspective and proactive perspectives on work design. The underlying mechanisms are the capability-related concepts that result from employees' surplus qualifications and the initiative that they take to modify their work (i.e., job crafting and i-deals), respectively. The underlying assumptions are that the contents of work are malleable, it is possible to utilize employees' surplus qualifications at work, and employees may proactively and positively react to perceived overqualification.

There are also overlaps between the studies that adopted person–environment fit theory and relative deprivation theory and the studies that adopted capability-based perspective and proactive perspectives on work design. Some of the former studies have also explored the boundary conditions that may be helpful in utilizing employees' surplus qualifications, such as empowerment (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009) and perceived organizational support (Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2016). Some of the latter studies also found that at high (vs. low) levels of perceived overqualification, it is difficult (vs. possible) to fully utilize employees' surplus qualifications by crafting their tasks and engaging in constructive voice, and employees may negatively (vs. positively) react to perceived overqualification (Duan et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2017).

In sum, whether perceived overqualification brings benefits or harms depends on whether the content of a job or work is fixed or malleable and whether it is possible to utilize employees' surplus qualifications at work or not. When the contents of work are malleable and it is possible to utilize their surplus qualifications at work, perceived overqualification may bring benefits; otherwise, it may bring harm. Thus, to make the best of perceived overqualification, it is important to facilitate the utilization of employees' surplus qualifications at work. Recently, more and more studies have paid attention to the utilization of employees' surplus qualifications at work. Recent studies have mostly adopted the capability-based perspective (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021) to explore the bright side of perceived overqualification and found that employees who felt overqualified utilized their surplus qualifications to benefit themselves, their teams, and their organizations, such as having higher task performance and more proactive behaviors (Ma, Lin, et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2016).

However, proactive perspectives on work design received less attention. Given that some of the related studies may not explore the overqualification phenomenon because the means of respondents' perceived overqualification were very small (e.g. Sánchez-Cardona et al., 2020; Sesen & Ertan, 2020), we may have a more limited understanding of the initiative employees who feel overqualified take to modify their work. Although both capability-based perspective and proactive perspectives on work design suggest employees who perceive overqualification can utilize their surplus qualifications at work, proactive perspectives on work design especially suggest that employees can proactively change their jobs or work via job crafting and negotiating i-deals. The notion is important because it indicates that the jobs or work of employees who feel

overqualified are changeable; further, the qualifications utilized on their jobs or at work are changeable, and their perceptions of overqualification can also change. Thus, it is possible and feasible that employees who feel overqualified change their perceptions of overqualification by taking the initiative to change their work. However, existing studies ignored the possible effects of employees' initiatives in modifying their work on perceived overqualification and the agentic role of employees in changing their perceptions of overqualification. In addition, although perceived overqualification is changeable, most studies adopt a static approach to studying perceived overqualification (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Simon et al., 2019). Thus, to deepen our understanding of perceived overqualification, it is important for future research to explore changeable perceived overqualification, and an important research direction is drawing on proactive perspectives on work design to explore how employees who feel overqualified proactively change their perceptions of overqualification.

2.1.3 Antecedents of Perceived Overqualification

Objective overqualification is a key antecedent of perceived overqualification, which mediates the relationships between objective overqualification and outcomes (e.g., Lin et al., 2017; Liu & Wang, 2012). Beyond objective overqualification, scholars have also explored other influencing factors. This review will focus on other influencing factors and integrate the categorization frameworks used by previous review papers (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Harari et al., 2017; Liu & Wang, 2012; McKee-Ryan & Harvey, 2011) to summarize the related studies.

Demographic Influence. Scholars have explored the effects of demographics on perceived overqualification. The effects of *gender* and *age* on

perceived overqualification were inconsistent (i.e., positive or negative) in previous studies (e.g., Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Liu et al., 2015; Liu & Wang, 2012; Luksyte et al., 2022). The results from a meta-analysis showed that gender and age were not correlated with perceived overqualification (Harari et al., 2017). In general, *education* was positively related to perceived overqualification (Deng et al., 2018; Erdogan, Karaeminogullari, et al., 2020; Gkorezis et al., 2019) because the increase in job applicants' education was faster than the increase in jobs that utilize high levels of education. The results of a meta-analysis (Harari et al., 2017) also showed that education had a modestly positive correlation with perceived overqualification. The relationship between *organizational tenure* and perceived overqualification was also mixed (i.e., positive or negative; Luksyte et al., 2022; Zhang et al., 2016). Harari et al. (2017) found that *organizational tenure* was not related to perceived overqualification in a meta-analysis.

Personalities and Traits. Scholars have explored the possible influence of personalities and traits. For example, *neuroticism* was positively related to perceived overqualification because employees with a high level of neuroticism may have less desirable perceptions of job characteristics and job complexity and then underestimate the qualifications required by or utilized on the job (Liu et al., 2015; Liu & Wang, 2012). *Boredom proneness* was positively related to perceived overqualification (Watt & Hargis, 2010). Boredom-prone employees may perceive overqualification because they are more likely to experience boredom and attribute boredom to the underutilization of qualifications. *Narcissistic entitlement* was also positively related to perceived overqualification and weakened the positive relationship between objective overqualification and perceived overqualification (Maynard et al., 2015). The meta-analysis (Harari et al., 2017) found that

narcissism and *negative affectivity* had positive correlations with perceived overqualification. Narcissistic employees may have inflated views of their qualifications, and employees with high negative affectivity may have biased evaluations of their jobs and pay more attention to the unfavorable aspects of their jobs.

Career-Related Factors and Job Search. The possible effects of career-related factors and job search has also received attention from scholars. For instance, Liu and Wang (2012) proposed that when employees invested more effort in *career planning* and *job search*, they were less likely to feel overqualification. Guerrero and Hatala (2015) found that *job search intensity* was negatively (vs. positively) related to perceived overqualification for employees with low (vs. high) financial needs. Valls et al. (2020) found that university graduates' *career planning* was negatively related to perceived overqualification. Zhang, Wang, Weng, et al. (2021) found *career growth opportunities* were negatively related to perceived overqualification.

Job-Related Factors. There are some studies on the effects of job-related factors. For example, Lobene et al. (2015) found that *lower pay rates*, *the presence of a uniform requirement*, and *repetitiveness* led to higher perceived overqualification. Harari et al. (2017) found *salary* had a negative correlation with perceived overqualification. Arvan et al. (2019) found *job dissatisfaction* positively affected perceived overqualification rather than the reverse.

Relational Influence. Some studies have explored the effects of relational factors. For example, Liu and Wang (2012) proposed that when *person-supervisor fit* was high, employees were less likely to perceive overqualification. Yang et al. (2015) found that *perceived delegation* was negatively related to perceived

overqualification, and the effect was stronger for employees with longer organizational tenure. Alfes et al. (2016) found that high levels of *leader–member exchange (LMX) quality* and *team cohesiveness* led to less perceived overqualification because employees are more likely to fully utilize their qualifications in supportive environments, but there may be reverse causality because of the cross-sectional research design. Zhang, Wang, Weng, et al. (2021) found that *transformational leadership* was negatively related to perceived overqualification via career growth opportunities, and the indirect effect was stronger when supervisor–subordinate *guanxi* was high.

Organizational Factors. The effects of organizational factors have received little attention. In one study, Liu and Wang (2012) proposed that when *organizational politics* were high, employees' qualifications were more likely to be underutilized and employees were more likely to perceive overqualification.

Culture-Related Factors. Harari et al. (2017) examined the moderating role of power distance in the relationships between the influencing factors and perceived overqualification. For example, they found that in low power distance cultures, older employees and employees with longer organizational tenure perceived less overqualification. As age and organization tenure increase, employees' skills and institutional knowledge also increase, and employees are more likely to gain career advancement opportunities and promotion and are less likely to perceive overqualification.

Changeable Perceived Overqualification. Simon et al. (2019) focused on newcomers' perceived overqualification and found that perceived overqualification changed over time during socialization. They found when newcomers had low levels of proactive personality, perceived overqualification

assessed on the first day of the new employee orientation had a positive effect on perceived overqualification assessed 90 days post hire through its negative effects on perceived autonomy intercept and then positive affect linear change.

Summary and Research Gaps. Existing research has provided a preliminary understanding of the antecedents. Besides objective overqualification, perceived overqualification was affected by *demographical influence* (e.g., gender, age, education, organizational tenure), *personalities and traits* (e.g., neuroticism, entitlement, negative affectivity), *career-related factors and job search* (e.g., job search intensity, career planning, and career growth opportunities), *job-related factors* (e.g., salary, repetitiveness, specific goals, uniform requirements), *relational influence* (e.g., LMX, team cohesiveness, transformational leadership), *organizational factors* (e.g., organizational politics), and *cultural factors* (e.g., power distance).

There are two main limitations in the existing research that explored the antecedents of perceived overqualification. First, most of the previous studies did not adopt theoretical perspectives. They explored the direct effects of influencing factors on perceived overqualification based on some possibly logical explanations. For example, when LMX was high, employees might have more resources and challenging tasks, and they were less likely to perceive overqualification (Alfes et al., 2016). Feldman (1996) suggested that traditional underemployment research was atheoretical and that integrating some theoretical perspectives into the underemployment research was beneficial and helpful. Scholars have found that perceived overqualification had important effects on employees' attitudes, behaviors, and performance and have applied some theoretical perspectives to explain the effects of perceived overqualification (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021),

whereas few theoretical perspectives were adopted to explore its antecedents. We still have a limited understanding of how to shape perceived overqualification. Thus, it is important for future research to adopt some theoretical perspectives to explore the antecedents of perceived overqualification.

Secondly, most previous studies did not examine the theoretical mechanisms in the relationships between the influencing factors and perceived overqualification. Although some studies have adopted some theoretical perspectives or explored some mechanisms, they did not explore the underlying mechanisms based on some theoretical perspectives. For example, Yang et al. (2015) adopted career construction theory and found that career adaptability had a positive effect on perceived delegation, thus leading to less perceived overqualification, and it also positively affected career anchor, thus increasing perceived overqualification. However, career construction theory provided limited explanations for the effects of career anchor and perceived delegation on perceived overqualification. The underlying mechanisms via which the proximal predictors—career anchor and perceived delegation—affected perceived overqualification were still unknown. Simon et al. (2019) drew on broaden-and-build theory and found that the increase in work-related positive affect was negatively related to perceived overqualification, but they did not examine the underlying mechanisms, such as setting higher goals. Valls et al. (2020) found that undergraduates' proactive personality had a positive effect on career planning, thus leading to less perceived overqualification, but their arguments were based on logical arguments and empirical findings. To date, we still know little about why the influencing factors affect perceived overqualification. It is important for future

research to explore the underlying theoretical mechanisms in the relationships between the influencing factors and perceived overqualification.

2.2 Jobs and Work Roles

2.2.1 Job–Role Differentiation Perspective

Job–role differentiation perspective (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991) applies a task elements approach and uses the ideas of prime beneficiaries and a universe of task elements to delineate the boundary between jobs and roles at the individual level. *Prime beneficiaries* refer to an individual or a group of individuals whose needs are the primary reasons for the origin and existence of organizations. Functional operations are executed to meet their needs and expectations. Usually, administrative agents run the organization on a day-to-day basis. Prime beneficiaries and their agents need to formally define jobs to recruit other individuals and enlist others to perform the jobs. *The universe of task elements* refers to a relatively finite set of task elements—generic job components that are unnecessarily further broken down. The elements are generic and comprehensive—that is, they are not job-specific and there is no need to add additional elements to describe all jobs.

After introducing these two ideas, the *job* is defined as “a set of task elements grouped together under one job title and designed to be performed by a single individual” (p.173). The task elements comprising jobs are called *established task elements*. Jobs have four attributes (Ilgen, 1994), as outlined below:

(1) Jobs are created by the prime beneficiaries or their agents to accomplish the organizations’ objectives.

(2) Jobs are objective in the sense that there is a shared consensus on the task elements comprising jobs based on formal job descriptions.

(3) Jobs are bureaucratic and independent of job incumbents. The task elements comprising jobs are invariant for all job incumbents. Job incumbents need to have a set of KSAs to perform the required tasks.

(4) Jobs are quasi-static and relatively constant. Although jobs can change, they do not change on a day-to-day basis.

However, the environment where jobs exist is subjective, personal, and dynamic. In the modern world, organizations become less bureaucratic and more responsive to the increasingly turbulent environment. Job descriptions may not be the foundation of performance management. Employees need to not only fulfill required tasks in job descriptions but also perform nonjob tasks to meet the demands of various stakeholders, such as customers and coworkers. These nonjob tasks are called *emergent task elements*, which are subjective, personal, dynamic, and specified by various stakeholders other than the prime beneficiaries. Emergent task elements are not a part of jobs but rather a part of roles. In organizations, roles are generated by expectations that reflect the official demands of the organizations (e.g., job descriptions) and the informal role pressures or forces, and they are constituted by role behaviors performed by employees as reactions to role expectations (Biddle, 1986; Kahn et al., 1964). Role senders who communicate expectations to employees may be supervisors, coworkers, subordinates, customers, and even employees themselves.

Thus, work roles are larger sets that include both established task elements comprising the jobs and informal task elements that are self-generated or communicated to job incumbents by various social sources—that is, the total

sets of employees' tasks associated with their employment. Work roles have different attributes from jobs, as outlined below:

(1) The tasks comprising work roles are specified by both the prime beneficiaries or their agents (established task elements) and other social sources (emergent task elements).

(2) Work roles are subjective and personal. There may not be a shared consensus on the task elements comprising work roles (e.g., Dierdorff & Morgeson, 2007; Lam et al., 1999; Morrison, 1994; Toegel et al., 2013).

(3) Work roles are not independent of the focal person who occupies the role. Individual factors of the focal person may influence the role expectations held by role senders and role behaviors (Katz & Kahn, 1978).

(4) Work roles are less static and more flexible than jobs. Work roles may frequently change in the context of unpredictable changes (Murphy & Jackson, 1999).

The tasks comprising work roles vary along the following two dimensions: social embeddedness, which refers to the extent to which the tasks require cooperating with other people, and formalization, which is defined as the extent to which the tasks are clearly specified and there is a shared consensus that tasks are part of the employment relationship (Murphy & Jackson, 1999).

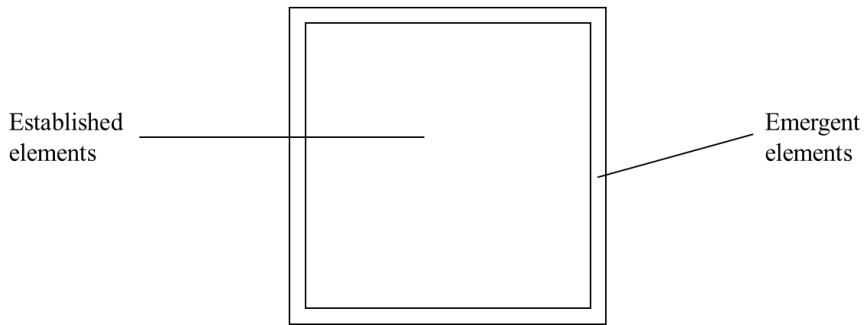
Based on the job–role differentiation perspective, there are different combinations of established and emergent elements. *The bureaucratic prototype* involves conditions where jobs and roles are similar, and there are almost established task elements and very few emergent task elements in the roles. *The loose cannon prototype* involves conditions where work roles are almost composed of emergent task elements and include very few established task elements. *The job*

similarity–role difference prototype involves the conditions in which two individuals have the same job but have different work roles. The prototypes are shown in Figure 1.

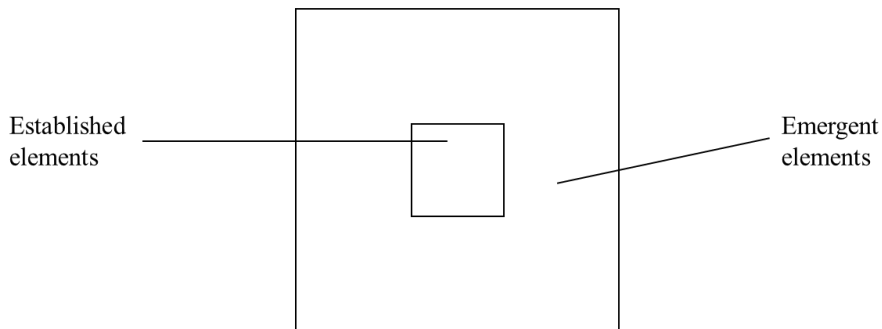
Figure 1

Examples of Different Combinations of Established and Emergent Task Elements

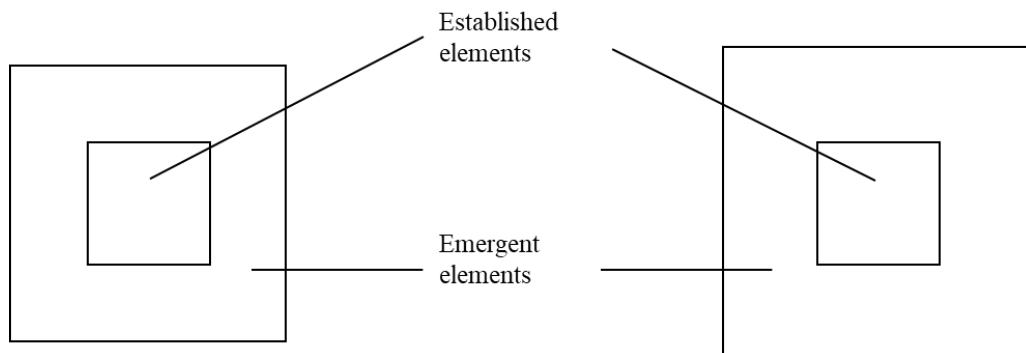
The Bureaucratic Prototype



The Loose Cannon Prototype



The Job Similarity-Role Difference Prototype



Note. Adapted from Ilgen & Hollenbeck (1991)

2.2.2 Model of Positive Work Role Behaviors

Although the job–role differentiation perspective differentiates between jobs and work roles, it does not describe the specific contents or dimensions of established and emergent task elements. Given that the tasks comprising work roles, especially emergent task elements, cannot be divorced from the work environment or context in which jobs or roles exist (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991), it is important and necessary to incorporate organizational context when describing the full set of behaviors or tasks comprising work roles. Griffin et al. (2007) identified two pervasive and important contextual features—uncertainty and interdependence—and developed the model of positive work role behaviors. Positive work role behaviors refer to all behaviors that a focal employee actually performs and that contribute to the organization’s goals (Carpini et al., 2017).

Uncertainty involves the lack of predictability in work systems, such as inputs, processes, and outputs. Uncertainty influences the extent to which work roles can be formalized using job descriptions. When uncertainty is low, work roles can be formalized, and organizations can specify tasks or behaviors that contribute to the organizations’ goals using formal job descriptions. When uncertainty is high, work roles need to be responsive to unpredictable contexts, and it is difficult to formalize the tasks comprising work roles. To respond to changing conditions and demands, employees need to perform emerging tasks. According to the differences in the formalization of behaviors, Griffin et al. (2007) identified three forms of work role behaviors—proficiency, adaptivity, and proactivity. Proficiency refers to behaviors that can be prescribed or predicted in advance. Adaptivity refers to behaviors that individuals perform to cope with, respond to, and support changes in work systems or work roles.

Proactivity refers to self-initiated and future-directed behaviors that individuals perform to anticipate or initiate changes in the work systems or work roles.

Interdependence occurs when individuals need to cooperate with others to achieve the organization's goals. Interdependence influences the extent of the embeddedness of work roles in a social system. When interdependence is low, employees simply perform tasks independently or as individual contributors. When interdependence is high, employees need to coordinate their activities to support the broader social contexts, including teams and organizations. According to the level of contribution of behaviors, Griffin et al. (2007) proposed three types of work role behaviors—individual task behaviors contributing to individual effectiveness, team member behaviors contributing to team effectiveness, and organization member behaviors contributing to organization effectiveness.

In order to provide the full range of behaviors comprising work roles in uncertain and interdependent organization contexts, Griffin et al. (2007) used cross-classification to propose the model of positive work role behaviors, which includes nine dimensions of work role behaviors that contribute to the organizations' goals. *Individual task proficiency* refers to “behaviors that can be formalized and are not embedded in a social context” (Griffin et al., 2007, p. 331). Individual task proficiency is commonly specified by formal job descriptions. Three categories of organizational citizenship behaviors (OCBs)—persistence and effort (e.g., personal industry), adherence to rules and procedures (e.g., compliance), and attendance and punctuality (e.g., conscientiousness)—were considered as types of individual task proficiency (Carpini et al., 2017; Carpini & Parker, 2017). *Team member proficiency* refers to “behaviors that can

be formalized and are embedded in a team or group context” (Griffin et al., 2007, p.331). Two categories of OCBs—helping (e.g., interpersonal helping and altruism) and cooperation (e.g., supporting and cooperating)—were identified as team member proficiency (Carpini et al., 2017). *Organization member proficiency* refers to “behaviors that can be formalized and are embedded in an organizational context” (Griffin et al., 2007, p. 331). OCBs that involve loyalty (e.g., loyal boosterism) and participating in organizational affairs (e.g., civic virtue) were viewed as types of organization member proficiency (Carpini & Parker, 2017).

