

Perception towards Work Non-Work Boundary Management Fit Among Teachers in Selected Secondary School

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Abstract

Due to the challenging working lifestyles, the interest on how to manage and maintain the boundary of work and non-work domain has increased. Teachers often strive to balance between work and non-work management. Lack of balance of in managing work and non-work in teaching profession will lead to low quality of life. This study aims to explore secondary school teachers' perceptions towards Work Non-Work Boundary Management Fit. This study utilized Qualitative Methods using in-depth interviews to collect data from seven informants among secondary school teachers and the data were analysed through content analysis. The aims of the study are to examine the factors of work non-work boundary management fit and identify its implications. Work life conflict resulted from the imbalance between work and non-work demands causes stress and subsequently, affects teachers' work life, health and family functioning. The findings from this study indicated that the factors of Work Non-Work Boundary Management Fit are peer support, self-autonomy, spouse, family and society support, and supportive work environment. Consequently, these factors led to positive implications for individuals, organisation, family or children as well as community. By considering individual's work, it is undeniable that non-work boundary management is important. Therefore, it is necessary to provide work non-work boundary management fit in order to achieve a good balance in work non-work life.

Keywords: Perceptions, Work Non-Work, Boundary Management Fit, Teachers

Introduction

Work non-work boundary management fit refers to an individual's psychological experience caused by the individual's boundary management preference with organisational boundary management supplies. An individual's experiences towards work non-work boundary management fit when choosing either integration or segmentation of their work and non-work domain comes from their needs. Individual that relies on integration or segmentation has high level of work non-work boundary management fit. Past researches have yet to prove whether integrating or segmenting work and non-work roles are beneficial to individual. However, both aspects have implications towards the boundaries management behavior. It depends on the

interaction between the individual boundary management preference and boundary management supplies (Kreiner, 2006). In that regard, it is of utmost importance to meet individual's boundary management need by having a "fitting" boundary management preference and boundary management supplies to achieve a more harmonious work non-work life.

According to Nippert-Eng (1996), work non-work boundary management fit refers to how individuals manage work and non-work boundary and it is a matter of their free choice. The level of managing work non-work boundary can be a predictor of an individual's well-being in life. High level of management or segmented environment will protect individuals from work-life conflict. A study by Kossek, Lautsch, and Eaton (2006) found that individuals with lower boundary management segmentation had high levels of work non-work conflict. Thus, work non-work boundary management fit is a clear indicators of an individual's attitudes, behaviour and well-being (Cable & Edwards, 2004). Individuals who effectively manage work non-work boundary management has the ability to meet their personal needs and resources in order to avoid work and non-work conflicts (Demerouti et al., 2001). Today, due to the challenging and fast-paced working lifestyles, the interest in psychological research on how to manage and maintain the boundary of work and non-work domain has increased. Generally, work boundary management theory aims to explain how individuals demarcate boundaries between work and non-work domains to achieve a quality work life balance. It has been found that individuals use collective construct boundaries (psychological and behavioral) in managing their work and non-work domain (Clark, 2000). One of the main reasons is because boundary management approach focuses on individual level to manage work and non-work domain (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2009).

Every individual has different preference to integrate or segment work and non-work domain (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Work boundary management theory may have an influence to an individual's working experience and family conflict. Individuals can manage work and non-work domain by sharpening boundaries or blurring boundaries which lead to either segmentation or integration (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000). Individuals who create, maintain and transit across boundaries try to balance work and non-work (Clark, 2000). Hence, work life balance can be achieved through segmentation or integration. Allen, Cho, and Meier (2014) state that segmentation or integration is both associated with positive and negative outcomes. Rapid role transition will lead to more life flexibility. It also affects mental effort and causes role blurry. Hence, Work Boundary Management Theory reflects on the degree of how strong or weak an individual tries to balance the demands and expectations between the boundary of work and non-work domain.