Individual task adaptivity refers to behaviors in which individuals adapt to changes that influence their roles as individuals, *team member adaptivity* refers to behaviors in which individuals adapt to changes that influence their roles as members of a team, and *organization member adaptivity* refers to behaviors in which individuals adapt to changes that influence their roles as members of an organization (Griffin et al., 2007). Adaptivity received less attention, and there are some constructs that are considered types of adaptivity, such as sportsmanship and adapting (Carpini et al., 2017).

Individual task proactivity refers to self-initiated and future-directed behaviors that individuals perform to change their roles as individuals, their individual work situations, or themselves (Griffin et al., 2007). Job crafting and i-deals are not considered types of individual task proactivity because the primary purpose of these two behaviors is to benefit employees themselves (Carpini et al., 2017). *Team member proactivity* refers to self-initiated and future-directed behaviors that individuals perform to change their teams’ situations or the way the teams work, and *organization member proactivity* refers to self-initiated and

future-directed behaviors that individuals perform to change their organizations or the way the organizations work (Griffin et al., 2007). There are some proactive behaviors that are viewed as types of proactivity and may contribute to more than one of the three levels, such as initiative, taking charge, and voice (Carpini et al., 2017).

2.2.3 Perceived Role Breadth for Work Behaviors

Role breadth refers to the range of characteristic behaviors within the role (Biddle, 1979). Employees who have the same job may have different work roles (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Some employees may have broader work roles as they perform more emergent behaviors and tasks. Given that work roles are subjective (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991) and that the focal person who occupies the work role may have different perceptions of role breadth from their role senders (e.g., supervisors and subordinates; Lam et al., 1999; Morrison, 1994; Toegel et al., 2013), this thesis focuses on the focal employee's perceived role breadth following most research on perceived role breadth for work behaviors.

To my best knowledge, we have a limited understanding of perceived role breadth that captures the full set of work behaviors in employees' work roles. Most studies examined perceived role breadth for specific work behaviors, such as helping (Marinova et al., 2013) and voice (Tangirala et al., 2013). *Perceived role breadth for work behaviors* is defined as the extent to which employees perceive work behaviors as the expected part of their work roles (McAllister et al., 2007). Scholars usually measure it by using the existing measurement scales of work behaviors and asking respondents to assess the degree to which behaviors are part of the work role (e.g., Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2004; Hofmann et al., 2003; Kim et al., 2013; Morrison, 1994; Tangirala et al., 2013).

Perceived role breadth for work behaviors is one facet of employees' *role perceptions for work behaviors*, and there are three other facets (McAllister et al., 2007), which are outlined as follows: *perceived instrumentality* is defined as the extent to which employees perceive that the performance of behaviors is relevant to rewards or punishments, *perceived role discretion* refers to employees' perceptions of freedom to choose to perform the behaviors, and *perceived role efficacy* refers to employees' perceptions of their competence in performing the behaviors. Some scholars have examined role definitions using the measurement combining perceived role breadth and role instrumentality for work behaviors. Specifically, they asked respondents to assess the degree to which behaviors are perceived as part of the work role and doing (or not doing) behaviors is relevant to rewards (or punishments; e.g., Kamdar et al., 2006; Van Dyne et al., 2008). Some scholars have also measured role definitions using the measurement combining perceived role breadth, role instrumentality, and role discretion for work behaviors. They also asked respondents to assess the degree to which they have to perform behaviors (e.g., Tepper et al., 2001; Tepper & Taylor, 2003; Zellars et al., 2002). Although the following review includes the studies on role definitions for behaviors, these studies confounded perceived role breadth for work behaviors with role instrumentality and role discretion (McAllister et al., 2007).

In order to provide a holistic view of employees' perceived role breadth, this thesis adopts a comprehensive theoretical framework—the model of positive work role behaviors (Carpini et al., 2017; Griffin et al., 2007)—to synthesize the research. I will begin with proficiency, followed by adaptivity and proactivity.

Perceived Role Breadth for Proficiency. Scholars have explored perceived role breadth (or role definitions) for different work behaviors, which are classified into proficiency.

Individual Task Proficiency. Some studies have examined perceived role breadth (or role definitions) for conscientiousness and personal industry. For example, Morrison (1994) found that *affective commitment* and *job satisfaction* were positively related to perceived role breadth for *conscientiousness*, which was positively related to conscientiousness. She also found that perceived role breadth for conscientiousness mediated the positive effect of affective commitment on conscientiousness. Tepper et al. (2001) found that when employees perceived higher levels of *organizational procedural justice*, they were more likely to perceive that *personal industry* was part of work roles and relevant to rewards and that they had to perform it. When they had this kind of role definition, they were more likely to perform personal industry, and the positive effect of organizational procedural justice on personal industry was weaker.

Team Member Proficiency. Scholars have paid more attention to perceived role breadth (or role definitions) for helping. For example, Kamdar et al. (2006) found that employees' perceptions of *supervisory procedural justice*, *employees' empathic concern*, and *perspective taking* were positively related to role definition for interpersonal helping, and employees' *empathic concern* mitigated the effect of supervisory procedural justice on role definition. They also found that role definition was positively related to interpersonal helping and weakened the positive effect of supervisory procedural justice on interpersonal helping. McAllister et al. (2007) found that perceived role breadth for helping

was positively related to interpersonal helping and mitigated the positive effect of *supervisory procedural justice* on helping. Kim et al. (2013) found that *prosocial values motives* and *impression management motives* were positively related to perceived role breadth for helping, thus leading to more *helping targeting teams or coworkers in the teams* (Helping-T), and the indirect effects were stronger when *coworker support* was high (first-stage moderated mediation). Marinova et al. (2013) found that *duty*, one facet of conscientiousness, was positively related to perceived role breadth for helping and, in turn, positively affected helping. They also found that when employees viewed helping as part of work roles, achievement striving, another facet of conscientiousness, positively affected helping.

Organization Member Proficiency. Scholars have examined perceived role breadth (or role definitions) for civic virtue and loyal boosterism. For example, Klieman et al. (2000) found that LMX was positively related to perceived role breadth for civic virtue (involvement). Kamdar et al. (2006) found that employees' perceptions of *supervisory procedural justice* were positively related to role definition for loyal boosterism, and *reciprocation wariness* was negatively related to role definition for loyal boosterism and mitigated the effect of supervisory procedural justice on role definition for loyal boosterism. They also found that role definition was positively related to loyal boosterism and weakened the positive effect of supervisory procedural justice on loyal boosterism.

Perceived Role Breadth for Adaptivity. There is a dearth of research that has examined perceived role breadth for work behaviors that are classified into adaptivity. For example, Morrison (1994) examined *keeping up* (e.g.,

keeping up with changes and developments in the organization) and found that *affective commitment* and *job satisfaction* were positively related to perceived role breadth for *keeping up*, *tenure* was negatively related to perceived role breadth for *keeping up*, and perceived role breadth for *keeping up* mediated the positive relationship between *affective commitment* and *keeping up*. Klieman et al. (2000) found that LMX was positively related to perceived role breadth for *keeping up*.

Perceived Role Breadth for Proactivity. Few scholars have examined perceived role breadth for behaviors that are classified into proactivity. For example, Tepper et al. (2001) examined role definition for *individual initiative*, which contributes to individual and team performance. They found that when employees perceived higher levels of *organizational procedural justice*, they were more likely to perceive that individual initiative was part of their work roles and relevant to rewards and that they had to perform individual initiative. McAllister et al. (2007) examined perceived role breadth for taking charge, which contributes to the effectiveness of individuals, teams, and organizations. They found it was positively related to taking charge and strengthened the positive relationship between employees' perceptions of *supervisory procedural justice* and taking charge.

Voice targeting organizations (Voice-O), which is classified into organization member proactivity, has received more attention. For example, Kim et al. (2013) found that perceived role breadth for Voice-O mediated the positive relationship between *organizational concerns motives* and Voice-O, and the indirect effect was stronger when *organizational support* was high (first-stage moderated mediation). Tangirala et al. (2013) found that perceived role breadth

for Voice-O mediated the positive relationship between *duty orientation* and Voice-O, and the indirect effect was stronger when *voice efficacy* was high (first-stage moderated mediation). They also found that perceived role breadth for Voice-O mediated the negative relationship between *achievement orientation* and Voice-O, and the indirect effect was weaker when *psychological safety perceptions* were high (first-stage moderated mediation).

Perceived Role Breadth for OCBs. Some research has examined perceived role breadth for OCBs, which are composed of work behaviors classified into different forms of work role behaviors (proficiency, adaptivity, and proactivity). For example, Bachrach and Jex (2000) found that compared with individuals in the negative mood condition, individuals in the positive and neutral mood conditions were more likely to have high levels of role breadth for OCBs, which were proficient, adaptive, and proactive. Zellars et al. (2002) examined role definition for OCBs. OCBs include *conscientiousness, sportsmanship, civic virtue, courtesy, and altruism* (Podsakoff et al., 1990), which are classified into proficiency and adaptivity and contribute to the effectiveness of individuals, teams, and organizations. They found that role definition weakened the positive effects of employees' perceptions of *organizational procedural justice* on OCBs and the negative effects of employees' perceptions of *abusive supervision* on OCBs. Hofmann et al. (2003) focused on perceived role breadth for safety citizenship behaviors. Safety citizenship behaviors contribute to other team members' and organizations' safety performance and include safety-related *helping, voice, stewardship, whistleblowing, civic virtue, and initiating workplace changes*, which are classified into proficiency and proactivity. They found that perceived role breadth for safety behaviors specified in formal job

descriptions was significantly larger than perceived role breadth for safety citizenship behaviors. They also found that LMX was positively related to perceived role breadth for safety citizenship behaviors, the effect was stronger when there was a *positive group safety climate*, and perceived breadth for safety citizenship behaviors was positively related to safety citizenship behaviors. Coyle-Shapiro et al. (2004) focused on OCBs directed at organizations that involve *civic virtue* and *organization participation* (e.g., making suggestions to improve the work of organizations and keeping up with the developments of organizations) and are proficient, adaptive, and proactive. They found that *organizational procedural justice* was positively related to *mutual commitment* between organizations and employees, which in turn positively affected perceived role breadth for OCBs and then led to more OCBs. The indirect effect of *supervisory interactional justice* was not significant. Parke et al. (2020) focused on OCBs, which involve *helping, generalized compliance, sanction compliance, safety behaviors, voice, and initiative* and are classified into proficiency and proactivity. They found that *supervisor-led and peer-led intervention* influenced employees' OCB role establishment, and employees thus viewed their work roles more broadly and engaged in more OCBs.

Summary and Research Gaps. In sum, scholars have examined perceived role breadth for different work behaviors that are classified into proficiency, adaptivity, and proactivity and contribute to the effectiveness of individuals, teams, and organizations. They found that perceived role breadth (or role definition) for work behaviors had important effects on the corresponding work behaviors (Jiao et al., 2013). They also examined some antecedents of perceived role breadth for specific work behaviors, such as organizational factors

(e.g., organizational procedural justice, organizational support), team factors (e.g., group safety climate), relational factors (e.g., LMX, supervisory procedural justice, coworker support), and individual factors (e.g., prosocial motives, duty orientation, achievement orientation; Podsakoff et al., 2017). Although previous studies have provided us with some insights about how to change employees' perceived role breadth to benefit organizations' goals, the narrow focus on specific work behaviors hinders our holistic understanding of employees' perceived role breadth and provides isolated and limited guidance for practitioners. To provide a holistic and integrated view of perceived role breadth, it is important for future research to explore perceived role breadth that captures the full set of work behaviors in employees' work roles.

2.2.4 A Holistic Operationalization of Perceived Role Breadth

As reviewed above, previous research on perceived role breadth for work behaviors, to some extent, has provided support and evidence for a holistic operationalization of perceived role breadth based on the comprehensive framework—the model of positive work role behaviors (Carpini et al., 2017; Griffin et al., 2007). To provide a holistic view of perceived role breadth, this thesis adopts the model of positive work role behaviors to capture the full set of work role behaviors within the work roles and defines *perceived role breadth* as the extent to which the focal employee perceives positive work role behaviors as part of his or her work role. Like positive work role behaviors, perceived role breadth has nine dimensions: perceived role breadth (PRB) for individual task proficiency, PRB for individual task adaptivity, PRB for individual task proactivity, PRB for team member proficiency, PRB for team member adaptivity, PRB for team member proactivity, PRB for organization member proficiency,

PRB for organization member adaptivity, and PRB for organization member proactivity.

Perceived role breadth is different from *flexible role orientation* (FRO). FRO refers to the extent to which employees consider the problems, tasks, and competencies relevant to their role and role performance (Parker et al., 1997). It includes two dimensions—production ownership and the importance of production knowledge. *Production ownership* is defined as the extent to which employees own or feel responsible for the work problems and goals, and *the importance of production knowledge* is defined as the extent to which employees recognize that gaining and using a wide range of skills and knowledge is important to perform effectively. On the one hand, perceived role breadth focuses on work role behaviors, whereas FRO focuses on problems, tasks, and competencies. On the other hand, although perceived role breadth seems to be to some extent similar to production ownership, which assesses the range of production problems, perceived role breadth captures the full set of positive work role behaviors and production ownership captures three categories of production problems—goal achievement, operational inefficiencies, and work group cohesion and coordination. In addition, the measurement scale of production ownership was developed in manufacturing companies and is more applicable to production employees, whereas the measurement scale of perceived role breadth can be applied to various occupations and organizations.

Perceived role breadth also differs from role stressors, which usually include role ambiguity, role conflict, and role overload. *Role ambiguity* refers to the degree of uncertainty about what the focal person who occupies the role is supposed to do (Kahn et al., 1964). *Role conflict* is defined as the extent to which

individuals simultaneously face two or more incompatible role expectations such that it is difficult to comply with all of these expectations (Kahn et al., 1964).

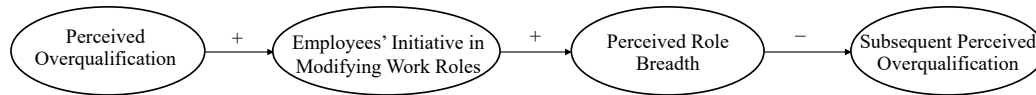
Role overload refers to the degree to which the expectations for the focal person and their behaviors are beyond the limit of time, their abilities, and other constraints (Kahn et al., 1964; Rizzo et al., 1970). Role ambiguity involves the unclarity of the contents of work roles, role conflict captures the conflicting role expectations, and role overload reflects higher role expectations than what the role occupant can meet. In contrast, perceived role breadth captures the range of positive work role behaviors within work roles, so it differs from role stressors.

Chapter 3 How to Reduce Perceived Overqualification? The Role of Employees' Initiative in Modifying Work Roles (Study 1)

Perceived overqualification is generally considered an undesirable employment situation (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). Whatever employees do to react to perceived overqualification, most of them have the same desire to change undesirable employment situations and reduce perceived overqualification. Extant studies have found that employees who feel overqualified may search for possible job positions that match their qualifications via internal and external job searches and try to change their job positions (Erdogan & Bauer, 2009; Wu & Chi, 2020). They may also proactively utilize their surplus qualifications by crafting their jobs and performing more tasks and behaviors beyond required tasks, such as creativity and proactivity (Deng et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2016). Although employees' different reactions to perceived overqualification affect subsequent perceived overqualification and perceived overqualification is changeable, most studies have adopted a static approach to studying the consequences of perceived overqualification and limited studies have explored changeable perceived overqualification (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Simon et al., 2019). To enrich the literature on the consequences of perceived overqualification and deepen our understanding of the overqualification phenomenon, this study explores "how employees who feel overqualified proactively reduce perceived overqualification." I first adopted proactive perspectives on work design (Grant & Parker, 2009) to explore the positive effect of perceived overqualification on perceived role breadth via employees' initiative in modifying work roles. Next, I predict that perceived role breadth is negatively related to subsequent perceived overqualification. I then develop a serial mediation model of the effect of perceived overqualification on

subsequent perceived overqualification through employees' initiative in modifying work roles and perceived role breadth. The theoretical model is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2
The First Theoretical Model



3.1 Theory and Hypotheses

3.1.1 *The Effect of Employees' Initiative in Modifying Work Roles*

Based on proactive perspectives on work design (Grant & Parker, 2009; Parker, Van Den Broeck, et al., 2017), employees can take the initiative to modify their jobs, roles, and tasks, such as crafting their jobs and negotiating idiosyncratic deals (i-deals). I argue that employees who feel overqualified are more likely to proactively modify their work. First, employees who perceive overqualification may experience a sense of person–job misfit due to their surplus qualifications. To address the misfit, they may take proactive steps to expand their work roles. They may attempt to craft their jobs to make their work match their qualifications, such as looking for tasks that match their strengths (Zhang, Wang, Qian, et al., 2021) and crafting more challenging demands to leverage their abilities and skills at work (Tims et al., 2016). Moreover, they may proactively ask for and successfully negotiate task i-deals with managers and employers (Howard et al., 2022) to align work contents with their characteristics and improve person–job fit (Hornung et al., 2010), such as negotiating more challenging assignments that match their qualifications (Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2016).

Second, employees who perceive overqualification may have a threatened self-image (Lin et al., 2017). To assert a positive self-image and display their surplus qualifications, they are more likely to proactively change their work. They

may engage in more task crafting, such as introducing new approaches and making work procedures more productive (Lin et al., 2017). Furthermore, they may negotiate task i-deals with managers and employers to display their competence (Ho & Kong, 2015). Employees who feel overqualified have the potential to make valuable contributions to organizations due to their surplus qualifications (Erdogan et al., 2011; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). As such, they are more likely to successfully negotiate i-deals with employers and managers as valued employees (Jahantab et al., 2022; Rousseau, 2005).

Through their initiative in modifying work roles, employees who feel overqualified can increase their perceived role breadth and have broader work roles. First, job crafting influences the way in which employees define and shape jobs and perceived role breadth (Lievens et al., 2010; Zhang & Parker, 2019). By crafting their jobs and making work more challenging, employees who feel overqualified may view their work roles more broadly and engage in a broad range of behaviors, such as initiating more changes, developing new methods, and adapting to the changes (Petrou et al., 2018; Tims et al., 2012). Second, through successfully negotiating task i-deals, employees who feel overqualified can take on broader work roles. Task i-deals can make their work more complex, and they may tackle more challenging tasks, solve new problems, collaborate more extensively with others, keep up with changes and developments, and propose ideas to improve organizational effectiveness (Ho & Kong, 2015; Hornung et al., 2010). Additionally, they may have more freedom to choose tasks and initiate new ways of doing tasks (Hornung et al., 2010) and thus have more opportunities to enlarge work roles and view more tasks, behaviors, and problems as part of their work roles (Morgeson et al., 2005; Parker et al., 2006). They may also define their

work roles more broadly to reciprocate special arrangements in terms of on-the-job activities (Ng & Feldman, 2015).

In sum, I argue that employees who feel overqualified may increase their perceived role breadth and take on expanded work roles via their initiative in modifying work roles. Thus, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 1. The positive effect of perceived overqualification on perceived role breadth is mediated by employees' initiative in modifying work roles.

3.1.2 Perceived Role Breadth and Perceived Overqualification

Perceived overqualification involves the subjective comparison between employees' qualifications and qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized on the job (Erdogan et al., 2011). Objective overqualification is considered an important predictor of perceived overqualification (Arvan et al., 2019; Harari et al., 2017), and perceived overqualification is also influenced by other factors that cause employees' subjective biased perceptions or misperceptions of overqualification (Maltarich et al., 2011), such as narcissism (Maynard et al., 2015) and negative affectivity (Harari et al., 2017). Although utilizing more qualifications at work¹ is a possible way to address the discrepancy between employees' qualifications and qualifications required by the job and utilized on the job (Erdogan, Karaeminogullari, et al., 2020), few studies have paid attention to the possible effect of utilizing more qualifications at work on perceived overqualification. This study focuses on qualifications utilized at work. Based on role theory (Graen

¹ In this study, I do not differentiate between jobs and work (or work roles), which is consistent with most previous research on perceived overqualification (Erdogan et al., 2011; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021).

& Scandura, 1987; Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991; Katz & Kahn, 1978) and the literature on perceived role breadth for work behaviors (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2004; McAllister et al., 2007; Morrison, 1994), I propose that perceived role breadth is an important theoretical antecedent of perceived overqualification and argue that employees who view their work roles broadly perform a broad range of behaviors and utilize more qualifications at work, thus perceiving less qualification.

Employees who have high levels of perceived role breadth enact broader work roles and perform more positive work role behaviors (McAllister et al., 2007; Morrison, 1994), such as adapting to changes and initiating changes. They utilize more qualifications when enacting broader work roles (Lievens et al., 2010; Morgeson et al., 2005). For example, employees utilize more abilities and talents to collaborate with their supervisors in challenging and unstructured tasks beyond required or core tasks (Graen & Scandura, 1987). They utilize more knowledge and cognitive ability to adapt to changes or engage in proactive behaviors (Carpini et al., 2017). Further, employees who take on broader work roles and utilize more qualifications are less likely to perceive overqualification. For example, employees who engage in more challenging tasks and cooperative behaviors utilize more qualifications and feel less overqualified (Alfes et al., 2016). Employees who take the initiative and engage in more innovation and learning also utilize more qualifications and perceive less overqualification (Zhang, Wang, Weng, et al., 2021). On the contrary, employees who have narrow work roles and even perform formalized job roles are less likely to fully utilize their qualifications and may perceive more overqualification. For example, employees who work in a relatively unimportant unit with fewer innovative and

challenging assignments are more likely to underutilize their qualifications and feel overqualified (Bolino & Feldman, 2000). In sum, employees who have high levels of perceived role breadth perform a broad range of behaviors and tasks and utilize more qualifications at work, and they are thus less likely to perceive overqualification. Although most of the existing studies on perceived overqualification have ignored the possible effects of qualifications utilized at work and perceived role breadth, some scholars have argued that engaging in a broad range of behaviors, such as helping coworkers and proactivity, can utilize more qualifications and address the discrepancy of overqualification (Erdogan, Karaeminogullari, et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2016), which provides some support for the relationship between perceived role breadth and perceived overqualification. Thus, I propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2. Perceived role breadth is negatively related to perceived overqualification.

Further, I propose the serial indirect effect of perceived overqualification on subsequent perceived overqualification via employees' initiative in modifying work roles and perceived role breadth. Employees who feel overqualified can reduce their perceptions of overqualification by proactively modifying their work roles to increase perceived role breadth and take on broader work roles. Thus, I propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 3. The effect of perceived overqualification on subsequent perceived overqualification is sequentially mediated by employees' initiative in modifying work roles and perceived role breadth.

3.2 Overview of Studies

I conducted two studies. In Study 1.1, I validated the measurement of perceived role breadth. In Study 1.2, I conducted a field study with a multiwave design to examine the first theoretical model.

3.3 Study 1.1 Measurement of Perceived Role Breadth

3.3.1 Perceived Role Breadth: An Aggregate Multidimensional Construct

As operationalized above, perceived role breadth has nine dimensions. I propose that perceived role breadth is an aggregate multidimensional construct that has nine dimensions as formative indicators (Law et al., 1998; MacKenzie et al., 2011). The nine dimensions are reflective and cause the variation in items, which is consistent with previous research on perceived role breadth (PRB) for work behaviors (Kim et al., 2013; McAllister et al., 2007; Tangirala et al., 2013). I argue that perceived role breadth has the features of the aggregate multidimensional construct (MacKenzie et al., 2005). First, the nine dimensions are the defining characteristics of perceived role breadth, and the changes in the dimensions cause the changes in perceived role breadth. For example, increases in PRB for individual task adaptivity lead to increases in perceived role breadth. However, whether increases in perceived role breadth lead to increases in PRB for individual task adaptivity is less clear.

Second, the dimensions do not appear to be conceptually interchangeable. For example, PRB for individual task proficiency, which reflects whether employees regard formalized behaviors that are not embedded in a social context as part of their work roles, does not appear interchangeable with PRB for organization member adaptivity, which reflects whether employees view behaviors performed to adapt to changes and embedded in an organizational

context as part of their work roles. Eliminating any one dimension leads to a deficient assessment of perceived role breadth.

Third, the dimensions are not highly correlated. For example, in a work environment where uncertainty and interdependence are low, employees may view individual task proficiency as part of their work roles, whereas they may not view team member adaptivity as part of their work roles; the correlation between PRB for individual task proficiency and PRB for team member adaptivity may be low. Some studies have found the correlations between PRB for different work behaviors were not high. For example, the correlation between PRB for helping and PRB for taking charge was .48 ($p < .01$; McAllister et al., 2007), the correlation between PRB for conscientiousness and PRB for keeping up was .22 ($p < .01$; Morrison, 1994), and the correlation between PRB for helping and PRB for voice was not significant (Kim et al., 2013).

Fourth, the dimensions have different antecedents and consequences. For example, uncertainty may not influence PRB for individual task proficiency, whereas it may have a positive influence on PRB for individual task adaptivity. PRB for individual task proficiency may positively affect individual task proficiency, whereas it may not affect individual task proactivity. Previous research has also found that PRB for different work behaviors had different antecedents and consequences. For example, PRB for helping mediated the effects of impression management motives and prosocial value motives on helping, whereas PRB for voice mediated the relationship between organizational concern motives and voice (Kim et al., 2013).

I operationalize perceived role breadth by calculating the average of the nine dimensions. Perceived role breadth is an additive function of its dimensions,

which is also in line with previous research that has created an overall score of PRB for organizationally directed citizenship behaviors by calculating the simple sum of four dummy items, which separately captured proficient, adaptive, and proactive forms of work role behaviors (Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2004). In addition, the dimensions of aggregate constructs are typically assigned equal weight (Edwards, 2001), such as the operationalization of job embeddedness—the mean of six dimensions (Mitchell et al., 2001).

3.3.2 Sample and Procedure

I recruited full-time employees via Prolific. In total, 301 participants agreed to participate in the survey; 5 participants failed the attention checks. The final sample was 296 participants. They received £1.5 for participating in the survey. Of these participants, 50.7% were from the United Kingdom and 49.3% were from the United States; 61.8% were men. The average age was 37.32 years ($SD = 9.41$); 66.9% had at least a bachelor's degree, and the average organizational tenure was 7.11 years ($SD = 6.65$). They were from various industries, such as education (12.8%); manufacturing (10.5%); professional, scientific, and technical activities (10.5%); human health and social work activities (10.5%); financial and insurance activities (9.8%); and information and communication (9.1%).

3.3.3 Measures

All variables were measured with a five-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*) unless otherwise stated.

Perceived Role Breadth (PRB). Following previous research (Kim et al., 2013; McAllister et al., 2007), I asked respondents to indicate the extent to which they agreed that each of the 27 items from the measurement of positive work role

behaviors (Griffin et al., 2007) was part of their work roles. The sample items were “Adapting well to changes in core tasks is part of my work role” (PRB for individual task adaptivity) and “Suggesting ways to make my team more effective is part of my work role” (PRB for team member proactivity). Cronbach’s alphas (α) of nine dimensions of PRB ranged from .73 to .94.

Perceived Role Breadth for Work Behaviors. I focused on PRB for three types of work behaviors that are separately classified into proficiency, adaptivity, and proactivity. These work behaviors—PRB for interpersonal helping (team member proficiency; McAllister et al., 2007), PRB for keeping up (organization member adaptivity; Morrison, 1994), and PRB for voice-O (organization member proactivity; Tangirala et al., 2013)—have received more attention in previous research on PRB compared with other work behaviors classified into the same forms of work role behaviors. I expect PRB for these work behaviors may be positively related to, but differ from, PRB for the corresponding dimensions into which they are classified. Respondents indicated the extent to which they agreed that the items used to measure work behaviors were part of their work roles. Sample items were “Going out of my way to help coworkers with work-related problems is part of my work role” (PRB for interpersonal helping; $\alpha = .86$); “Keeping up with changes and developments in the organization is part of my work role” (PRB for keeping up; $\alpha = .75$); and “Developing and making recommendations concerning issues that affect the organization is part of my work role” (PRB for voice-O; $\alpha = .92$).

Flexible Role Orientation and Role Stressors. I measured flexible role orientation using the 9-item scale (Parker et al., 1997). Role stressors—role conflict, role ambiguity, and role overload—were measured using the

measurement scales developed by Peterson et al. (1995). Sample items were “Orders for the products you deal with are repeatedly not being met on time” (flexible role orientation; $\alpha = .90$; 1 = *to no extent* to 5 = *to a very large extent*); “I receive incompatible requests from two or more people” (role conflict; $\alpha = .87$); “I do not have clear planned goals and objectives for my job” (role ambiguity; $\alpha = .91$); and “There is a need to reduce some parts of my role” (role overload; $\alpha = .93$).

Work Role Behaviors. Employees who view specific work behaviors as part of work roles perform more corresponding work behaviors (McAllister et al., 2007; Morrison, 1994). I thus expect the nine dimensions of PRB to be positively related to the corresponding dimensions of positive work role behaviors. In this study, work role behaviors were measured using the 27-item scale (Griffin et al., 2007). A sample item was “Coped with changes to the way you have to do your core tasks” (1 = *very little* to 5 = *a great deal*). Cronbach’s alphas of nine dimensions of work role behaviors ranged from .80 to .96.

3.3.4 Results

I conducted confirmatory factor analyses in Mplus 8.3. First, I compared the nine-factor model with two three-factor models and a one-factor model. The results showed that the nine-factor model ($\chi^2_{(288)} = 684.68, p < .001, CFI = .92, TLI = .91, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .06$) fitted the data better than alternative models (see Table 1). Item loadings on nine dimensions were above .50. The composite reliabilities of nine dimensions were above .70. The values of average variance extracted (AVE) for the dimensions were above .50, except for the AVE for PRB for team member proficiency (.50) and PRB for team member adaptivity (.49). The square root of the AVE for each dimension (from .70 to .92) was larger

than the correlation between it and other dimensions. The above results provided evidence for the convergent and discriminant validity of the nine dimensions (Bagozzi & Yi, 1988; Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Verhoef et al., 2002).

I also tested the second-order factor model, in which nine dimensions were the manifestations of perceived role breadth and perceived role breadth caused the variations in nine dimensions. Table 1 shows that the second-order factor model had unsatisfactory fit indices ($\chi^2_{(315)} = 1019.36, p < .001, CFI = .86, TLI = .85, RMSEA = .09, SRMR = .10$). The loadings of nine dimensions on the second-order factor ranged from .19 to .87. The composite reliability and AVE of the second-order factor were .88 and .47, respectively. Table 2 provides descriptive statistics and correlations among nine dimensions of perceived role breadth. As shown in Table 2, the nine dimensions were not highly correlated. The results show it was invalid to operationalize perceived role breadth as the second-order latent construct (MacKenzie et al., 2011, 2005).

I tested the convergent validity and discriminant validity of the dimensions of perceived role breadth by examining their correlations with PRB for work behaviors, flexible role orientation, and role stressors (Hinkin, 1998). The results in Table 3 show that PRB for team member proficiency was positively related to PRB for interpersonal helping ($r = .48, p < .001$), PRB for organization member adaptivity was positively related to PRB for keeping up ($r = .51, p < .001$), and PRB for organization member proactivity was positively related to PRB for voice-O ($r = .77, p < .001$), thus providing the evidence of convergent validity. I also modeled the dimensions of PRB and PRB for corresponding work behaviors in one-factor and two-factor models and conducted chi-square difference tests to compare the two models (Anderson &

Gerbing, 1988). The results show that each of the two-factor models fitted the data better than the one-factor models: PRB for team member proficiency ($\Delta\chi^2_{(1)} = 96.23, p < .01$), PRB for organization member adaptivity ($\Delta\chi^2_{(1)} = 162.11, p < .01$), and PRB for organization member proactivity ($\Delta\chi^2_{(1)} = 128.90, p < .01$), thus demonstrating that the dimensions of PRB were distinguishable from PRB for corresponding work behaviors. As evidence of discriminant validity, the correlations between the dimensions of perceived role breadth and flexible role orientation and role stressors were low, negative, or not significant (see Table 3). I also conducted the Fornell–Larcker test (Fornell & Larcker, 1981) to compare the AVE for each dimension with the squared correlations of each dimension with flexible role orientation and role stressors. The results showed that the AVE of each dimension (from .49 to .84) was greater than the squared correlations (maximum value was .07). In addition, as shown in Table 3, perceived role breadth was also distinct from flexible role orientation ($r = .16, p < .01$), role conflict ($r = -.0002, p = .997$), role ambiguity ($r = -.23, p < .01$), and role overload ($r = .13, p < .01$).

As shown in Table 4, each of the nine dimensions of perceived role breadth was positively related to the corresponding dimensions of positive work role behaviors, and the correlations ranged from .38 to .69, thus providing evidence for criterion-related validity.

Table 1*Results of Confirmatory Factor Analyses (Study 1.1)*

Models	χ^2	<i>df</i>	$\Delta\chi^2(\Delta df)$	RMSEA	CFI	TLI	SRMR
Nine factors	684.68**	288		.07	.92	.91	.06
Three factors (proficiency, adaptivity, and proactivity)	1960.72**	321	1276.04**(33)	.13	.68	.65	.10
Three factors (individual, team, and organization)	1924.33**	321	1239.65**(33)	.13	.69	.66	.11
One factor	2538.53**	324	1853.85**(36)	.15	.57	.54	.12
The second-order factor model	1019.36**	315	334.68**(27)	.09	.86	.85	.10

Note. $N = 296$. CFI = comparative fit index; TLI = Tucker–Lewis index; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; RMSEA = root mean square error of approximation.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 2*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Nine Dimensions of Perceived Role Breadth (Study 1.1)*

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. PRB for individual task proficiency	(.75)									
2. PRB for individual task adaptivity	.36**	(.76)								
3. PRB for individual task proactivity	.09	.55**	(.91)							
4. PRB for team member proficiency	.33**	.32**	.32**	(.73)						
5. PRB for team member adaptivity	.27**	.57**	.54**	.55**	(.74)					
6. PRB for team member proactivity	.03	.35**	.69**	.40**	.57**	(.94)				
7. PRB for organization member proficiency	.04	.19**	.25**	.28**	.32**	.42**	(.82)			
8. PRB for organization member adaptivity	.20**	.45**	.39**	.45**	.64**	.45**	.42**	(.85)		
9. PRB for organization member proactivity	.03	.30**	.57**	.37**	.52**	.78**	.52**	.59**	(.91)	
10. Perceived role breadth	.28**	.62**	.75**	.61**	.79**	.82**	.60**	.74**	.82**	
Mean	4.64	4.21	3.59	4.24	3.97	3.36	3.1	3.9	3.25	3.80
SD	0.47	0.64	0.97	0.64	0.7	1.05	0.97	0.76	1.05	0.56
Composite reliability	.77	.79	.91	.75	.74	.94	.82	.85	.91	
Average variance extracted	.53	.56	.77	.50	.49	.84	.61	.66	.77	

Note. $N = 296$. PRB = perceived role breadth. Internal consistency reliabilities appear in parentheses along the diagonal.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Perceived Role Breadth, Perceived Role Breadth for Work Behaviors, Flexible Role Orientation, and Role Stressors (Study 1.1)

Variables	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1. PRB for individual task proficiency	.06	.15*	.02	.06	-.10	-.21**	-.15**
2. PRB for individual task adaptivity	.27**	.23**	.28**	.03	-.02	-.06	-.09
3. PRB for individual task proactivity	.37**	.23**	.47**	.10	.01	-.14*	-.09
4. PRB for team member proficiency	.48**	.36**	.36**	.05	-.04	-.27**	-.06
5. PRB for team member adaptivity	.54**	.41**	.50**	.08	-.08	-.22**	-.19**
6. PRB for team member proactivity	.51**	.36**	.66**	.13*	-.01	-.18**	-.15*
7. PRB for organization member proficiency	.50**	.47**	.52**	.23**	.13*	-.05	.09
8. PRB for organization member adaptivity	.49**	.51**	.54**	.10	-.01	-.22**	-.13*
9. PRB for organization member proactivity	.53**	.50**	.77**	.16**	.02	-.17**	-.11
10. Perceived role breadth	.63**	.53**	.72**	.16**	-.0002	-.23**	-.13*
11. PRB for interpersonal helping	(.86)						
12. PRB for keeping up	.40**	(.75)					
13. PRB for voice-O	.56**	.62**	(.92)				
14. Flexible role orientation	.13*	.09	.15**	(.90)			
15. Role conflict	.04	-.06	.01	.27**	(.87)		
16. Role ambiguity	-.14*	-.29**	-.22**	.08	.42**	(.91)	
17. Role overload	-.06	-.07	-.12*	.24**	.65**	.37**	(.93)
Mean	3.20	3.77	3.15	2.72	2.67	1.92	2.33
SD	0.90	0.81	0.94	0.99	1.09	0.85	1.05

Note. $N = 296$. PRB = perceived role breadth. Internal consistency reliabilities appear in parentheses along the diagonal.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 4*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among Perceived Role Breadth and Work Role Behaviors (Study 1.1)*

Variables	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1. PRB for individual task proficiency	.45**	.35**	.11	.30**	.34**	.09	.21**	.29**	.07
2. PRB for individual task adaptivity	.22**	.38**	.35**	.20**	.37**	.29**	.16**	.30**	.25**
3. PRB for individual task proactivity	.08	.36**	.58**	.20**	.42**	.56**	.20**	.26**	.45**
4. PRB for team member proficiency	.29**	.30**	.22**	.60**	.44**	.31**	.27**	.33**	.29**
5. PRB for team member adaptivity	.22**	.38**	.29**	.37**	.55**	.36**	.30**	.46**	.38**
6. PRB for team member proactivity	.14*	.38**	.54**	.25**	.43**	.68**	.32**	.38**	.61**
7. PRB for organization member proficiency	.04	.22**	.24**	.29**	.34**	.34**	.62**	.35**	.48**
8. PRB for organization member adaptivity	.12*	.30**	.23**	.31**	.44**	.29**	.35**	.48**	.40**
9. PRB for organization member proactivity	.08	.34**	.47**	.34**	.47**	.60**	.40**	.46**	.69**
10. Perceived role breadth	.22**	.47**	.52**	.44**	.60**	.61**	.47**	.53**	.63**
11. Individual task proficiency	(.85)								
12. Individual task adaptivity	.58**	(.83)							
13. Individual task proactivity	.23**	.54**	(.93)						
14. Team member proficiency	.34**	.35**	.24**	(.84)					
15. Team member adaptivity	.41**	.65**	.49**	.61**	(.80)				
16. Team member proactivity	.18**	.42**	.72**	.35**	.56**	(.96)			
17. Organization member proficiency	.26**	.38**	.32**	.37**	.51**	.39**	(.87)		
18. Organization member adaptivity	.35**	.58**	.36**	.43**	.65**	.40**	.60**	(.89)	
19. Organization member proactivity	.16**	.40**	.57**	.35**	.54**	.71**	.55**	.60**	(.95)
Mean	4.40	4.00	3.44	4.13	3.80	3.15	3.13	3.64	2.89
SD	0.62	0.73	1.04	0.73	0.81	1.14	1.06	0.93	1.17

Note. $N = 296$. PRB = perceived role breadth. Internal consistency reliabilities appear in parentheses along the diagonal.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

3.4 Study 1.2 Test of the First Theoretical Model

3.4.1 Sample and Procedure

To test the first theoretical model, I conducted a field study with a multiwave design. With the help of HR managers, I recruited participants from a manufacturing firm in Southern China. About 530 employees expressed interest in participating in this study. Most of them were factory workers and technicians who collaborated with coworkers to produce various products tailored to meet customers' needs. At Time 1, this study collected employees' demographic information and their perceptions of overqualification. One month later (Time 2), they reported their initiative in modifying work roles and perceived role breadth. Two months later (Time 3),² they reported perceived overqualification again.

At Time 1, this study obtained responses from 514 employees; 498 employees participated in the Time 2 survey; 488 employees returned the Time 3 survey. After matching data and deleting missing cases, the final sample consisted of 477 employees, yielding a response rate of 92.80%. Of the 477 employees, 80.9% were male, the average age was 37.27 years ($SD = 9.38$), 80.2% had a high school education or above (or equivalent), and the average organizational tenure was 8.31 years ($SD = 9.17$).

3.4.2 Measures

The measurement scales were translated into Chinese following the translation-back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1986). All variables were measured with a five-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly disagree*) unless otherwise stated.

² Chinese New Year holidays were between Time 2 and Time 3. The interval was adjusted to accommodate the time schedule of the firm.

Perceived Overqualification. Employees rated the extent to which they perceived overqualification using the 9-item measurement scale (Maynard et al., 2006). The sample item was “My job requires less education than I have”. The Cronbach’s alphas were separately .89 at Time 1 and .93 at Time 3).

Employees’ Initiative in Modifying Work Roles. Because job crafting and negotiating idiosyncratic deals are two important types of employees’ initiative in modifying work (Grant & Parker, 2009; Parker, Van Den Broeck, et al., 2017), I measured employees’ initiative in modifying work roles using two measures: increasing challenging demands and task i-deals. I chose increasing challenging demands as the measure of job crafting because it emphasizes making work roles more challenging, such as proactively looking for new developments and challenging tasks and starting new projects (Tims et al., 2012). Compared with other crafting behaviors that capture changing the number, scope, and type of tasks within work roles, such as work role expansion (Bruning & Campion, 2018), task crafting (Niessen et al., 2016), and crafting towards strength and interests (Kooij et al., 2017), increasing challenging demands may be the more effective strategy for employees who feel overqualified to expand their work roles and demonstrate and utilize their surplus qualifications. I chose task i-deals as the measure of idiosyncratic deals because it involves the customization of work contents, such as tasks and responsibilities (Hornung et al., 2010; Liao et al., 2016; Rosen et al., 2013).