There are several factors of work non-work boundary management fit to achieve a work-life balance. First, high level organisational support will lead an individual to achieve a good work non-work boundary management fit. Organisational factor has the power to influence one's ability to manage their boundary management (Rothbard, Phillip, & Dumas, 2005). According to Carlson and Perrewé (1999), having a high level of organisational supports will lead an individual to achieve a better work non-work boundary management fit. This is because having high levels of organisational support can reduce work and non-work conflict. Thompson, Beauvais, and Lyness (1999) also add that having a good working environment or workplace that is family-friendly allows individuals to be caring towards people surrounding them and thus minimising the work and non-work conflict. Leaders, supervisors or mentors play a vital role in reducing work non-work conflict by showing good work ethics and giving positive modelling behaviors to individuals (Lapierre & Allen, 2006). To encourage conflict-free working environment and support fellow subordinates, leaders, supervisors or mentors have to be actively involved and engaged in the work non-work management (Hammer et al., 2009).

Other than that, work non-work boundary management depends on how individuals shape it based on their needs and desires. Thus, having a great autonomy in managing the boundaries of work non-work boundary will lead to work life balance. Individuals who have this advantage are able to manage their work non-work boundary which will enable them to transform their working environment to become less threatening, more rewarding and less interference towards non-work domain (Clark, 2002). Having a positive mood and responsible attitude help an individual to complete the assigned tasks responsibly and professionally. Moreover, having a good work non-work boundary management fit can strengthen good working spirit and improve job performance. Other than that, individuals who perceived good value and support from family are likely to experience a good life and job satisfaction (Michel et al., 2011).

Working environment also influences work non-work boundary management fit. Several researches show that a working environment that fit with individual's work non-work boundary management will improve mental health, have good organisational commitment and job satisfaction. It also can reduce stress and also work life conflict or issue. A good working environment allows an individual be able to manage between work and non-work demands properly and it will lead them to achieve their working desires (Kreiner, 2006). When an individual's personal sources are associated with the outcomes for themselves and the organisation, it also gives values and positive results. Cable and DeRue (2002) state that a healthy working environment, in which an organisation always gives a positive reinforcement, contributes and develops a strong bond between individuals and their organization. An example can be seen when individuals are given the option of flexible working hours. This allows them to have a sense of control which may reduce work non-work conflict.

Nonetheless, work non-work boundary management fit also has a few implications. Individuals that can manage boundaries effectively will have an effective balanced career with personal work-life demands. Previous research shows that managing work and non-work boundary can enhance well-being and reduce role conflict of individuals, teams and organisations. It can also reduce burnout, stress, mood disorders, and enhance one's mental and physical health (Kossek, 2016). Furthermore, individuals who are flexible in work non-work boundary management through meeting boundary control will have higher and better work life balance, as well as improve family lives (Chen, Powell & Greenhaus, 2009). Healthy working life will help individuals to balance their families and work domains (Russell & Bowman, 2000). Individuals who scored high on work non-work boundary management will experience a less exhausted life. In addition, high levels of boundary management will lead to lower level of depression that is also beneficial for non-work conflict (Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006). Edwards and Rothbard (1999) state that by attaining and having a high degree of work non-work boundary management or segmentation, one will be led to a better well-being. The ability to manage the borderland between work and non-work can be overlooked. Therefore, it is essential to have work non-work boundary management fit as one of the effective ways to lessen individuals' role strain or work-life imbalance.

OECD report (2013) shows that achieving balance between work and personal life is the key component to people's well-being. In this twenty-first century era, it will become a great challenge if individuals hardly adapt to the current and ever-evolving demands in the workplace. Education field, for instance, has faced a change due to the emergence of the Industrial Revolution 4.0. Under this revolution, teachers are required to change the curriculum, assessments as well as teaching and learning delivery. Due to this evolution, teachers often strive to balance between work and non-work management. Lack of balance in managing work and non-work in teaching profession leads to low quality of life which contradicts the value stipulated in the Malaysian Education Blueprint (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2018). Bogaerts et al. (2018) explains that the research on work non-work boundary