Increasing challenging demands was measured using the 5-item measurement scale developed by Tims et al. (2012). The sample item was “If there are new developments, I am one of the first to learn about them and try them out” ($\alpha = .90$). The 6-item measurement scale (Rosen et al., 2013) was used to measure

task i-deals. The sample item was “I have successfully asked for extra responsibilities that take advantage of the skills that I bring to the job” ($\alpha = .94$). Increasing challenging demands and task i-deals were strongly correlated with each other ($r = .63, p < .01$). I thus averaged them to create an aggregate score of employees’ initiative in modifying work roles.³

Perceived Role Breadth. As in Study 1.1, I used the measurement scale adapted from the measurement of positive work role behaviors (Griffin et al., 2007) to measure perceived role breadth. Cronbach’s alphas of nine dimensions of perceived role breadth ranged from .94 to .97. I compared the nine-factor model with two three-factor models, the one-factor model, and the second-order factor model. The results showed that the nine-factor model ($\chi^2_{(288)} = 1145.74, p < .01$, CFI = .96, TLI = .95, RMSEA = .08, SRMR = .02) fitted the data better than alternative models. This study operationalized perceived role breadth by calculating the average of the nine dimensions.⁴

Control Variables. This study controlled for employees’ gender (1 = *male*, 0 = *female*), age, education (1 = *primary school*, 2 = *junior school*, 3 = *high school or equivalent*, 4 = *junior college*, 5 = *bachelor’s degree*, 6 = *master’s degree*), and organizational tenure, given that they may influence employees’ perceptions of overqualification (Erdogan et al., 2017; Harari et al., 2017). Notably, excluding these control variables did not change the pattern of significance. For completeness, this study presents the results with control variables included.

³ I examined the mediating effects of increasing challenging demands and task i-deals, respectively. Their effects were consistent with those of employees’ initiative in modifying work roles.

⁴ I examined the mediating effect of each dimension of perceived role breadth. The effect of each of the nine dimensions was consistent with that of perceived role breadth.

3.4.3 Results

Confirmatory Factor Analyses. To examine discriminant validity, this study conducted confirmatory factor analyses on the key variables: Time 1 perceived overqualification, increasing challenging demands, task i-deals, and Time 3 perceived overqualification. This study used Mplus version 8.3 to analyze the data. Results showed that the hypothesized model fit the data significantly better than any alternative models ($\chi^2_{(48)} = 106.97, p < .001, CFI = .99, TLI = .98, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .03$; see Table 5), supporting the discriminant validity of the constructs.

Hypotheses Testing. Descriptive statistics, internal consistency reliabilities, and bivariate correlations are shown in Table 6. Because employees were from 67 groups, I first tested for nonindependence in the data. I conducted the one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the key variables. The results of ANOVA showed nonsignificant variances for Time 1 perceived overqualification ($F_{(66, 410)} = 1.26, p = .10$), employees' initiative in modifying work roles ($F_{(66, 410)} = 1.12, p = .25$), perceived role breadth ($F_{(66, 410)} = 1.08, p = .32$), and Time 3 perceived overqualification ($F_{(66, 410)} = 1.24, p = .11$) at the group level, supporting the independence in the data. This study thus conducted path analyses to test the hypotheses. To test the indirect effects, this study used 2,000 bootstrap samples to estimate bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for each indirect effect (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). As shown in Table 7, Time 1 perceived overqualification was positively related to employees' initiative in modifying work roles ($b = .13, SE = .05, p = .017$), which was positively related to perceived role breadth ($b = .50, SE = .04, p < .001$). The indirect effects of Time 1 perceived overqualification on perceived role breadth via employees'

initiative in modifying work roles (estimate = .062, $SE = .027$, 95% CI [.011, .116]) was positive and significant (see Table 8), thus supporting Hypothesis 1. Consistent with Hypothesis 2, the study found a negative and significant effect of perceived role breadth on Time 3 perceived overqualification ($b = -.13$, $SE = .04$, $p = .001$).

Hypothesis 3 proposed the serial indirect effect. The results showed that the serial indirect effect of Time 1 perceived overqualification on Time 3 perceived overqualification through employees' initiative in modifying work roles and perceived role breadth was negative and significant (estimate = $-.008$, $SE = .005$, 95% CI [$-.021$, $-.002$]), thus supporting Hypothesis 3.

3.4.4 Study 1.2 Discussion

This study supported the first theoretical model and found that employees who perceive overqualification are more likely to take the initiative to broaden their work roles, thus reducing their subsequent perceptions of overqualification. The findings show that perceived overqualification is changeable rather than static, and employees' malleable work roles affect employees' perceptions of overqualification. When employees assess perceived overqualification, they compare their qualifications with qualifications utilized to perform work roles. However, existing studies on perceived overqualification did not differentiate malleable work roles from quasi-static jobs. Some studies ignored qualifications utilized on the job when conceptualizing perceived overqualification (e.g., Arvan et al., 2019; Harari et al., 2017; Li et al., 2022; Luksyte et al., 2022; Maynard et al., 2006). Other studies mostly conflated qualifications utilized on the job and qualifications required by the job (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). The main measurement scales of perceived overqualification—SPOQ (Maynard et al.,

2006) and perceived mismatch (Johnson & Johnson, 1996)—also conflated these two sets of qualifications. Such conflation and the lack of attention paid to qualifications utilized to perform work roles hinder a precise understanding of perceived overqualification. Thus, to provide an accurate understanding, in the following studies, I will highlight qualifications utilized to perform work roles, propose a role-based conceptualization of perceived overqualification, adapt the existing measurement scales to measure it, and explore its antecedents and consequences.

Table 5
Confirmatory Factor Analyses (Study 1.2)

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA
Model 1	106.97	48			.99	.98	.03	.05
Model 2	2363.33	53	2256.36**	5	.54	.43	.26	.30
Model 3	2235.72	53	2128.75**	5	.56	.46	.24	.29
Model 4	2921.23	54	2814.26**	6	.43	.30	.27	.33

Note. $N = 477$. Model 1 = the hypothesized model; Model 2 = model combining Time 1 perceived overqualification, increasing challenging demands, and task i-deals into one factor; Model 3 = model combining increasing challenging demands, task i-deals, and Time 3 perceived overqualification into one factor; Model 4 = model combining four variables into one factor.

** $p < .01$.

Table 6
Correlations and Descriptive Statistics (Study 1.2)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Gender										
2. Age	-.07									
3. Education	.01	-.60**								
4. Organizational tenure	-.07	.57**	-.32**							
5. Time 1 perceived overqualification	-.03	.06	.05	.02	(.89)					
6. Increasing challenging demands	.08	.06	.03	.06	.14**	(.90)				
7. Task i-deals	.10*	.04	-.02	.04	.12**	.63**	(.94)			
8. Employees' Initiative in Modifying Work Roles	.10*	.05	.01	.05	.14**	.90**	.90**			
9. Perceived Role Breadth	.03	.00	.04	-.02	-.07	.45**	.43**	.48**		
10. Time 3 Perceived Overqualification	.00	.11*	.03	.05	.66**	.10*	.10*	.11*	-.12**	(.93)
Mean	.81	37.27	3.47	8.31	2.94	3.26	3.31	3.29	3.87	2.98
SD	.39	9.37	1.06	9.17	.62	.62	.62	.56	.55	.63

Note. $N = 477$. SD = standard deviation. Internal consistency reliabilities appear in parentheses along the diagonal.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 7
Path Analyses Results (Study 1.2)

Predictors	Employees' initiative in modifying work roles		Perceived role breadth		Time 3 perceived overqualification	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
<i>Controls</i>						
Gender	.16	.07	-.04	.05	.04	.05
Age	.003	.004	.003	.003	.01*	.003
Education	.02	.03	.03	.03	.05	.03
Organizational tenure	.002	.004	-.003	.002	-.0004	.003
<i>Independent Variable</i>						
Time 1 perceived overqualification	.13*	.05	-.13**	.03	.64**	.05
<i>Mediators</i>						
Employees' initiative in modifying work roles			.50**	.04	.08	.06
Perceived role breadth					-.13**	.04
Constant	2.56**	.24	2.45**	.23	0.87**	.28
<i>R</i> ²	.04	.02	.26	.04	.45	.05

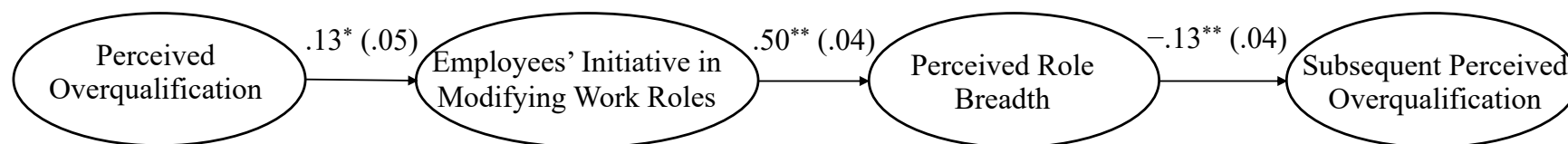
Note. $N = 477$. The estimates are unstandardized coefficients.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 8*Results of Hypothesized Indirect Effects (Study 1.2)*

Indirect effects	Estimate	SE	95% CI
Time 1 perceived overqualification → employees' initiative in modifying work roles → perceived role breadth	.062	.027	[.011, .116]
Time 1 perceived overqualification → employees' initiative in modifying work roles → perceived role breadth → Time 3 perceived overqualification	-.008	.005	[-.021, -.002]

Note. $N = 477$. The estimates are unstandardized coefficients. CI = confidence interval.

Figure 3*Results of the First Theoretical Model (Study 1.2)*

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Chapter 4 Developing Role-Based Perceived Overqualification (Study 2)

Overqualified job candidates face obstacles in the hiring and selection processes. Employers usually feel hesitant to hire them and think they have high turnover intentions once hired (Forbes Coaches Council, 2022; Morgan, 2024; Whitehead, 2020). Recent research also found that overqualified candidates were perceived as having lower firm commitment and higher flight risks and were less likely to be hired (Campbell & Hahl, 2022; Galperin et al., 2020). However, if overqualified job candidates are hired, will they feel overqualified and have low firm commitment and high turnover intentions?

Implicit in this question is the relationship between objective overqualification and perceived overqualification. Objective overqualification results from the comparisons between employees' qualifications and qualifications required by the job (i.e., job requirements). In the hiring processes, overqualified job candidates are identified based on objective overqualification. In contrast, perceived overqualification is individuals' direct self-assessment of overqualification and the more proximal influencing factor of employees' attitudes and behaviors at work (e.g., low affective commitment and high turnover intentions; Harari et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2017; Maltarich et al., 2011). Scholars have largely assumed that, like objective overqualification, perceived overqualification is shaped by employees' cognitive comparison of their qualifications with qualifications required by the job (Arvan et al., 2019; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). Objective overqualification is considered a key predictor of perceived overqualification (e.g., Arvan et al., 2019; Harari et al., 2017). Thus, it is not surprising that practitioners are usually unwilling to hire overqualified job candidates.

However, two concerns about the overqualification literature suggest that the current understanding of the overqualification phenomenon is incomplete. First, existing studies on perceived overqualification have mostly conflated qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized on the job, and some studies even ignored the latter. Most studies argue that perceived overqualification involves comparing employees' qualifications with two sets of qualifications relevant to jobs—qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized on the job—but they do not differentiate between these two sets of qualifications (e.g., Erdogan et al., 2011; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). The main measurement scales of perceived overqualification capture both sets of qualifications and include items such as “My job requires less education than I have” and “My talents are not fully utilized on my job” (Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Maynard et al., 2006). Some studies have even ignored qualifications utilized on the job and have defined perceived overqualification as the extent to which the focal employee perceives that they have surplus qualifications relative to qualifications required by the job (e.g., Arvan et al., 2019; Harari et al., 2017; Li et al., 2022; Luksyte et al., 2022; Maynard et al., 2006). I argue that such a conflation, combined with the less attention paid to qualifications utilized on the job, can lead to our incomplete understanding of the difference between objective overqualification and perceived overqualification and further result in the problematic application of the research findings of perceived overqualification to management practices that focus more on objective overqualification. This can also inhibit the exploration of the influencing factors of perceived overqualification. By distinguishing qualifications utilized on the job from qualifications required by the job and elevating the role of qualifications utilized

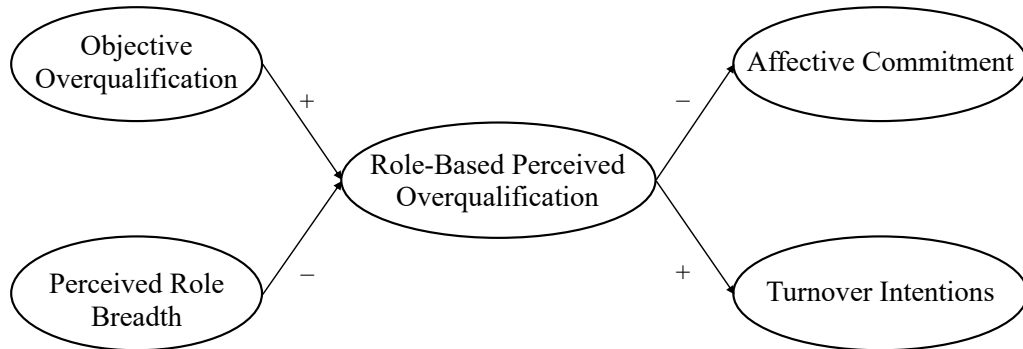
on the job, we can have a deeper and more complete understanding of how to shape perceived overqualification.

Second, existing studies on perceived overqualification have conflated formalized jobs and malleable work roles and overlooked an important theoretical perspective. In contrast to the conventional view that employees feel overqualified for jobs, I argue that employees feel overqualified for work roles. That is, employees' perceptions of overqualification are affected not only by objective overqualification but also by their malleable work roles. Research on role theory and work role behaviors has proposed that engaging in more behaviors beyond job responsibilities can utilize more qualifications (e.g, Carpini & Parker, 2017; Graen & Scandura, 1987). Thus, although objectively overqualified job candidates may feel overqualified and then have low levels of commitment and high levels of turnover intentions once hired, as is generally considered, it is likely that they do not feel overqualified and have negative reactions. Instead, they may perform broad work roles, fully utilize their qualifications, and be highly productive after entry into the organization.

In this study, I adopt a role theory perspective to study perceived overqualification. Specifically, I draw on the job–role differentiation perspective (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991) to differentiate qualifications utilized on the job and perceived overqualification from qualifications required by the job and objective overqualification and propose the role-based conceptualization of perceived overqualification. I argue that employees who have broad work roles, regardless of whether they are objectively overqualified, can utilize more qualifications at work and are less likely to perceive overqualification, thus having fewer negative

reactions (i.e., low affective commitment and high turnover intentions). The theoretical model is shown in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4
The Second Theoretical Model



4.1 Theory and Hypotheses

4.1.1 Differentiating Between Objective Overqualification and Perceived Overqualification

Based on the job–role differentiation perspective (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991), I differentiate between qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized on the job and then distinguish perceived overqualification from objective overqualification. This study places *qualifications required by the job* in the job domain because they have the following attributes: (a) they are a set of qualifications identified by the prime beneficiaries or their agents in order to recruit and train other individuals to successfully fulfill the required or established tasks (Ilgen, 1994); (b) they are usually stated in formal job descriptions (Lin et al., 2017; Zhang et al., 2016) and there is a shared consensus on qualifications required by the job among organization members; (c) they are independent of job incumbents and invariant for all job incumbents (Erdogan et al., 2011; Maltarich et al., 2011); and (d) they are quasi-static, relatively constant, and do not change on a daily basis. Thus, this study views qualifications required

by the job as qualifications required by established tasks or utilized to successfully fulfill established tasks.

Different from qualifications required by the job, *qualifications utilized on the job* are placed in the work role domain because they have the following attributes: (a) they are influenced by other social resources beyond the prime beneficiaries or their agents, such as leaders and teams (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021), and employees may utilize more qualifications when leaders and teams provide more emergent tasks (Alfes et al., 2016; Graen & Scandura, 1987); (b) they are subjective and personal and employees may utilize different levels of qualifications while they have the same job positions (Erdogan, Karaeminogullari, et al., 2020; Luksyte & Spitzmueller, 2016); (c) they are not independent of job incumbents and variant among job incumbents (Lin et al., 2017; Simon et al., 2019); and (d) they are less static and more flexible than qualifications required by the job. Thus, this study views qualifications utilized on the job as qualifications utilized to enact work roles or to perform both established and emergent tasks at work. I will use a new term—*qualifications utilized at work*—to replace qualifications utilized on the job. Notably, existing research about overqualification has mostly confounded work and jobs (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Lin et al., 2017). This study instead adopts the job–role differentiation perspective to differentiate work from job, which is also consistent with the differentiation between work and job in existing research on work design (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006; Parker, Morgeson, et al., 2017; Parker, Van DenBroeck, et al., 2017). Thus, qualifications utilized at work are a larger set of qualifications than qualifications required by the job and include both qualifications required by the job (i.e., established tasks) and qualifications

utilized to do emergent tasks that are self-generated or communicated to job incumbents by various social sources. That is, qualifications utilized at work are the total set of qualifications utilized to enact the work role.

With the distinction between qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized at work, this study will differentiate between objective overqualification and perceived overqualification. *Objective overqualification* is objective and independent of the perceptions of job incumbents (Maltarich et al., 2011). It is *qualifications required by the job* that are compared with employees' qualifications when assessing objective overqualification. In contrast, perceived overqualification is subjective and dependent on the perceptions of job incumbents (Erdogan et al., 2011). It is *qualifications utilized at work* that are compared with employees' qualifications when assessing perceived overqualification. Thus, the differences between objective overqualification and perceived overqualification result from not only employees' biased perceptions of objective overqualification but also the legitimate differences between qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized at work. The legitimate differences between these two sets of qualifications are due to the differences between jobs and work roles (i.e., the range of emergent tasks).

I will use three prototypes proposed by the job–role differentiation perspective and add a new prototype to illustrate the differences between objective overqualification and perceived overqualification more concretely. For *the bureaucratic prototype*, jobs and work roles are similar; qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized at work are thus similar, and the differences between objective overqualification and perceived overqualification mostly result from employees' biased perceptions of overqualification. For *the*

loose cannon prototype, work roles are mostly composed of emergent tasks and include very few established tasks; the set of qualifications utilized at work is thus much larger than the set of qualifications required by the job, and the differences between objective overqualification and perceived overqualification may largely result from the differences between qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized at work. For *the job similarity–role difference prototype*, two employees have the same job but have different work roles; therefore, qualifications required by the job are the same, but the employee who has a broader work role utilizes more qualifications at work than another employee. If they have the same levels of qualifications and biased perceptions of overqualification, they will experience the same levels of objective overqualification, but the employee who has a broader work role will perceive less overqualification than another employee. I will propose a new prototype, that is, *the quasi-static job-dynamic role prototype*. It involves a condition where the focal employee’s work role is broadened while their job is unchanged; that is, emergent tasks become more, whereas established tasks are unchanged. For this prototype, qualifications required by the job are unchanged, whereas qualifications utilized at work become more. Assuming the focal employee’s qualifications and biased perceptions of overqualification are unchanged, the focal employee’s objective overqualification is unchanged, whereas they will perceive less overqualification than before.

4.1.2 Role-Based Perceived Overqualification

Based on the job–role differentiation perspective, I propose that perceived overqualification is different from objective overqualification and is grounded in the comparison between employees’ qualifications and qualifications utilized at

work. The problem, however, is that existing studies have conflated qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized on the job when conceptualizing perceived overqualification, and some studies have even ignored the latter. Such an imprecise conceptualization hinders the investigation into how perceived overqualification is shaped and results in the problematic generalization of the findings of perceived overqualification to objective overqualification. Thus, to provide a more precise understanding of the overqualification phenomenon, it is crucial to more theoretically and precisely define and conceptualize perceived overqualification. Based on the job–role differentiation perspective, I propose a role-based conceptualization of perceived overqualification and define it as the extent to which the focal employee perceives he or she has surplus education, experience, knowledge, skills, abilities, and other qualifications relative to qualifications utilized at work.

I then argue that both objective overqualification and perceived role breadth are important influencing factors of role-based perceived overqualification. Previous studies have found that objective overqualification was an important antecedent of perceived overqualification (Arvan et al., 2019; Harari et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2017). Qualifications utilized at work include qualifications required by the job (or utilized to successfully fulfill established tasks) and qualifications utilized to perform emergent tasks. For objectively overqualified employees, their qualifications are more than qualifications required by the job, their qualifications are more likely to be more than qualifications utilized at work, and they are thus more prone to perceive higher levels of role-based overqualification. Role-based perceived overqualification is influenced by not only objective overqualification but also employees' work

roles. As argued in the relationship between perceived role breadth and perceived overqualification (Hypothesis 2), employees who view their work roles more broadly and perform more emergent tasks and behaviors are more likely to utilize more qualifications at work (Lievens et al., 2010; Morgeson et al., 2005), thus perceiving less role-based overqualification (Alfes et al., 2016). Thus, I argue that perceived role breadth has a negative effect on role-based perceived overqualification. Therefore, I propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 4. Objective overqualification is positively related to role-based perceived overqualification.

Hypothesis 5. Perceived role breadth is negatively related to role-based perceived overqualification.

Further, I distinguish role-based perceived overqualification from perceived overqualification in previous studies (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021) by comparing the different effects of objective overqualification and perceived role breadth on them. I argue that the positive effect of objective overqualification on role-based perceived overqualification is weaker than its positive effect on perceived overqualification in previous studies, whereas the negative effect of perceived role breadth on role-based perceived overqualification is stronger than its negative effect on perceived overqualification in previous studies. Perceived overqualification in previous studies captures the comparison of employees' qualifications with both qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized on the job, whereas role-based perceived overqualification focuses on qualifications utilized to perform work roles. Thus, objective overqualification, which focuses on qualifications required by the job, has a stronger effect on perceived overqualification in previous studies, and perceived role breadth,

which focuses on work roles, has a stronger effect on role-based perceived overqualification.

I focus on the two most frequently studied employees' reactions to perceived overqualification (i.e., affective commitment and turnover intentions) in previous research (e.g., Campbell & Hahl, 2022; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Galperin et al., 2020; Harari et al., 2017; Maynard et al., 2006). I argue that role-based perceived overqualification has a negative effect on affective commitment and a positive effect on turnover intentions. Employees who perceive more role-based overqualification are more likely to experience person–environment misfit and feel deprived, thus having low levels of affective commitment and high levels of turnover intentions (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). Thus, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 6. Role-based perceived overqualification is negatively related to affective commitment (6a) and is positively related to turnover intentions (6b).

Given that objective overqualification and perceived role breadth are important antecedents of role-based perceived overqualification (Hypotheses 4 and 5), they may have indirect effects on employees' reactions to overqualification through role-based perceived overqualification. Thus, I propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 7. Role-based perceived overqualification mediates the effects of objective overqualification on affective commitment (7a) and turnover intentions (7b).

Hypothesis 8. Role-based perceived overqualification mediates the effects of perceived role breadth on affective commitment (8a) and turnover intentions (8b).

4.2 Overview of Studies

I conducted three studies. In Study 2.1, I examined whether the main measurement scales of perceived overqualification involve both qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized on the job and adapted the main measurement scales to measure role-based perceived overqualification. In Study 2.2, I conducted an experiment to test the second theoretical model.

4.3 Study 2.1a Content Validation Analysis of the Existing Scales of Perceived Overqualification

Perceived overqualification involves the subjective comparison between “employees’ qualifications” and “qualifications required by and utilized on the job” (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). Based on the job–role differentiation perspective (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991), qualifications utilized on the job (i.e., qualifications utilized at work) are different from qualifications required by the job. In this study, I conducted content validation analyses to test whether the main measurement scales of perceived overqualification—SPOQ (Maynard et al., 2006) and perceived mismatch (Johnson & Johnson, 1996)—involve both qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized on the job. I differentiate between these two sets of qualifications and define *role-based perceived overqualification* as the extent to which the focal employee perceives that he or she has surplus qualifications relative to *qualifications utilized on the job* (i.e., qualifications utilized to perform work roles). Although some previous studies have defined perceived overqualification as the extent to which the focal employee perceives that he or she has surplus qualifications relative to *qualifications required by the job* (i.e., formal job requirements; Arvan et al., 2019; Harari et al., 2017; Li et al., 2022; Luksyte et al., 2022; Maynard et al.,

2006), in this study, I referred to the definition as *job-based perceived overqualification* because qualifications required by the job are in the job domain.

4.3.1 Sample and Procedure

I used Anderson and Gerbing's (1991) approach to test the content validity of the main measurement scales of perceived overqualification. I recruited 141 full-time employees from the USA via Prolific. After filtering out 15 participants who failed attention checks, the final sample size was 126 participants. They received £0.50 for participating in the survey. Of the participants, 55.6% were men. The average age was 38.33 years ($SD = 9.70$), 99.2% had at least a bachelor's degree, and the average organizational tenure was 7.76 years ($SD = 6.81$). They were from various industries, such as professional, scientific and technical activities (15.1%); education (11.9%); financial and insurance activities (11.9%); human health and social work activities (11.1%); information and communication (11.1%); and manufacturing (10.3%).

Participants first conducted a practice adapted from previous research (Colquitt et al., 2019). In the practice, they sorted three practice items into work motivation or job satisfaction. They were given three chances to sort the items appropriately. After participants sorted the items appropriately, I presented them with the definitions and characteristics of qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized on the job. I then presented participants with the definitions of role-based and job-based perceived overqualification and the measurement scales of perceived overqualification (Johnson & Johnson, 1996; Maynard et al., 2006). Participants were asked to determine which concept and definition the items best match.

4.3.2 Analyses and Results

I calculated two content validation statistics (Colquitt et al., 2019)—the proportion of substantive agreement (p_{sa}) and the substantive-validity coefficient (c_{sv}). The p_{sa} statistic was calculated by dividing the number of participants who sorted the item correctly (n_c) by the final sample size (N), and the c_{sv} statistic was calculated by dividing the difference between n_c and the number of participants who incorrectly sorted the item (n_o) by N .

According to the overall criteria for interpreting content validation statistics (Colquitt et al., 2019), if the p_{sa} value is .72 or above and the c_{sv} value is .51 or above, the item is considered to correspond at least moderately to the construct (above the 40th percentile of the distributions of p_{sa} and c_{sv}). As shown in Table 9, Items 5 and 9 of SPOQ and Item 2 of perceived mismatch corresponded well to the definition of role-based perceived overqualification, Items 1 and 7 of SPOQ and Item 1 of perceived mismatch corresponded well to the definition of job-based perceived overqualification, and the remaining items did not correspond well to either of the definitions of role-based and job-based perceived overqualification. The results indicated that the two main measurement scales of perceived overqualification capture the contents of two definitions and involve both qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized on the job. Thus, the dominant view that perceived overqualification is grounded in the comparison between employees' qualifications and qualifications required by the job (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021) is inaccurate. The results also indicated that the wording "*My qualifications are not fully utilized on my job*" corresponded better to role-based perceived overqualification than other wordings, which provides

guidance for adapting the existing scales to measure role-based perceived overqualification.

Table 9
Content Validation Item Assignment Results (Study 2.1a)

Items	Role-based perceived overqualification		Job-based perceived overqualification	
	<i>p_{sa}</i>	<i>c_{sv}</i>	<i>p_{sa}</i>	<i>c_{sv}</i>
SPOQ (Maynard et al., 2006)				
1. My job requires less education than I have.	.13	-.73	.87	.73
2. The work experience that I have is not necessary to be successful on this job.	.67	.35	.33	-.35
3. I have job skills that are not required for this job.	.44	-.11	.56	.11
4. Someone with less education than myself could perform well on my job.	.48	-.05	.52	.05
5. My previous training is not being fully utilized on this job.	.83	.67	.17	-.67
6. I have a lot of knowledge that I do not need in order to do my job.	.68	.37	.32	-.37
7. My education level is above the education level required by my job.	.15	-.70	.85	.70
8. Someone with less work experience than myself could do my job just as well.	.60	.21	.40	-.21
9. I have more abilities than I need in order to do my job.	.83	.65	.17	-.65
Perceived mismatch (Johnson & Johnson, 1996)				
1. My formal education overqualifies me for my present job.	.19	-.62	.81	.62
2. My talents are not fully utilized on my job.	.87	.73	.13	-.73
3. My work experience is more than necessary to do my present job.	.51	.02	.49	-.02
4. Based on my skills, I am overqualified for the job I hold.	.54	.08	.46	-.08

Note. *N* = 126.

4.4 Study 2.1b Measurement of Role-Based Overqualification

4.4.1 Scale Adaptation

The two main measurement scales adopted a facet approach to domain sampling (Lambert & Newman, 2023)—sampling the specific forms of qualifications and then combining responses across different forms of qualifications to assess perceived overqualification—and covered seven forms of qualifications (i.e., education, work experience, previous training, knowledge, skills, abilities, and talents). There might be overrepresentations of education (3 items out of 9 items) and work experience (2 items out of 9 items) in SPOQ, and the representation of different forms of qualifications in perceived mismatch was balanced. The overrepresentation of one part of the content domain in the measurement scales may be problematic (Lambert & Newman, 2023). Regarding the measurement of role-based perceived overqualification, there is no theoretical support for the overrepresentation of one form of qualification. Thus, I adapted the wording that corresponded best to role-based perceived overqualification in Study 2.1a—“*My qualifications are not fully utilized at work*”—to write seven items that separately covered seven forms of qualifications. Next, I used Hinkin and Tracey’s (1999) approach to test the content validity of the items.

4.4.2 Conceptual Distinction

Role-based perceived overqualification is distinct from person–organization fit perception, which refers to the “judgments of congruence between an employee’s personal values and an organization’s culture” (Cable & DeRue, 2002, p. 875). Person–organization fit perception captures the fit between employees’ values and an organization’s culture, whereas role-based perceived overqualification captures employees’ surplus qualifications relative to

qualifications utilized at work. Role-based perceived overqualification is also distinct from personal relative deprivation, which refers to “feelings of resentment and dissatisfaction stemming from the belief that one is deprived of a desired and deserved outcome compared with some referent” (Callan et al., 2011, p. 955). Personal relative deprivation includes disadvantaged comparison, undeserved disadvantages, and feelings of resentment. Role-based perceived overqualification may lead to personal relative deprivation; personal relative deprivation may result from other disadvantaged comparisons, such as the disadvantaged comparison of standing experienced by people low in subjective socioeconomic status (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2016).

4.4.3 Sample and Procedure

I recruited 120 full-time employees from the USA via Prolific. After filtering out 7 participants who failed attention checks, the final sample size was 113 participants. They received £0.75 for participating in the survey. Of the participants, 57.5% were men. The average age was 39.04 years ($SD = 9.23$). 96.5% had at least a bachelor’s degree, and the average organizational tenure was 7.86 years ($SD = 6.60$). They were from various industries, such as education (13.3%); human health and social work activities (13.3%); financial and insurance activities (12.4%); professional, scientific, and technical activities (12.4%); and information and communication (11.5%).

Participants first conducted a practice adapted from Colquitt et al. (2019). In the practice, they rated three practice items on how well each matched work motivation. They were given two chances to rate the items appropriately. After participants rated the items appropriately, I presented them with the definitions of role-based perceived overqualification, person–organization fit perception, and

personal relative deprivation. The measurement scales of person–organization fit perception (Cable & DeRue, 2002) and personal relative deprivation (Callan et al., 2011) were developed by previous research. Participants were then asked to evaluate the degree to which each of the items corresponded to each of the constructs and definitions (1 = *Item does an extremely bad job of measuring the bolded concept provided above* to 7 = *Item does an extremely good job of measuring the bolded concept provided above*).

4.4.4 Analyses and Results

I calculated two content validation statistics (Colquitt et al., 2019)—Hinkin Tracey correspondence (*htc*) and Hinkin Tracey distinctiveness (*htd*). The *htc* statistic was calculated by dividing the average definitional correspondence ratings on the construct by the number of anchors, and the *htd* statistic was calculated by dividing the average of all the differences between the average correspondence ratings on the construct and the average correspondence ratings on other constructs by “the number of anchors minus 1.”

According to the overall criteria for interpreting content validation statistics (Colquitt et al., 2019), if the *htc* value is .84 or above and the *htd* value is .18 or above, the item is considered to correspond at least moderately to the construct. As shown in Table 10, the *htd* and *htc* values of the seven items were above .84 and .18, respectively, thus providing evidence for the content validity of the 7-item scale.

Table 10
Content Validation Results (Study 2.1b)

Items	Statistics	
	<i>htc</i>	<i>htd</i>
Role-Based Perceived Overqualification		
My education is not fully utilized at work.	.90	.69
My work experience is not fully utilized at work.	.87	.66
My previous training is not fully utilized at work.	.86	.65
My knowledge is not fully utilized at work.	.89	.67
My skills are not fully utilized at work.	.87	.64
My abilities are not fully utilized at work.	.87	.63
My talents are not fully utilized at work.	.84	.60
Person–Organization Fit Perception (Cable & DeRue, 2002)		
The things that I value in life are very similar to the things that my organization values.	.91	.70
My personal values match my organization’s values and culture.	.92	.72
My organization’s values and culture provide a good fit with the things that I value in life.	.90	.67
Personal Relative Deprivation (Callan et al., 2011)		
I feel deprived when I think about what I have compared to what other people like me have.	.90	.69
I feel privileged compared to other people like me. [Reversed]	.74	.49
I feel resentful when I see how prosperous other people like me seem to be.	.87	.65
When I compare what I have with what others like me have, I realize that I am quite well off. [Reversed]	.75	.49
I feel dissatisfied with what I have compared to what other people like me have.	.86	.64

Note. $N = 113$.

4.5 Study 2.2 Test of the Second Theoretical Model (Experiment)

I conducted a 2 (high vs. low objective overqualification) by 2 (high vs. low perceived role breadth) between-subjects experiment to test the second model for two primary reasons. First, experiments can help better establish the causal relationships between the influencing factors and role-based perceived overqualification. Second, I can manipulate objective overqualification in experiments to address the limitations on the measurements of objective overqualification in previous field studies, such as capturing limited forms of qualifications rather than a holistic picture of overqualification and involving job requirements at the occupation level rather than in a specific organization (Arvan et al., 2019).

4.5.1 Sample

I recruited 260 full-time employees from the USA via Prolific; 16 participants failed attention checks, and the final sample size was 244 participants. Each condition included 59–64 participants. They received £0.75 for participating in the study. Of the participants, 44.3% were men. The average age was 40.22 years ($SD = 9.68$). 97.5% had at least a bachelor's degree, and the average organizational tenure was 8.21 years ($SD = 6.80$). They were from various industries, such as financial and insurance activities (15.6%); education (14.8%); human health and social work activities (13.5%); professional, scientific, and technical activities (8.2%); and information and communication (7%).

4.5.2 Procedure

I asked participants to envision themselves as an employee who joined Goldman Sachs 6 months ago. Each participant was first told that Goldman Sachs

posted a job position—investment banking analyst—on a social media site and was presented with the job posting that included the job responsibilities and job requirements (see Figure 5). After reading the job posting, participants answered three comprehension check questions⁵ and had two chances to pass the comprehension check. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. They were asked to imagine that about 1 year ago, they were job candidates who had one of two social media profiles—the overqualified candidate’s profile and the qualified candidate’s profile—that summarized different qualifications and accomplishments (the manipulation of objective overqualification; see Figure 6). Following the profile, they answered four profile attention check questions⁶ to reinforce the profile information. If they answered at least one of the four questions incorrectly, they were forced to read the profile again before proceeding. Participants then responded to two questions about their qualifications in the profiles. The job posting and social media profiles were designed based on previous research (Campbell & Hahl, 2022; Galperin et al., 2020). Next, participants were told that they applied for the job position and joined Goldman Sachs 6 months ago. They were then presented with information about the qualifications and accomplishments of individuals who previously

⁵ The questions were as follows (the response scales were in parentheses, and the correct answers were italicized): “Job responsibilities include conducting financial and other business-related research (*True/False*)”; “The minimum education level listed in the job requirements is bachelor’s degree (*True/False*)”; “The minimum work experience listed in the job requirements is 2 years (*True/False*).”

⁶ The attention check questions were as follows (the response scales were in parentheses, and the correct answers were italicized): “At Merrill Lynch, your job position is business consultant (*True/False*)”; “At Merrill Lynch, you [overqualified condition: ‘conducted’; qualified condition: ‘did not conduct’] financial and other business-related research (*True/False*)”; “You have about [overqualified condition: ‘4 years of work experience’; qualified condition: ‘2 years of work experience’] (*True/False*)”; “You have a [overqualified condition: ‘master’s degree’; qualified condition: ‘bachelor’s degree’] (*True/False*)”. Participants who saw the profile reinforcements or study instruction reinforcements were included in the final analyses because the results did not change when excluding them.

filled the job position. The information helped participants to learn more about what defined being qualified for the position. Participants answered two study instruction attention check questions following the instruction⁷ to reinforce the important study information. If they answered at least one of the two questions incorrectly, they were forced to read the instruction again before proceeding. Afterward, I provided participants with information about their work roles, such as more (vs. fewer) tasks/behaviors comprising work roles (the manipulation of perceived role breadth). Participants then responded to the questions about their perceptions of role breadth at Goldman Sachs. Last, participants rated their perceived overqualification measured using SPOQ (Maynard et al., 2006), role-based perceived overqualification, affective commitment, and turnover intentions at Goldman Sachs. They also provided their demographics, such as gender, age, education, and organizational tenure.

4.5.3 Manipulations

Objective Overqualification. I used the manipulation modified from previous research (Campbell & Hahl, 2022; Galperin et al., 2020). Objective overqualification derives from the objective comparison between job requirements and employees' qualifications. I manipulated objective overqualification by giving all participants the same job requirements (i.e., "bachelor's degree" and "2 years of overall experience") in the job posting and adjusting job candidates' qualifications (i.e., education and work experience) in the social media profiles. Participants in the high (vs. low) condition were

⁷ The attention check questions were as follows (the response scales were in parentheses, and the correct answers were italicized): "In general, what were the education levels of individuals who previously filled your position?" (*bachelor's degree*, master's degree, doctorate degree); "In general, what was the work experience of individuals who previously filled your position?" (2 years, 3 years, 4 years).

presented with the overqualified candidate's profile (vs. the qualified candidate's profile) and were asked to imagine that they had a master's degree (vs. bachelor's degree) and 4 years (vs. 2 years) of work experience. Thus, the qualifications summarized in the overqualified candidate's profile were higher than the job requirements (high objective overqualification condition), whereas the qualifications summarized in the qualified candidate's profile matched the job requirements (low objective overqualification condition).

In order to reinforce the manipulation, I gave all participants the same additional information about what defined being qualified for the job position—the qualifications and accomplishments of individuals who previously filled the job position—and also adjusted job candidates' accomplishments in the social media files. The accomplishments involved success or performance in the job responsibilities and other tasks, and different accomplishments can elicit differences in qualifications (Campbell & Hahl, 2022). The qualifications and accomplishments of individuals who previously filled the job position were the same as those in the qualified candidate's profile. The qualified candidate's profile (vs. the overqualified candidate's profile) included the following accomplishments: “creating LBO financing model to support 15 million (vs. \$1.5 billion) merger & acquisition (M&A) transactions”; “leading team of 2 (vs. 10) direct reports to assess investment opportunities and build pitch-books supporting North American deals”; and “participating in all stages of the capital raising process for 10 million (vs. \$1 billion) in common stock, preferred stock, and bond offerings.” The accomplishments in the overqualified candidate's profile included one more accomplishment: “conducting financial and other business-related research.” Thus, the qualifications and accomplishments in the

overqualified candidate's profile were higher than those of individuals who previously filled the job position (high objective overqualification condition), whereas those in the qualified candidate's file matched their qualifications and accomplishments (low objective overqualification condition).

Perceived Role Breadth. I designed the manipulation by expanding the scale items of perceived role breadth in Study 1.1 to include more contextual information and details (see Table 11). All participants were told their work roles included proficiency, such as carrying out core parts of their job well. Participants in the high (vs. low) condition were asked to imagine that the tasks comprising their work roles were more than (vs. the same as) the job responsibilities and that adaptivity (e.g., adapting well to changes in your tasks) and proactivity (e.g., initiating better ways of doing your tasks) were (vs. not important) part of their work roles. Participants in the high condition were told that employees at Goldman Sachs were encouraged to have broad work roles, and employees in their department were encouraged to work on more tasks beyond job responsibilities, such as conducting financial and other business-related research and proactively creating more advanced financial models. In contrast, participants in the low condition were told that, at Goldman Sachs, employees' work roles were mostly shaped by formal job descriptions, and employees in their department performed job responsibilities, such as leading teams of about 2 direct reports and developing basic financial models.

4.5.4 Measures

The following variables were measured with a five-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly disagree*) unless otherwise stated.

Perceived Overqualification (SPOQ). As in Study 1.2, I used SPOQ (Maynard et al., 2006; $\alpha = .93$), given that it has high reliability and previous studies have mostly used it to measure perceived overqualification.

Role-Based Perceived Overqualification (RBPOQ). I used the 7-item measurement scale adapted in Study 2.1b ($\alpha = .98$).

Affective Commitment. I used the 6-item scale adapted from Meyer et al. (1993). The sample item was “I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with Goldman Sachs” ($\alpha = .93$).

Turnover Intentions. I used the 3-item scale adapted from Cammann et al. (1983). The sample item was “It is very likely that I will actively look for a new job in the next year” ($\alpha = .95$).

Manipulation Check Measure: Objective Overqualification. Objective overqualification was measured using two indicators: overeducation and over-experience. Overeducation was measured by calculating the difference between individuals’ education (1 = *bachelor’s degree*, 2 = *master’s degree*, 3 = *doctorate degree*) and the minimum education level (1 = *bachelor’s degree*) in the job requirements. Over-experience was measured by calculating the difference between individuals’ work experience (1 = 2 *years*, 2 = 3 *years*, 3 = 4 *years*) and the minimum work experience (1 = 2 *years*) in the job requirements. I standardized two indicators and then combined them into one objective overqualification measure.