management fit has less emphasis in Malaysia and past research showed little importance between work non-work boundary management supplies and preferences. On top of that, the study on teachers' ability to balance work and personal life is still scarce. In order to achieve Malaysia aspiration to become an education hub driven by balance, focus needs to be put into improving work-life conflict that influences work life balance. As such, conducting a research on work non-work boundary management fit among teachers is highly recommended. In this regard, this study aims to explore the factors of work non-work boundary management fit and identify its implications to secondary school teacher.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative method. Seven married secondary school teachers in Bintulu participated in this study. Table 1 indicate the characteristics of informants. To ensure the study meets its research objectives, the informants were chosen through purposive sampling. The sampling allows the researchers to gather important data from specific groups (Sekaran & Bougie, 2009). A semi-structured interviewed was conducted in order to obtain important information. The informants were interviewed in Malay, a national language in Malaysia, in order to assist their understanding and obtain in-depth details. By choosing semi-structured interview, the researcher had the flexibility to ask additional important questions that were not originally included in the interview guide. This method resulted in obtaining unexpected and insightful information that was very crucial in refining and strengthening the findings.

Table 1: Characteristics of informants

Informants	Age	Gender	Highest Academic Qualification	Ethnicity	Length of Service	Number of Children	Working Spouse	NGOs Involvement
A	36	Female	Degree	Iban	5	2	Yes	Club (Society)
B	36	Female	Degree	Bidayuh	6	3	Yes	Club (Society)
C	38	Female	Degree	Iban	11	4	Yes	Club (Society)
D	32	Male	Degree	Malay	7	0	Yes	Club (Society)
E	35	Male	Degree	Malay	10	3	Yes	Religious
F	41	Female	Degree	Chinese	18	5	Yes	Club (Society)
G	36	Female	Degree	Lun Bawang	12	0	Yes	Religious

Results and Discussion

Understanding of Work Non-Work Boundary Management Fit

As shown in Figure 1, the understanding of work non-work boundary management fit is defined based upon priorities and time management or work schedule. The finding of this study is clearly supported by work boundary management theory which explains how an individual manages the border of work and non-work domain either by separating it or mixing it up in order to achieve a better work life balance. Interestingly, it was supported by past research with various individual's perspectives.