Manipulation Check Measure: Perceived Role Breadth. I measured perceived role breadth using nine items adapted from the measurement scale of perceived role breadth in Study 1.1, which involved PRB for proficiency, adaptivity, and proactivity. The sample items were “Carrying out core parts of

my job well is part of my work role at Goldman Sachs” (PRB for proficiency; $\alpha = .80$); “Adapting well to changes in my tasks is part of my work role at Goldman Sachs” (PRB for adaptivity; $\alpha = .96$); and “Initiating better ways of doing my tasks is part of my work role at Goldman Sachs” (PRB for proactivity; $\alpha = .96$). The score of perceived role breadth was the average of the three dimensions.

4.5.5 Results

Manipulation Check Results. I conducted a 2 (high vs. low objective overqualification) by 2 (high vs. low perceived role breadth) ANOVA on objective overqualification to test the effectiveness of the manipulation of objective overqualification. The results showed that the objective overqualification manipulation had a significant main effect on objective overqualification ($F_{(1, 240)} = 3037.13, p < .001$), and participants in the high objective overqualification condition ($M = .93; SD = .29$) reported higher levels of objective overqualification than participants in the low objective overqualification condition ($M = -.96; SD = .24$). There was no significant main effect of perceived role breadth manipulation ($F_{(1, 240)} = .92, p = .34$) or significant interaction between two manipulations on objective overqualification ($F_{(1, 240)} = 1.00, p = .32$).

In order to examine the effectiveness of the manipulation of perceived role breadth, I conducted a 2 (high vs. low objective overqualification) by 2 (high vs. low perceived role breadth) ANOVA on perceived role breadth. The results showed that perceived role breadth manipulation had a significant main effect on perceived role breadth ($F_{(1, 240)} = 171.55, p < .001$), and participants in the high perceived role breadth condition ($M = 4.40; SD = .50$) reported higher levels of perceived role breadth than participants in the low perceived role breadth

condition ($M = 3.25$; $SD = .83$). There was no significant main effect of objective overqualification manipulation ($F_{(1, 240)} = .58, p = .45$) or significant interaction between two manipulations on perceived role breadth ($F_{(1, 240)} = .42, p = .52$). In sum, the manipulations were successful.

Confirmatory Factor Analyses. To examine discriminant validity, I used Mplus version 8.3 to conduct confirmatory factor analyses on the key variables. The results showed that the hypothesized model fitted the data significantly better than any alternative models ($\chi^2_{(48)} = 81.03, p < .001, CFI = .99, TLI = .99, RMSEA = .05, SRMR = .03$; see Table 12), supporting the discriminant validity of the constructs.

Hypotheses Testing. The descriptive statistics and correlations among the variables are summarized in Table 13. I conducted path analyses in Mplus 8.3 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017) to test the hypotheses. As shown in Table 14, objective overqualification was positively related to RBPOQ ($\beta = 1.00, SE = .13, p < .001$), thus supporting Hypothesis 4. Objective overqualification was also positively related to SPOQ ($\beta = 1.27, SE = .10, p < .001$), and the positive effect of objective overqualification on RBPOQ was weaker than its positive effect on SPOQ ($difference = -.28, SE = .10, p = .004$). Consistent with Hypothesis 5, perceived role breadth was negatively related to RBPOQ ($\beta = -.61, SE = .14, p < .001$). Perceived role breadth was also negatively related to SPOQ ($\beta = -.27, SE = .10, p = .006$), and the negative effect of perceived role breadth on RBPOQ was stronger than its negative effect on SPOQ ($difference = -.35, SE = .10, p < .001$). RBPOQ was negatively related to affective commitment ($\beta = -.29, SE = .06, p < .001$) and was positively related to turnover intentions ($\beta = .50, SE = .06, p < .001$), thus supporting Hypothesis 6.

To test the indirect effects, I used 2,000 bootstrap samples to estimate bias-corrected 95% confidence intervals (CIs) for each indirect effect (Edwards & Lambert, 2007). As shown in Table 15, the indirect effects of objective overqualification on affective commitment ($estimate = -.289, SE = .071, 95\% CI [-.438, -.161]$) and turnover intentions ($estimate = .501, SE = .090, 95\% CI [.341, .696]$) via RBPOQ were significant. Perceived role breadth also had significant indirect effects on affective commitment ($estimate = .178, SE = .055, 95\% CI [.090, .309]$) and turnover intentions ($estimate = -.309, SE = .081, 95\% CI [-.484, -.167]$) via RBPOQ. Thus, Hypotheses 7 and 8 were supported. I also examined the mediating effect of SPOQ. The results showed that the indirect effects of objective overqualification on affective commitment ($estimate = -.402, SE = .129, 95\% CI [-.654, -.142]$) and turnover intentions ($estimate = .733, SE = .153, 95\% CI [.449, 1.040]$) via SPOQ were significant. Perceived role breadth had significant indirect effects on affective commitment ($estimate = .084, SE = .041, 95\% CI [.021, .186]$) and turnover intentions ($estimate = -.153, SE = .067, 95\% CI [-.306, -.045]$) via SPOQ.

Supplementary Analyses. Although I did not hypothesize the effect of the interaction between objective overqualification and perceived role breadth on RBPOQ, I examined the possible interaction effect to advance our understanding of the effects of objective overqualification and perceived role breadth on RBPOQ. I conducted a 2 (high vs. low objective overqualification) by 2 (high vs. low perceived role breadth) ANOVA on RBPOQ in SPSS version 26. The results showed that there was a significant main effect of objective overqualification on RBPOQ ($F_{(1, 240)} = 52.73, p < .001$). Perceived role breadth had a significant main effect on RBPOQ ($F_{(1, 240)} = 20.06, p < .001$). However, the interaction between

objective overqualification and perceived role breadth had no significant effect on RBPOQ ($F_{(1, 240)} = .36, p = .548$). The path analysis results also showed that the interaction did not have a significant effect on RBPOQ ($\beta = .17, SE = .28, p = .549$). Simple effect analyses (see Figure 7) showed that when objective overqualification was high, participants in the high perceived role breadth condition ($M = 3.02; SD = 1.09$) reported lower levels of RBPOQ than participants in the low perceived role breadth condition ($M = 3.55; SD = 1.25; F_{(1, 240)} = 7.63, p = .006$). When objective overqualification was low, participants in the high perceived role breadth condition ($M = 1.94; SD = .78$) also reported lower levels of RBPOQ than participants in the low perceived role breadth condition ($M = 2.64; SD = 1.10; F_{(1, 240)} = 12.70, p < .001$). The results showed that the effect of perceived role breadth on RBPOQ was not contingent on objective overqualification. Similarly, the effect of objective overqualification was also not contingent on perceived role breadth.

I also conducted a 2 (high vs. low objective overqualification) by 2 (high vs. low perceived role breadth) ANOVA on SPOQ. The results showed that there was a significant main effect of objective overqualification on SPOQ ($F_{(1, 240)} = 162.01, p < .001$). Perceived role breadth also had a significant main effect on SPOQ ($F_{(1, 240)} = 7.10, p = .008$). However, there was no significant effect of the interaction between objective overqualification and perceived role breadth on SPOQ ($F_{(1, 240)} = .37, p = .545$). The path analysis results also showed that the effect of interaction was not significant ($\beta = .12, SE = .20, p = .540$). Simple effect analyses (see Figure 8) showed that when objective overqualification was low, participants in the high perceived role breadth condition reported lower levels of SPOQ ($M = 2.15; SD = .68$) than participants in the low perceived role

breadth condition ($M = 2.48$; $SD = .74$; $F_{(1, 240)} = 5.261$, $p = .023$). When objective overqualification was high, participants in the high perceived role breadth condition ($M = 3.48$; $SD = .66$) also reported lower levels of SPOQ than participants in the low perceived role breadth condition ($M = 3.69$; $SD = .99$). However, the mean difference was not significant ($F_{(1, 240)} = 2.152$, $p = .144$).

I also compared the mediating effect of RBPOQ with that of SPOQ by examining their mediating effects in one model. The results showed that RBPOQ had significant effects on affective commitment ($\beta = -.25$, $SE = .08$, $p = .002$) and turnover intentions ($\beta = .41$, $SE = .08$, $p < .001$), whereas the effects of SPOQ on affective commitment ($\beta = -.07$, $SE = .14$, $p = .615$) and turnover intentions ($\beta = .18$, $SE = .13$, $p = .187$) were not significant. The mediating effect of RBPOQ on the negative relationship between perceived role breadth and turnover intentions ($estimate = -.253$, $SE = .077$, 95% CI $[-.436, -.127]$) was significantly stronger than that of SPOQ ($estimate = -.047$, $SE = .042$, 95% CI $[-.155, .013]$; difference = $-.207$, $SE = .093$, 95% CI $[-.057, -.444]$). However, the mediating effects of SPOQ and RBPOQ in the relationships between objective overqualification and outcomes and their effects in the relationship between perceived role breadth and affective commitment were not significantly different.

4.5.6 Study 2.2 Discussion

The results supported the second theoretical model and showed that objective overqualification and perceived role breadth had important effects on role-based perceived overqualification, thus affecting affective commitment and turnover intentions. The results also indicate that objective overqualification has a stronger effect on SPOQ and perceived role breadth has a stronger effect on

role-based perceived overqualification, thus supporting that role-based perceived overqualification is different from perceived overqualification in previous studies. In addition, the interaction between objective overqualification and perceived role breadth did not have a significant effect on role-based perceived overqualification. The finding indicates that employees who have broad work roles, regardless of whether they are objectively overqualified, are less likely to perceive role-based overqualification. Although objectively overqualified employees may feel overqualified and react to overqualification negatively, they may also not feel overqualified and have negative reactions because their perceptions of overqualification also depend on their work roles and qualifications utilized at work. In the following study, I will explore how to shape employees' role-based overqualification and address their possible negative reactions.

Table 11

The Manipulation of Perceived Role Breadth (Study 2.2)

High Perceived Role Breadth	Low Perceived Role Breadth
<p>As an investment banking analyst, your work role includes carrying out core parts of your job well, completing tasks well using standard procedures, and ensuring that your tasks are completed properly.</p> <p>At Goldman Sachs, the only constraints on the tasks comprising employees' work roles are employees' own capacities and performance, and employees are encouraged to have broad work roles and work on more tasks beyond job responsibilities.</p>	<p>As an investment banking analyst, your work role includes carrying out core parts of your job well, completing tasks well using standard procedures, and ensuring that your tasks are completed properly.</p> <p>At Goldman Sachs, employees' work roles are mostly shaped by formal job descriptions. In general, employees perform job responsibilities and work on the required tasks.</p>
<p>In your department, the supervisor encourages you and your coworkers who hold similar job positions to you to enact broad work roles, such as leading bigger teams and conducting financial and other business-related research (e.g., research on target companies, sectors, industries, and geographies). From your view, adapting well to changes in your tasks, coping with changes to the way you have to do your tasks, and learning new skills to help you adapt to changes in your tasks are parts of your work role.</p>	<p>In your department, you and your coworkers who hold similar job positions to you perform job responsibilities listed in the above job posting under the supervision of your supervisor, such as leading teams of about 2 direct reports to assess investment opportunities and build pitch-books supporting North American deals. From your view, adapting well to changes in your tasks, coping with changes to the way you have to do your tasks, and learning new skills to help you adapt to changes in your tasks are NOT important when you enact your work role.</p>
<p>You also think that your work role includes initiating better ways of doing your tasks, coming up with ideas to improve the way in which your tasks are done, and making changes to the way your tasks are done. For example, you can proactively try to create more advanced financial models to support larger transactions.</p>	<p>You also think that initiating better ways of doing your tasks, coming up with ideas to improve the way in which your tasks are done, and making changes to the way your tasks are done are NOT important when you enact your work role. For example, you usually develop basic financial models to support about \$15 million merger & acquisition (M&A) transactions.</p>

Table 12
Confirmatory Factor Analyses (Study 2.2)

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA
Model 1	81.03	48			.99	.99	.03	.05
Model 2	360.50	51	279.47**	3	.91	.88	.05	.16
Model 3	483.43	51	402.4**	3	.87	.84	.08	.19
Model 4	1457.98	54	1376.95**	6	.59	.50	.18	.33

Note. *N* = 244. Model 1 = the hypothesized model; Model 2 = model combining SPOQ and RBPOQ into one factor; Model 3 = model combining affective commitment and turnover intentions into one factor; Model 4 = model combining four variables into one factor.

** *p* < .01.

Table 13
Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among the Variables (Study 2.2)

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Objective overqualification condition ^a						
2. Perceived role breadth condition ^a	-.02					
3. SPOQ	.63**	-.15*	(.93)			
4. RBPOQ	.42**	-.26**	.77**	(.98)		
5. Affective commitment	-.13	.22**	-.32**	-.41**	(.93)	
6. Turnover intentions	.26**	-.21**	.51**	.60**	-.60**	(.95)
Mean	.51	.50	2.96	2.80	2.88	2.68
SD	.50	.50	1.02	1.22	.90	1.07

Note. *N* = 244. Internal consistency reliabilities appear in parentheses along the diagonal.

* *p* < .05; ** *p* < .01

^a Dummy coded: 0 = *low*, 1 = *high*.

Table 14
Path Analyses Results (Study 2.2)

Predictors	SPOQ		RBPOQ	
	B	SE	B	SE
<i>Independent Variables</i>				
Objective Overqualification	1.27**	.10	1.00**	.13
Perceived Role Breadth	-.27**	.12	-.61**	.14
<i>Interaction^a</i>				
Objective Overqualification × Perceived Role Breadth	.12	.20	.17	.28
<i>Mediators</i>				
SPOQ				
RBPOQ				
Constant	2.45**	.08	2.59**	.12
<i>R</i> ²	.42	.05	.24	.05

Table 14
Path Analyses Results (Study 2.2, Cont.)

Predictors	Affective Commitment				Turnover Intentions							
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
<i>Independent Variables</i>												
Objective Overqualification	.19	.18	.07	.12	.13	.18	-.20	.19	.04	.12	-.10	.18
Perceived Role Breadth	-.30**	.11	.21	.11	.21	.11	-.27*	.12	-.12	.12	-.12	.12
<i>Interaction</i>												
Objective Overqualification × Perceived Role Breadth												
<i>Mediators</i>												
SPOQ	-.32**	.10			-.07	.14	.58**	.11			.18	.13
RBPOQ			-.29**	.06	-.25**	.08			.50**	.06	.41**	.08
Constant	3.98**	.31	3.55**	.19	3.63**	.26	1.13**	.27	1.31**	.19	1.12**	.27
R ²	.14	.05	.18	.05	.18	.05	.28	.06	.36	.06	.37	.06

Note. $N = 244$. The estimates are unstandardized coefficients. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

^a Results derived from the moderated-mediation models. Other results derived from the mediation models.

Table 15*Results of Hypothesized Indirect Effects (Study 2.2)*

Indirect effects	Estimate	SE	95% CI
Objective overqualification → role-based perceived overqualification → affective commitment	-.289	.071	[-.438, -.161]
Objective overqualification → role-based perceived overqualification → turnover intentions	.501	.090	[.341, .696]
Perceived role breadth → role-based perceived overqualification → affective commitment	.178	.055	[.090, .309]
Perceived role breadth → role-based perceived overqualification → turnover intentions	-.309	.081	[-.484, -.167]
Objective overqualification → SPOQ → affective commitment	-.298	.072	[-.454, -.170]
Objective overqualification → SPOQ → turnover intentions	.516	.091	[.353, .711]
Perceived role breadth → SPOQ → affective commitment	.180	.056	[.089, .312]
Perceived role breadth → SPOQ → turnover intentions	-.311	.082	[-.489, -.170]

Note. $N = 244$. The estimates are unstandardized coefficients. CI = confidence interval.

Figure 5
The Job Posting (Study 2.2)

Investment Banking Analyst - New York

Goldman Sachs · New York

About the job

Responsibilities

- → Developing financing models for merger & acquisition (M&A) transactions
- → Leading team to evaluate possible investment opportunities and build pitch-books supporting North American deals
- → Participating in all stages of the capital raising process in common stock, preferred stock, and bond offerings

Qualifications

Minimum Requirements

- → Bachelor's Degree in finance, accounting, economics or other business-related discipline
- → 2 years of overall experience in Financial Planning & Analysis (FP&A), Investment Banking, or similar field

About the company



Goldman Sachs

3,696,926 followers

Financial Services · 10,001+ employees

At Goldman Sachs, we believe progress is everyone's business. That's why we commit our people, capital and ideas to help our clients, shareholders and the communities we serve to grow.

Founded in 1869, Goldman Sachs is a leading global investment banking, securities and investment management firm. Headquartered in New York, we maintain offices in all major financial centers around the world.

Figure 6
The Profile of Overqualified Job Candidate (Study 2.2)

Analyst - Investment Banking Division at Merrill Lynch

Greater New York City Area



Experience



Analyst - Investment Banking Division

Merrill Lynch

Jun 2019 – Present · 3 years 9 months

Greater New York City Area

- Created LBO financing model to support \$1.5 billion merger & acquisition (M&A) transactions
- Led team of 10 direct reports to assess investment opportunities and build pitch-books supporting North American deals
- Participated in all stages of the capital raising process for \$1 billion in common stock, preferred stock, and bond offerings
- Conducted financial and other business-related research, such as research on target companies, sectors, industries, and geographies



Summer Intern

UBS

Jun 2017 – Aug 2017 · 3 months

Greater New York City Area

- Performed financial analysis via pro forma cash flow models
- Participated in all stages of capital raising process for \$10 million in common stock, preferred stock, and bond offerings

Education



Cornell University

Master of Professional Studies (MPS) in Applied Economics and Management

2018 – 2019



Florida State University

Bachelor of Science (B.S.), Finance

2014 – 2018

Figure 7
Effects of Objective Overqualification and Perceived Role Breadth on Role-Based Perceived Overqualification (Study 2.2)

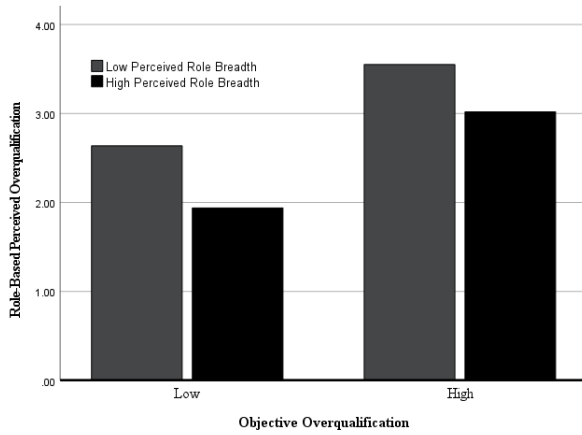


Figure 8
Effects of Objective Overqualification and Perceived Role Breadth on Perceived Overqualification Measured Using SPOQ (Study 2.2)

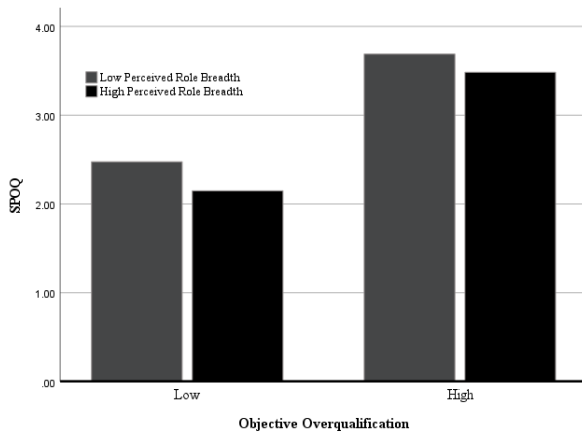
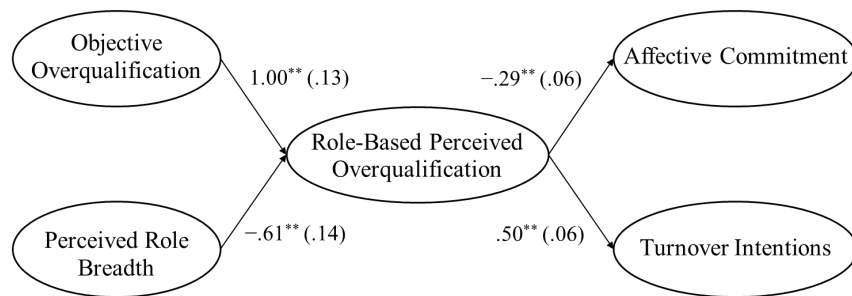


Figure 9
Results of the Second Theoretical Model (Study 2.2)

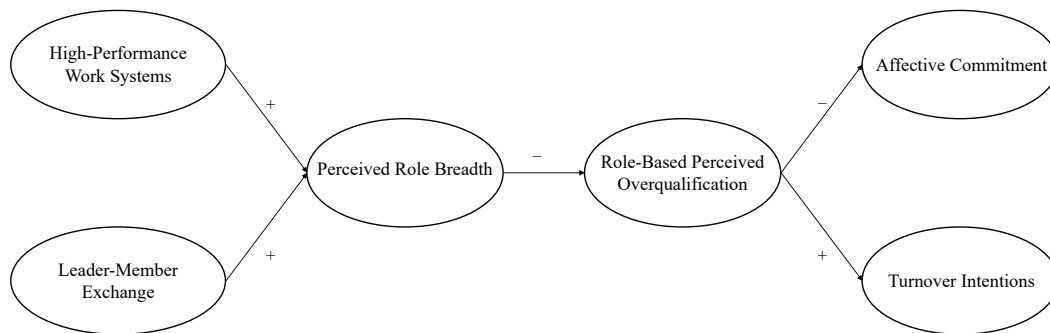


Note. ** $p < .01$.

Chapter 5 Reducing Role-Based Perceived Overqualification: The Effects of Organizational and Relational Factors (Study 3)

Research on perceived overqualification has focused on exploring its consequences but has paid less attention to its antecedents. So far, we still have limited knowledge of the influencing factors of perceived overqualification. Previous studies have called for the investigation of its influencing factors to enrich the literature and deepen our understanding of the overqualification phenomenon (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Liao et al., 2024). To respond to the call and generate new knowledge on the antecedents of perceived overqualification, I draw on role theory to explore how role-based perceived overqualification is shaped. Role theory proposes that organizational and relational factors play a pivotal role in shaping employees' work roles (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991; Katz & Kahn, 1978). In this study, I focus on high-performance systems (HPWS) and leader-member exchange (LMX), both of which are found to have important effects on employees' work roles (e.g., Evans & Davis, 2005; Hofmann et al., 2003; Jensen et al., 2013; Klieman et al., 2000). I first predict that HPWS and LMX are positively related to perceived role breadth and then propose their indirect effects on role-based perceived overqualification through perceived role breadth. Next, I propose the serial mediation model of the effects of HPWS and LMX on affective commitment and turnover intentions through perceived role breadth and role-based perceived overqualification. The theoretical model is shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10
The Third Theoretical Model



5.1 Theory and Hypotheses

5.1.1 The Effect of High-Performance Work Systems

HPWS refer to a bundle of HRM practices that are horizontally aligned with each other and vertically aligned with the organization's strategy and includes, for example, flexible work assignments, encouragement of participation, and results-oriented appraisal (Combs et al., 2006; Sun et al., 2007). Employees are usually underutilized because organizations give them fewer opportunities to design their work roles and leverage their capabilities to enact their work roles in better ways (Bailey, 1993). HPWS are important HRM practices that can encourage employees to design and perform their work roles better (Evans & Davis, 2005; Huselid, 1995). Previous studies have proposed that when organizations implement HPWS, employees may define their work roles more broadly, enact broader work roles, and engage in more emergent tasks and behaviors beyond required tasks (Evans & Davis, 2005; Sun et al., 2007).

I argue that HPWS have a positive effect on perceived role breadth. First, HPWS can give employees more discretion and control in initiating and changing work behaviors and tasks (Aryee et al., 2012; Liao et al., 2009; Messersmith et al., 2011). They have more flexibility in defining their work roles, have more opportunities to take on broader work roles, and are more likely to view emergent

behaviors and tasks as part of work roles (Kim et al., 2023; Morgeson et al., 2005; Parker et al., 2006). They may perform a broad range of behaviors and tasks beyond required tasks, such as helping new employees and suggesting ways to improve teams (Messersmith et al., 2011). Second, when organizations implement HPWS, employees are more likely to perceive more support from organizations, feel that they are valued, and experience high-quality exchange relationships (Chuang & Liao, 2010; Liao et al., 2009); They may thus reciprocate the organizations by viewing their work roles more broadly (Beltrán-Martín et al., 2017; Coyle-Shapiro et al., 2004) and enact broader work roles, such as helping coworkers, proposing creative solutions, and making constructive suggestions (Chuang & Liao, 2010; Lin et al., 2023; Sun et al., 2007). In sum, HPWS can facilitate employees to view their work roles more broadly and enact broader work roles. Thus, I propose the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 9. High-performance work systems are positively related to perceived role breadth.

Given that perceived role breadth is negatively related to role-based perceived overqualification (Hypothesis 5), HPWS may have an indirect effect on role-based perceived overqualification. Further, role-based perceived overqualification has a negative effect on affective commitment and a positive effect on turnover intentions (Hypotheses 6a and 6b), I thus propose the serial indirect effects of HPWS on affective commitment and turnover intentions through perceived role breadth and role-based perceived overqualification. Therefore, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 10. Perceived role breadth mediates the negative effect of HPWS on role-based perceived overqualification.

Hypothesis 11. The effects of HPWS on affective commitment (*11a*) and turnover intentions (*11b*) are sequentially mediated by perceived role breadth and role-based perceived overqualification.

5.1.2 The Effect of Leader–Member Exchange

Role theory (Ilgen & Hollenbeck, 1991; Katz & Kahn, 1978) suggests that interpersonal relationships between employees and the members of their work role sets are important in shaping employees' work roles. This study focuses on the effects of LMX as leaders are the key members of employees' work role sets and play a significant role in influencing the ways employees define their work roles (Parke et al., 2020).

The basic premise behind LMX is that leaders differentiate their treatment of employees in their teams (Dansereau et al., 1975). In high-quality LMX relationships, employees can have higher levels of decision-making influence, perceive more support and empowerment, and have more autonomy (Liden et al., 2000). The leaders provide them with more resources and opportunities to take on broad work roles, and they can perform more tasks beyond required tasks, collaborate more challenging tasks with leaders, and have broader work roles (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Liden & Graen, 1980). For example, they may speak up with more suggestions for constructive change and develop more novel and useful ideas (Ilies et al., 2007; VanDyne et al., 2008). In low-quality LMX relationships, employees and their leaders have low mutual affection, loyalty, and professional respect, the exchange relationships are based on employment contracts, and employees may have fewer tasks beyond required tasks and enact narrower work roles (Graen & Scandura, 1987; Liden & Maslyn, 1998). Thus, employees who have high-quality LMX relationships are more likely to see their work roles

broadly and take on broad work roles. Moreover, they may feel the obligation to reciprocate the high-quality exchange relationships via expanding work roles, and they may perceive more emergent tasks and behaviors as part of their work roles and define their work roles in a broader manner (Hofmann et al., 2003). Therefore, I hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 12. Leader–member exchange is positively related to perceived role breadth.

Previous research has proposed that good relationships with leaders may provide employees with more opportunities to enact broader work roles and effectively utilize their qualifications, and employees thus perceive less overqualification (Alfes et al., 2016), which provides some support for the indirect effect of LMX on role-based perceived overqualification via perceived role breadth. Further, I propose the serial indirect effects of LMX on affective commitment and turnover intentions through perceived role breadth and role-based perceived overqualification. Thus, I hypothesize:

Hypothesis 13. Perceived role breadth mediates the negative effect of LMX on role-based perceived overqualification.

Hypothesis 14. The effects of LMX on affective commitment (*14a*) and turnover intentions (*14b*) are sequentially mediated by perceived role breadth and role-based perceived overqualification.

5.2 Method and Results

5.2.1 Sample and Procedure

To test the third theoretical model, I conducted a field study with a multiwave and multisource design. With the help of coordinators who worked in different firms, I recruited supervisors and their subordinates from different firms

in mainland China and Macau (a firm). About 140 supervisors and 5 or 6 subordinates of each supervisor expressed interest in participating in this study. At Time 1, supervisors rated high-performance work systems and provided their demographic information, and employees rated LMX and provided their demographic information. One month and two weeks later (Time 2),⁸ employees reported perceived role breadth. One month later (Time 3), employees reported perceived overqualification measured using SPOQ (Maynard et al., 2006), role-based perceived overqualification, affective commitment, and turnover intentions.

At Time 1, this study obtained responses from 135 supervisors and 790 employees; 765 employees responded to Time 2 survey; and 764 employees returned Time 3 survey. After matching data and deleting missing cases, the final sample consisted of 132 supervisors and 764 employees from 110 firms, yielding a response rate of 97.78% for supervisors and 96.71% for employees. Of the 132 supervisors, 58.3% were male, the average age was 39.35 years ($SD = 8.38$), 74.2% had a bachelor's degree or above, and the average organizational tenure was 12.11 years ($SD = 8.07$). Of the 764 employees, 50.3% were male, the average age was 32.35 years ($SD = 7.50$), 68.6% had a bachelor's degree or above, and the average organizational tenure was 5.96 years ($SD = 6.38$).

5.2.2 Measures

Following the translation-back-translation procedure (Brislin, 1986), the measurement scales were translated into Chinese. All variables were measured

⁸ Chinese New Year holidays were between Time 1 and Time 2. The interval was adjusted to accommodate the time schedules of the firms.

with a five-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly disagree*) unless otherwise stated.

High-performance work systems (HPWS). I used the scale adapted from the high-performance human resource practices scale (Sun et al., 2007) to measure HPWS. It included the following eight dimensions: selective staffing, extensive training, internal mobility, employment security, clear job description, results-oriented appraisal, incentive reward, and participation. The Cronbach's alphas of eight dimensions ranged from .70 to .85. HPWS were operationalized as the average of eight dimensions.

Leader–Member Exchange (LMX). This study used the 7-item measurement scale adapted from Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) to measure LMX. The sample item was “I would characterize my working relationship with my supervisor as extremely effective.” Cronbach's alpha of this variable was .87.

Perceived Role Breadth. As in Studies 1.1 and 1.2, perceived role breadth was measured using the measurement scale adapted from the measurement of positive work role behaviors (Griffin et al., 2007). The Cronbach's alphas of nine dimensions of perceived role breadth ranged from .81 to .83. The nine-factor model ($\chi^2_{(288)} = 576.26, p < .01, CFI = .98, TLI = .97, RMSEA = .04, SRMR = .02$) fitted the data better than two three-factor models, the one-factor model, and the second-order factor model. Perceived role breadth was operationalized by calculating the average of the nine dimensions.

Perceived Overqualification (SPOQ). As in Studies 1.2 and 2.2, I used the 9-item measurement scale (Maynard et al., 2006; $\alpha = .88$).

Role-Based Perceived Overqualification (RBPOQ). I used the 7-item measurement scale adapted in Study 2.1b ($\alpha = .92$).

Affective commitment. As in Study 2.2, I used the 6-item scale adapted from Meyer et al. (1993; $\alpha = .88$).

Turnover Intentions. As in Study 2.2, I used the 3-item scale adapted from Cammann et al. (1983; $\alpha = .89$).

Control Variables. As in Study 1.2, this study controlled for employees' gender (0 = *male*, 1 = *female*), age, education (1 = *primary school*, 2 = *junior school*, 3 = *high school or equivalent*, 4 = *junior college*, 5 = *bachelor's degree*, 6 = *master's degree*, 7 = *doctorate degree*), and organizational tenure. Notably, excluding these control variables did not change the pattern of significance. For completeness, this study presents the results with control variables included.

5.2.3 Analytical Strategy

In the data, employees were nested within departments; 37 of 132 departments were nested within 15 firms, and 95 of 132 departments were from 95 firms. Before aggregating supervisors' ratings of HPWS in 15 firms to the firm level, I first calculated ICC (1) and ICC (2) for HPWS and the degree of agreement (r_{wg}) for each dimension of HPWS. The acceptable cutoff values were .10 for ICC (1), .50 for ICC (2), and .70 for r_{wg} , respectively (James et al., 1984; LeBreton & Senter, 2008). The ICC (1) and ICC (2) for HPWS were .24 and .52, respectively. The median r_{wg} values for eight dimensions ranged from .80 to .95. The mean r_{wg} values for eight dimensions ranged from .66 to .90. Thus, the aggregation of supervisors' ratings of HPWS was appropriate. Although the r_{wg} values for eight dimensions in some groups were below .70, I conducted analyses after deleting the firms with low r_{wg} values, and the results remained identical.

I then ran a three-level null model to examine the appropriateness of multilevel modeling. The results showed there were significant variances at both individual and firm levels for perceived role breadth, SPOQ, RBPOQ, affective commitment, and turnover intentions. The percentages of their variances at the individual level ranged from 55.17% to 74.04%, and the percentages of their variances at the firm level ranged from 22.68% to 37.52%. Although the percentages of their variances at the department level were low, there was significant department-level variance for RBPOQ.⁹ Thus, I conducted multilevel path analyses in Mplus 8.3 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). At Level 1 (individual level), I modeled the effect of LMX on perceived role breadth, the effects of perceived role breadth on overqualification (i.e., SPOQ and RBPOQ), and the effects of overqualification on dependent variables (i.e., affective commitment and turnover intentions) as fixed. I centered LMX at the department-level means to remove the variance at the department level. At Level 2 (department level), I controlled for the variances of perceived role breadth, overqualification, and dependent variables. At Level 3 (firm level), I estimated the effect of HPWS on perceived role breadth, the effects of perceived role breadth on overqualification, and the effects of overqualification on dependent variables. To estimate the indirect effects, I used the Monte Carlo method with 20,000 iterations at a 95% confidence interval (Preacher & Selig, 2012) in R Studio 4.0.3.

5.2.4 Results

Confirmatory Factor Analyses. To examine discriminant validity, I conducted confirmatory factor analyses on the key variables in Mplus version 8.3

⁹ I conducted two-level analyses (i.e., individual level and firm level) but ignored the department level; the results were identical.

(LMX, SPOQ, RBPOQ, affective commitment, and turnover intentions). The results showed that the hypothesized model fitted the data significantly better than any alternative models ($\chi^2_{(80)} = 273.72, p < .001, CFI = .97, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .04$; see Table 16), supporting the discriminant validity of the constructs.

Hypotheses Testing. Table 17 presents the descriptive statistics, internal consistency reliabilities, and bivariate correlations. As shown in Table 18, perceived role breadth was not significantly related to RBPOQ ($\beta = -.03, SE = .06, p = .612$). Thus, Hypothesis 5 was not supported. RBPOQ was positively related to turnover intentions ($\beta = .32, SE = .06, p < .001$).¹⁰ However, RBPOQ was not significantly related to affective commitment ($\beta = -.06, SE = .05, p = .238$). Thus, Hypothesis 6 was partially supported.

HPWS were positively related to perceived role breadth ($\beta = .29, SE = .06, p < .001$), thus supporting Hypothesis 9. However, the indirect effect of HPWS on RBPOQ via perceived role breadth was not significant (estimate = .045, SE = .082, 95% CI [-.110, .211]). The serial indirect effects of HPWS on affective commitment (estimate = -.008, SE = .020, 95% CI [-.056, .027]) and turnover intentions (estimate = .047, SE = .091, 95% CI [-.125, .252]) via perceived role breadth and RBPOQ were also not significant. Thus, Hypotheses 10 and 11 were not supported.

Consistent with Hypothesis 12, LMX ($\beta = .11, SE = .04, p = .011$) was positively related to perceived role breadth. The indirect effect of LMX on RBPOQ via perceived role breadth was not significant (estimate = -.003, SE

¹⁰ The results had similar significant patterns at the individual and firm levels. I reported the results at the individual level here.

= .007, 95% CI [-.020, .010]). The serial indirect effects of LMX on affective commitment (estimate = .0002, SE = .001, 95% CI [-.001, .002]) and turnover intentions (estimate = -.001, SE = .002, 95% CI [-.006, .004]) via perceived role breadth and RBPOQ were also not significant. Therefore, Hypotheses 13 and 14 were not supported.

Supplementary Analyses. I compared the effect of perceived role breadth on RBPOQ with its effect on SPOQ. As shown in Table 18, the results showed that perceived role breadth was also not significantly related to SPOQ ($\beta = -.04$, $SE = .05$, $p = .506$). The effect of perceived role breadth on RBPOQ was not significantly stronger than its effect on SPOQ (*difference* = .01, $SE = .05$, $p = .926$).

I also compared the effects of RBPOQ on affective commitment and turnover intentions with the effects of SPOQ. SPOQ was also positively related to turnover intentions ($\beta = .24$, $SE = .08$, $p = .003$). However, SPOQ was not significantly related to affective commitment ($\beta = .04$, $SE = .07$, $p = .558$). When examining their effects in one model, at the individual level, RBPOQ was positively related to turnover intentions ($\beta = .29$, $SE = .07$, $p < .001$), whereas SPOQ was not significantly related to turnover intentions ($\beta = .12$, $SE = .08$, $p = .126$). Both of them were not significantly related to affective commitment.

5.2.5 Study 3 Discussion

The results showed that HPWS and LMX had positive effects on perceived role breadth and role-based perceived overqualification had a positive effect on turnover intentions. Moreover, as in Study 2.2, when simultaneously examining the effects of SPOQ and role-based perceived overqualification on turnover intentions, at the individual level, the positive effect of role-based

perceived overqualification was significant, whereas the positive effect of SPOQ was not significant. However, the effect of perceived role breadth on role-based perceived overqualification and the effect of role-based perceived overqualification on affective commitment were not supported. I will discuss the results in the next chapter.

Table 16
Confirmatory Factor Analyses (Study 3)

Model	χ^2	<i>df</i>	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	CFI	TLI	SRMR	RMSEA
Model 1	273.72	80			.97	.96	.04	.06
Model 2	989.70	84	715.98**	4	.87	.84	.07	.12
Model 3	1651.96	84	1378.24**	4	.78	.72	.15	.16
Model 4	3236.38	89	2962.66**	9	.56	.48	.15	.22
Model 5	5812.22	90	5538.50**	10	.19	.06	.26	.29

Note. $N = 764$. Model 1 = the hypothesized model; Model 2 = model combining SPOQ and RBPOQ into one factor; Model 3 = model combining affective commitment and turnover intentions into one factor; Model 4 = model combining SPOQ, RBPOQ, affective commitment, and turnover intentions into one factor; Model 5 = model combining five variables into one factor.

** $p < .01$.

Table 17*Descriptive Statistics and Correlations Among the Variables (Study 3)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
<i>Level 1 variables</i>											
1. Gender											
2. Age	-.003										
3. Education	-.002	-.21**									
4. Organizational tenure	.02	.75**	-.17**								
5. LMX	.01	.05	-.02	.00	(.87)						
6. Perceived role breadth	.02	.05	-.02	.02	.14**						
7. SPOQ	-.004	-.03	.04	-.01	.03	-.02	(.88)				
8. RBPOQ	.03	-.01	-.004	.01	-.04	-.02	.36**	(.92)			
9. Affective commitment	-.03	.05	.004	.05	.25**	.22**	.03	-.07*	(.88)		
10. Turnover intentions	-.08*	-.03	.003	-.03	-.07	-.16**	.15**	.25**	-.24**	(.89)	
<i>Level 3 variable</i>											
11. HPWS						.42**	-.11	-.16	.17	-.22*	
Mean	.50	32.35	4.74	5.96	3.55	3.67	3.06	2.97	3.61	2.67	3.78
SD	.50	7.50	.90	6.38	.77	.65	.79	.89	.83	1.13	.65

Note. Level 1 $N = 764$; Level 3 $N = 110$. Internal consistency reliabilities appear in parentheses along the diagonal. Numbers below the diagonal are correlations at the individual level. The correlations between HPWS and Level 1 variables were calculated by aggregating Level 1 variables to the firm level.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Table 18
Multilevel Path Analyses Results (Study 3)

Predictors	PRB		SPOQ		RBPOQ		Affective Commitment					
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
<i>Level 1 (individual level)</i>												
Gender	.02	.04	.01	.05	.07	.06	-.09	.06	-.09	.06	-.09	.06
Age	.01	.004	-.004	.01	-.003	.01	.02*	.01	.02*	.01	.02*	.01
Education	-.01	.03	.04	.04	.01	.05	.04	.04	.05	.04	.04	.04
Organizational tenure	-.001	.01	.004	.01	.01	.01	-.0002	.01	-.0002	.01	.0001	.01
LMX	.11*	.04	.03	.05	-.04	.05	.24**	.05	.24**	.05	.24**	.05
Perceived role breadth (PRB)			-.04	.05	-.03	.06	.25**	.06	.25**	.05	.25**	.07
SPOQ							.04	.07			.08	.07
RBPOQ									-.06	.05	-.08	.05
<i>Level 3 (firm level)</i>												
HPWS	.29**	.06	-.24*	.11	-.20	.12	.01	.09	.03	.09	-.003	.12
Perceived role breadth (PRB)			.47	.25	.16	.27	.34	.24	.25	.24	.45	.44
SPOQ							-.23	.12			-.53	.82
RBPOQ									-.18	.15	.32	.84
Constant	2.38**	.32	2.25**	.70	3.20**	.74	2.31**	.80	2.37**	.90	1.94	1.28
R ² _{Level 1}	.02	.01	.01	.01	.01	.01	.12	.03	.12	.03	.12	.03
R ² _{Level 3}	.27	.09	.10	.09	.05	.06	.20	.15	.17	.14	.22	.19

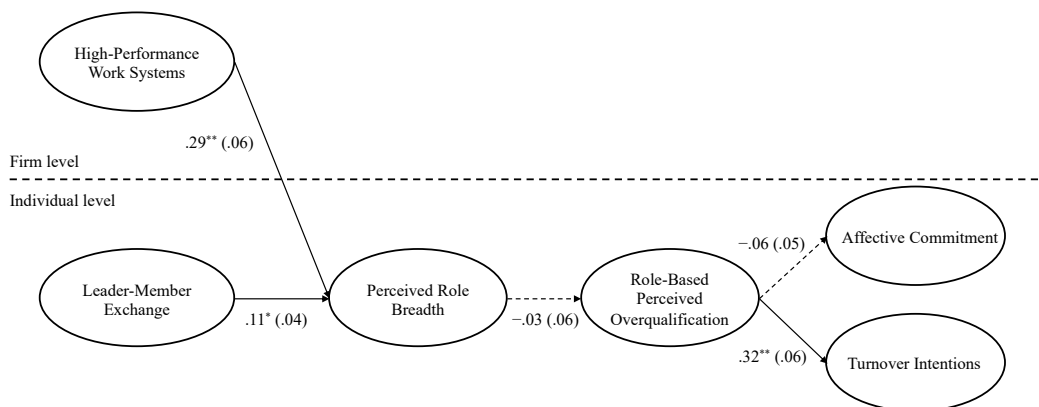
Table 18
Multilevel Path Analyses Results (Study 3, Cont.)