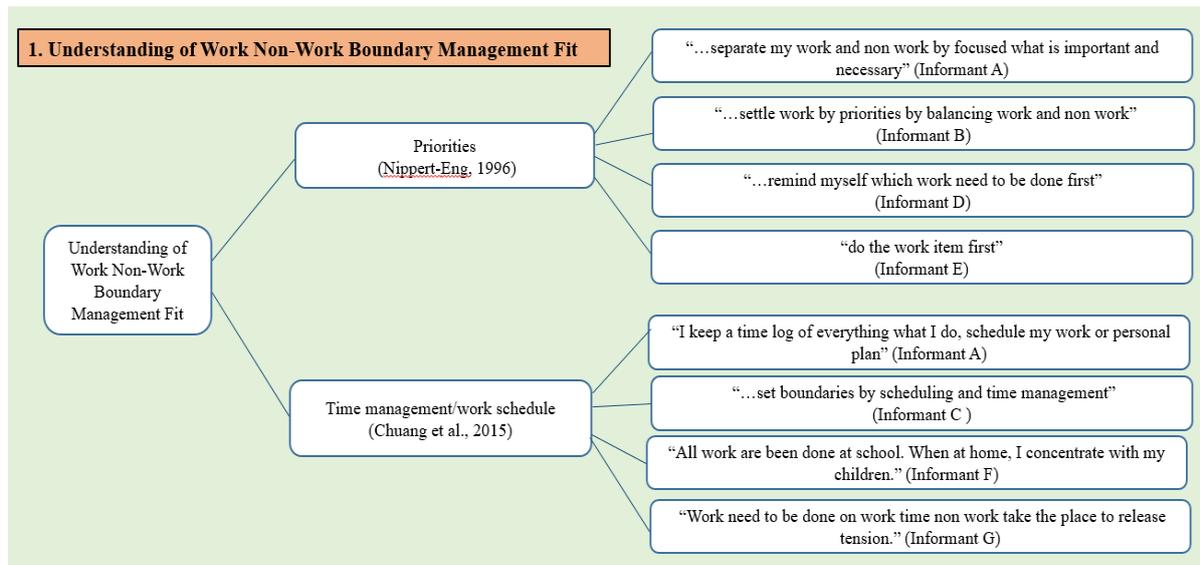


Figure 1: Understanding of Work Non-Work Boundary Management Fit

Priorities

Nippert-Eng (1996) stresses that work non-work boundary management fit is about the understanding of the ways individuals manages the boundary between work and non-work based on their choices and priorities. Based on the finding of this study, informants defined work non-work boundary management fit according to priority. They were able to understand and manage their work and non-work very well. It was done according to their own strategies by either separating or combining work and non-work in the same time but making sure all of them were done according to their priorities.

Time Management or Work Schedule

In addition, informants also defined work non-work boundary management fit as managing work and non-work using time management or work schedule. Past research conceded with these findings that an individual would have work life balance when he or she was able to manage their work and non-work domain by having time management. In the interview, most of the informants stated that they managed their work and non-work according to their personal or work plan. Good time management enabled them to manage their work and non-work at home or at the workplace. As a result, they managed to arrange their work and non-work to make sure they could balance their work and non-work.

Factors of Work Non-Work Boundary Management Fit

In this study, informants were requested to clarify the factors that influenced them in work non-work boundary management fit. The second research question was planned to obtain a rich information about what factors they thought would influence them in managing their work and non-work: combining or separating work and non-work domain. The results show that there were four factors that influenced informants in work non-work boundary management fit: support from management or peer, self-autonomy, support from spouse, family or society, and good organisation environment.

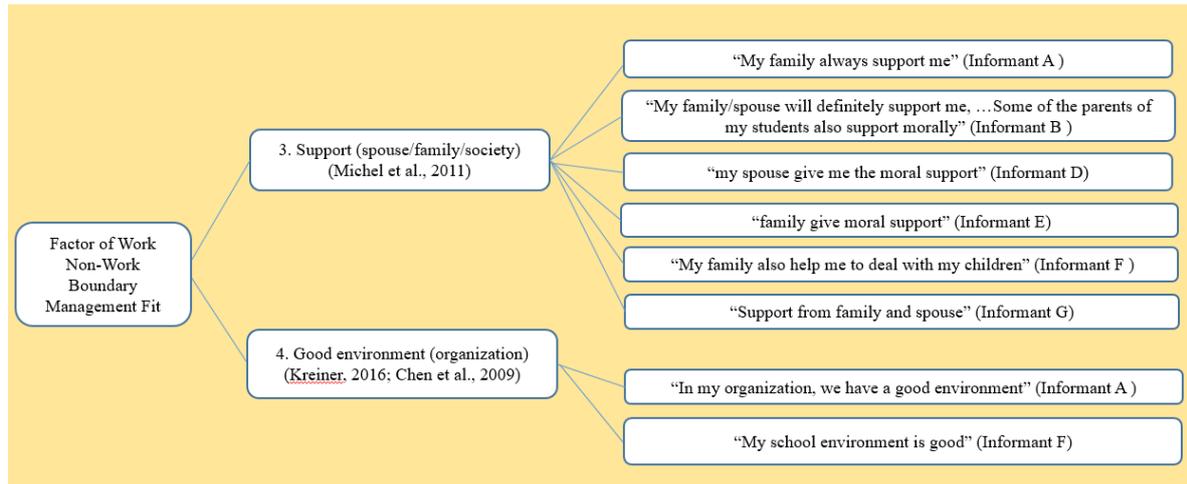


Figure 2: Factors of Work Non-Work Boundary Management Fit

Support from Management or Peer

All of the informants stated that having support from the management or peers is vital and it gives a big influence towards their work non-work boundary management fit. The findings show that informants perceived management or peer as a moral support and their tolerance would help them in balancing their work life and reducing their stress or workload at the same time. Prevalent study have shown that a high level of organisational support will influence an individual's ability to achieve a good work non-work boundary management fit (Rothbard et al., 2005). In addition, the results of this study also indicate that informants were able to manage their work and non-work domain well at schools. Healthy working culture, flexibility and supportive management and colleagues enabled them to balance their work and non-work. It was reported too that leaders who were considerate in extending the work deadlines gave the informants opportunity to deal with family matters.