Predictors	Turnover Intentions					
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
<i>Level 1 (individual level)</i>						
Gender	-.13	.07	-.15*	.06	-.14*	.06
Age	-.002	.01	-.001	.01	-.001	.01
Education	.04	.05	.03	.05	.04	.05
Organizational tenure	-.02	.01	-.02	.01	-.02	.01
LMX	-.07	.06	-.05	.06	-.06	.06
Perceived role breadth (PRB)	-.24**	.07	-.24**	.07	-.24**	.07
SPOQ	.24**	.08			.12	.08
RBPOQ			.32**	.06	.29**	.07
<i>Level 3 (firm level)</i>						
HPWS	.02	.15	-.01	.14	.002	.16
Perceived role breadth (PRB)	-.61	.36	-.28	.31	-.48	.57
SPOQ	.99**	.20			.57	1.07
RBPOQ			1.05**	.34	.39	1.14
Constant	1.82	1.12	.68	1.44	1.56	1.70
R ² _{Level 1}	.09	.03	.09	.03	.13	.03
R ² _{Level 3}	.61	.19	.60	.19	.57	.20

Note. Level 1 $N = 764$; Level 3 $N = 110$. The estimates are unstandardized coefficients.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Figure 11
Results of the Third Theoretical Model (Study 3)



Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Chapter 6 Discussion

6.1 Overview of Research Findings

The findings of this thesis demonstrate that different from objective overqualification, perceived overqualification involves the comparison between employees' qualifications and qualifications utilized at work rather than qualifications required by the job and that employees' malleable work roles play an important role in shaping changeable perceived overqualification. In order to reduce perceived overqualification and address employees' negative reactions to overqualification, employers and employees who feel overqualified themselves can enlarge employees' work roles to better utilize their qualifications.

Specifically, the results of Study 1 showed that employees who feel overqualified are more likely to take the initiative to expand their work roles, and they thus have higher levels of perceived role breadth and enact broader work roles and, in turn, utilize more qualifications at work and perceive less overqualification. The findings supported that perceived overqualification is changeable rather than static. The findings also implied that qualifications utilized at work play a key role in employees' perceptions of overqualification and changeable work roles have an important impact on perceived overqualification. Further, the dominant view that perceived overqualification is grounded in the comparison between employees' qualifications and qualifications required by the job (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021) may be inaccurate. Following this, the results of Study 2.1a showed that the main measurement scales of perceived overqualification—SPOQ (Maynard et al., 2006) and perceived mismatch (Johnson & Johnson, 1996)—involve both qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized on the job, thus challenging the dominant view. The results

also provided a basis for adapting the main measurement scales to measure role-based perceived overqualification in Study 2.1b. Role-based perceived overqualification focuses on qualifications utilized at work and is defined as the extent to which the focal employee perceives that his or her qualifications are more than qualifications utilized at work.

In Study 2.2, I explored the antecedents (i.e., objective overqualification and perceived role breadth) and consequences (i.e., affective commitment and turnover intentions) of role-based perceived overqualification. The results showed that irrespective of whether they are objectively overqualified, employees who have broad work roles perceive less role-based overqualification, thus having higher affective commitment and lower turnover intentions. The results also showed that objective overqualification had a stronger positive effect on perceived overqualification measured using SPOQ than role-based perceived overqualification, whereas perceived role breadth had a stronger negative effect on role-based perceived overqualification than SPOQ. The findings supported that role-based perceived overqualification is different from perceived overqualification in previous studies. The results of Study 2.2 implied that employers and employees who feel overqualified themselves can change employees' work roles to shape their perceptions of overqualification and, in turn, affect their reactions to overqualification.

In Study 3, I further investigated how to shape employees' role-based perceived overqualification and subsequently affect their reactions to overqualification. I tested the effects of two important organizational and relational factors—HPWS and LMX—on perceived role breadth, their indirect effects on role-based perceived overqualification, and their serial indirect effects

on affective commitment and turnover intentions. The results showed that HPWS and LMX had positive effects on perceived role breadth and that role-based perceived overqualification had a positive effect on turnover intentions. However, perceived role breadth was not significantly related to either role-based perceived overqualification or SPOQ, role-based perceived overqualification and SPOQ were not significantly related to affective commitment, and the indirect effects of HPWS and LMX were also not supported. Although the results of Study 3 partially supported the third theoretical model, the findings showed that employers can enlarge employees' work roles and utilize their qualifications better by implementing HPWS and facilitating leaders and employees to develop good exchange relationships.

6.2 Theoretical Contributions

This thesis has several theoretical contributions. The core theoretical contributions of this thesis lie in challenging the dominant view—perceived overqualification is grounded in the comparison between employees' qualifications and qualifications required by the job (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021)—and adopting a role theory perspective to study changeable perceived overqualification. This thesis demonstrates how (a) focusing on qualifications utilized at work, (b) theoretically differentiating perceived overqualification from objective overqualification, (c) identifying perceived role breadth as an important theoretical antecedent of perceived overqualification, and (d) elevating the active roles of employers and employees who feel overqualified in shaping perceived overqualification help challenge the dominant view and provide a more theoretical and precise understanding of perceived overqualification. As such, this thesis generates new knowledge on how employers and employees who feel

overqualified change qualifications utilized at work and shape perceived overqualification and, in turn, affect employees' reactions to overqualification.

Specifically, this thesis demonstrates the value of theoretically differentiating perceived overqualification from objective overqualification and proposes a more theoretical conceptualization of perceived overqualification based on role theory. Previous research on perceived overqualification mostly does not distinguish between formalized jobs and malleable work roles and conflates qualifications required by the job and qualifications utilized on the job, and some studies even ignore qualifications utilized on the job when conceptualizing and defining perceived overqualification (e.g., Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Luksyte et al., 2022; Maynard et al., 2006). Scholars generally view objective overqualification as a key predictor of perceived overqualification (e.g., Arvan et al., 2019; Harari et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2017) and usually argue that the research findings of perceived overqualification can generalize to objective overqualification (Arvan et al., 2019). Based on the job–role differentiation perspective, this thesis distinguishes work roles and qualifications utilized at work from jobs and qualifications required by the job and further differentiates perceived overqualification from objective overqualification. This thesis demonstrates that different from objective overqualification, perceived overqualification captures employees' surplus qualifications relative to qualifications utilized at work (i.e., qualifications utilized to perform work roles). Accordingly, this thesis proposes a role-based conceptualization of perceived overqualification and further finds that irrespective of whether they are objectively overqualified, employees who have broad work roles can better utilize their qualifications at work and perceive less overqualification, thus having higher affective commitment and lower turnover

intentions. The findings help explain the difference between objective overqualification and perceived overqualification and the modest correlations between them in previous studies (e.g., Arvan et al., 2019; Harari et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2017). The findings also indicate that scholars and practitioners should take the influence of malleable work roles into account when applying the research findings of perceived overqualification to objective overqualification. For example, previous studies found that objectively overqualified candidates were less likely to be hired than qualified candidates because they were considered to have lower levels of firm commitment and be more likely to leave the organizations after entry to organizations (Campbell & Hahl, 2022; Galperin et al., 2020). However, based on the findings of this thesis, it is likely that objectively overqualified job candidates do not feel overqualified and have low firm commitment and high turnover intentions but are productive employees who enact broad work roles. Furthermore, the findings show that less attention paid to changeable qualifications utilized at work hinders our precise understanding of perceived overqualification and the exploration of how to shape perceived overqualification. In this thesis, I elevate the role of qualifications utilized at work and propose a role-based conceptualization of perceived overqualification. Role-based perceived overqualification is a more theoretical and clearer conceptualization without conflating changeable qualifications utilized at work with quasi-static qualifications required by the job. Developing role-based perceived overqualification can direct scholars' attention to the pivotal roles of malleable work roles and changeable qualifications utilized at work in the overqualification phenomenon and stimulate the investigation of how employees' work roles are modified to leverage employees' qualifications and reduce perceived

overqualification. This thesis also introduces a validated measure of role-based perceived overqualification that enables scholars to study perceived overqualification without conflating two different sets of qualifications.

Another contribution to the overqualification literature involves generating new knowledge on how perceived overqualification is shaped. Existing studies have mostly focused on the consequences of perceived overqualification but have relatively overlooked its antecedents (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Liao et al., 2024). Although perceived overqualification is malleable and has important effects on employees' attitudes, behaviors, and performance, we have limited knowledge of how to shape it (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021). This thesis suggests that perceived overqualification can be shaped by modifying employees' work roles. This thesis finds that employees who work in organizations that implement HPWS and have good exchange relationships with leaders have broad work roles. Further, employees who enact broad work roles utilize more qualifications at work and perceive less overqualification and, in turn, have fewer negative reactions. This thesis demonstrates that employers and employees who feel overqualified can take active roles in shaping employees' perceptions of overqualification by modifying their work roles, thus affecting their reactions to overqualification.

This thesis also contributes to the literature by extending our understanding of employees' reactions to perceived overqualification. Previous studies have usually adopted a static approach to explore the consequences of perceived overqualification and have focused on its effects on employees' attitudes, behaviors, and performance, but these studies have ignored that perceived overqualification can change and employees' different reactions to overqualification may further affect subsequent perceived overqualification

(Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Simon et al., 2019). This thesis finds that employees who feel overqualified can take the initiative to expand their work roles and increase perceived role breadth, thus utilizing more qualifications at work and reducing perceived overqualification. Thus, a contribution of this thesis is demonstrating that employees who feel overqualified can proactively change their perceptions of overqualification. Another contribution is that this thesis draws on proactive perspectives on work design to integrate the current understanding of the initiative taken by employees who feel overqualified to modify work roles and further extends our understanding of the effects of employees' initiative in modifying work roles. Previous studies have focused on one of two ways in which employees proactively modify their work roles (i.e., either job crafting or i-deals) and have explored their effects on employees' attitudes, behaviors, and performance (e.g., Jahantab et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2017; Zhang, Wang, Qian, et al. et al., 2021). This thesis focuses on employees' initiative in modifying work roles, which involves both job crafting (i.e., increasing challenging demands) and i-deals (i.e., task i-deals), and finds that employees' initiative in modifying work roles can help enlarge their work roles, thus reducing perceived overqualification.

Beyond the overqualification literature, this thesis contributes to the literature on perceived role breadth by providing a holistic operationalization of perceived role breadth. Existing studies have mostly explored perceived role breadth for specific work behaviors, but we have a limited understanding of perceived role breadth that captures the full range of work behaviors within employees' work roles. This thesis draws on the model of positive work role behaviors (Carpini et al., 2017; Griffin et al., 2007) to operationalize perceived role breadth that captures the full range of positive work role behaviors. This thesis

finds that organizational (i.e., HPWS), relational (i.e., LMX), and individual (i.e., employees' initiative in modifying work roles) factors influence perceived role breadth and perceived role breadth negatively affects perceived overqualification, thus enriching the literature on perceived role breadth and role theory.

6.3 Practical Implications

This thesis has several practical implications. First, this thesis helps answer an important and frequently asked practical question: "Should companies hire overqualified candidates?" In reality, employers and hiring managers are usually unwilling to hire overqualified job candidates (Forbes Coaches Council, 2022; Morgan, 2024). The findings of the thesis show that objectively overqualified job candidates who have broad work roles after entry to organizations can better utilize their qualifications at work. Thus, they may not feel overqualified and have negative reactions (i.e., low affective commitment and high turnover intentions). The implication is that when making hiring decisions, employers and managers should move beyond merely evaluating the match between employees' qualifications and qualifications required by the job (i.e., objective overqualification). Instead, they should take the match between employees' qualifications and qualifications utilized at work (i.e., role-based perceived overqualification) into account and think about whether overqualified job candidates can take on broad work roles and leverage their qualifications once hired (or whether they can provide overqualified job candidates with broad work roles). If overqualified job candidates can enact broad work roles, employers and managers may hire them and make the best of their qualifications to contribute to organization and team effectiveness. If not, employers and managers probably should not hire them, given the possible downside of perceived overqualification.

Second, this thesis provides employers and managers with guidance and insights about how to shape employees' perceptions of overqualification. Previously, employers and managers have usually identified employees who perceive overqualification based on objective overqualification and know little about how perceived overqualification is shaped (Erdogan et al., 2011; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Maynard et al., 2006). This thesis finds that employers and managers can shape perceived overqualification by modifying employees' work roles. The implication is that employers and managers can reduce employees' perceptions of overqualification by facilitating employees to view their work roles more broadly and by broadening their work roles. For example, organizations can implement HPWS and encourage leaders and employees to develop good relationships, and leaders can develop good exchange relationships with employees, thus increasing their perceived role breadth and enlarging their work roles.

Third, this thesis provides employees who feel overqualified with strategies to reduce their perceptions of overqualification. Although employees who feel overqualified generally have a desire to reduce perceived overqualification and change their inferior employment situations, they still have a limited knowledge of how to reduce their perceptions of overqualification beyond changing job positions via internal and external job searches. So, will employees continuously feel overqualified when it is difficult to change job positions? The findings of this thesis show that even if employees do not change job positions, they can proactively expand their work roles to reduce perceived overqualification. For example, they can proactively join new projects, ask for extra tasks, and make their work more challenging to better utilize their qualifications, thus reducing their perceptions of overqualification and changing their inferior employment situations.

6.4 Limitations and Future Directions

Like all studies, this thesis has some limitations that provide possible directions for future research. First, although the negative effect of perceived role breadth on perceived overqualification was supported by two cross-cultural samples (mainland China and the United States) in both a field study (Study 1.2) and an experiment (Study 2.2), it was not supported in Study 3. Similarly, the negative effect of perceived overqualification on affective commitment was significant in Study 2.2 and previous studies (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021), but the relationship was nonsignificant in Study 3. In Studies 1.2 and 2.2, I examined the effects at the individual level. The results of Study 1.2 showed that the key variables had no significant variances at the group level. However, the key variables had significant variances at the collective levels in Study 3, and I examined the relationships at both the individual and firm levels and controlled the variance of variables at the department level. The results of this thesis indicate that perceived overqualification sometimes emerges at the collective level. Previous studies have found that cultural, team, and individual factors (e.g., power distance, team cohesiveness, proactive personality) can affect employees' perceptions of overqualification (Alfes et al., 2016; Harari et al., 2017; Simon et al., 2019). Based on the framework of work design influences (Parker, Van DenBroeck, et al., 2017), organizational, team, and individual factors influence employees' work roles. Thus, qualifications utilized at work and perceived overqualification can emerge at both individual and collective levels. However, existing research has primarily examined perceived overqualification at the individual level, and limited studies have explored its multilevel implications (e.g., Erdogan, Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, et al., 2020; Erdogan & Bauer, 2021; Hu et

al., 2015). For example, Erdogan, Karakitapoğlu-Aygün, et al. (2020) found that at the individual level, the effect of perceived overqualification on voluntary turnover was significant, and its effect on career satisfaction was not significant, which was found to be significant in other research (Erdogan et al., 2018); at the group level, its effect on voluntary turnover was not significant, and its effect on career satisfaction was significant even though the variance of career satisfaction was small. To date, exploring the multilevel implications of perceived overqualification remains in its early stages. This thesis suggests that studying perceived overqualification and investigating the relationships among perceived overqualification, its antecedents, and consequences from a multilevel research approach may need further exploration. Future research can further explore when perceived overqualification emerges at the collective level and examine its relationships with its influencing factors and outcomes at multiple levels.

Second, this thesis proposes a role-based conceptualization of perceived overqualification, examines its effects on affective commitment and turnover intentions, compares the effects of objective overqualification and perceived role breadth on it with their effects on perceived overqualification in previous studies (i.e., perceived overqualification measured using SPOQ), and further explores the effects of HPWS and LMX on it. However, there are other influencing factors that may affect role-based perceived overqualification, and it may lead to other employees' reactions (e.g., behaviors and performance). Thus, future research can identify other antecedents and consequences of role-based perceived overqualification, thus deepening our understanding of the overqualification phenomenon. For example, future studies can further adopt role theory (Katz & Kahn, 1978) and the framework of work design influences (Parker, Van

DenBroeck, et al., 2017) to explore its influencing factors, such as organizational factors (e.g., technological uncertainty), team factors (e.g., leadership styles), relational factors (e.g., team–member exchange), and individual factors (e.g., openness to new experience). These influencing factors affect employees' work roles, thus possibly influencing role-based perceived overqualification. Future research can also draw on role theory to explore the consequences of role-based perceived overqualification. Role theory may help integrate and extend the existing research findings by explaining why perceived overqualification is a double-edged sword. The possibility of modifying employees' work roles may affect employees' reactions to perceived overqualification. When employees who feel overqualified can change their work roles, they have opportunities to utilize their surplus qualifications at work, thus contributing to individual, team, and organization effectiveness; otherwise, perceived overqualification may bring harm. Thus, future studies can explore the effects of some factors that influence employees' work roles to enrich the literature on the consequences of perceived overqualification. Job-growth mindset (Berg et al., 2023) is a potential factor that moderates the effects of perceived overqualification. When employees who feel overqualified have high levels of job-growth mindset, they think their work roles can change, and they are more likely to expand their work roles and leverage their qualifications at work, thus bringing benefits to themselves, teams, and organizations.

Besides exploring the nomological network of role-based perceived overqualification, more studies are needed to further differentiate role-based perceived overqualification from perceived overqualification in previous studies (Erdogan & Bauer, 2021) and compare their different relationships with other concepts. One possible direction is to explore their different effects on

employees' reactions. This thesis found that only the effect of role-based perceived overqualification on turnover intentions was significant at the individual level when simultaneously examining the effects of role-based perceived overqualification and perceived overqualification measured using SPOQ. The findings may imply that role-based perceived overqualification has stronger effects on employees' reactions to overqualification. Future studies may further explore their different effects on employees' reactions, such as well-being and work behaviors. In addition, given that work roles are dynamic, role-based perceived overqualification should be more dynamic than perceived overqualification in previous studies. Although the findings of both Study 1 and a prior study (Simon et al., 2019) indicate that perceived overqualification can change over time. Neither of them examined the change in perceived overqualification. Future research may adopt the latent change model or latent growth model to examine the change in perceived overqualification and compare the change in role-based perceived overqualification with that of perceived overqualification in previous studies.

Third, this thesis focuses on employees' perceived role breadth and proposes a holistic operationalization of perceived role breadth based on the model of positive work role behaviors (Griffin et al., 2007). However, there are other ways to operationalize role breadth. For example, future research can focus on a job position, conduct a work analysis to identify all possible tasks performed by employees who hold this job position, and operationalize role breadth as the number of tasks possibly performed by the focal employee (Morgeson et al., 2005). In addition, more studies are needed to validate the operationalization of perceived role breadth in this thesis and explore its nomological network. Future studies can

adopt role theory and the framework of work design influences to explore the antecedents and consequences of perceived role breadth. For example, future studies may explore the effects of different leadership styles (e.g., transactional and transformational leadership) on perceived role breadth and its effects on employees' role performance.

Last, most of the variables in this thesis were self-reported and may lead to concerns of common method bias. Given that self-rating is more accurate than other-rating in measuring employees' subjective perceptions, initiative in modifying work roles, and interpersonal relationships, which is also consistent with previous research (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Maynard et al., 2006; McAllister et al., 2007; Rosen et al., 2013; Tims et al., 2012), this thesis used self-rating. This thesis also measured predictors and outcomes at different time points to address common method bias. In addition, the confirmatory factor analyses supported the discriminant validity of the key variables, thus indicating that common method bias was not a major concern in this thesis. However, future research can test the theoretical models using multisource data.

6.5 Conclusion

Employees feel overqualified for changeable work roles rather than formalized jobs. This thesis demonstrates that perceived overqualification is changeable and is shaped by the comparison between employees' qualifications and qualifications utilized to perform work roles. This thesis suggests that employees who view more emergent behaviors and tasks as part of work roles and perform broad work roles, irrespective of whether they are objectively overqualified, utilize more qualifications at work and perceive less overqualification, thus having higher affective commitment and lower turnover

intentions. This thesis also finds that employees who feel overqualified can take the initiative to expand their work roles. To enlarge employees' work roles, leaders can build good exchange relationships with them, and organizations can implement high-performance work systems. I hope this thesis motivates scholars to further investigate how employers and employees make the best of a potentially bad but changeable situation—overqualification.

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October 2024