Self-Autonomy

The second factor is self-autonomy. Four out of seven informants stated that having self-autonomy would help them in work non-work boundary management fit. This finding indicates that autonomy or freedom is one of the important components in helping individuals to balance their work and non-work. They also had the ability to complete their works efficiently. One of the reasons why one of the informants stated that she would finish all her works at the workplace because she wanted to spend quality time with her family. She also emphasised that she only did housechores at home. The informant defined it as a "win-win situation" in which both work and non-work domains were done at the right time and place. This is a good practice in order to balance work and non-work. Clark (2002) mentions that individuals who use autonomy wisely are able to manage work non-work boundary and reduce work non-work conflict.

Support from Spouse, Family and Society

The analysis from the interview aslo found support from spouse, family and society as one of the factors of work non-work boundary management fit. Five out of seven informants agreed that getting support from these parties gave a big influence in their work-life balance. The informants indicated that getting supports from spouse, family and society would give them confidence and strength to deal with workplace issues. This is in line with the review by Michel et al. (2011) on antecedents of work-family conflict in which individual who perceives good

value from his/her family role and support is likely to experience a good life and job satisfaction. In addition, the informants also informed that their family would help them to take care of their children when they worked. They also stated that the support from their family is vital because they have better understanding of them and their problems than their colleagues and friends, thus making problem solving easier. Besides, society such as students' parents were supportive of their works.

Good Organisation Environment

Two informants stated that good school environment did influence their work non-work management. They were fully satisfied with the schools' complete facilities and infrastructures. This factor made their job easier. They did not have to bring school works home. Clearly, a good surrounding does give good vibe to the workers. This result is similar to the findings by Kreiner (2006) and Chen et al. (2009). Good working environment allows individuals to care about the people they love and minimise the work and non-work conflict in the workplace.

Implications of Work Non-Work Boundary Management Fit

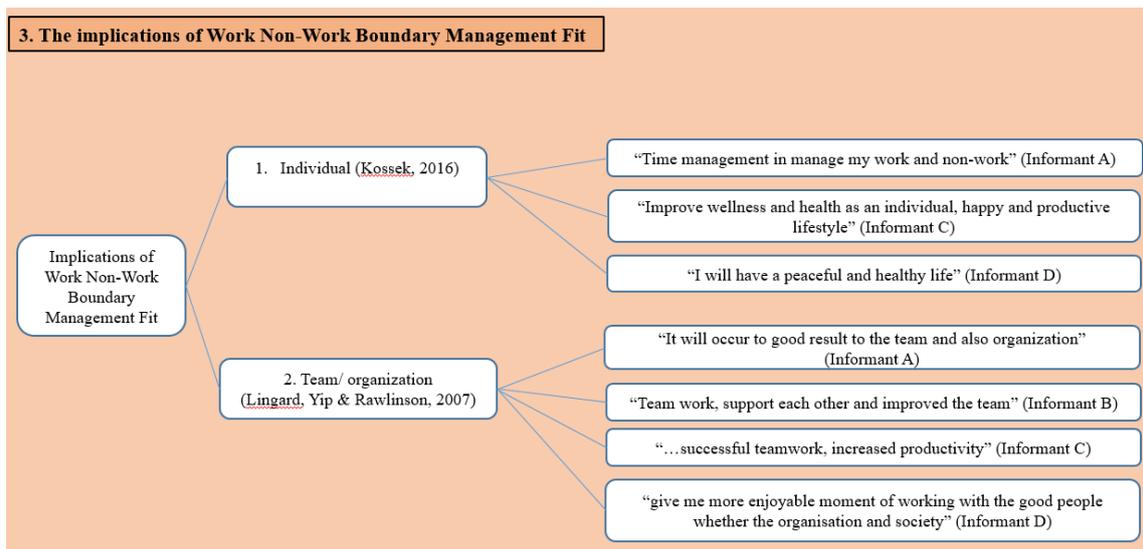


Figure 3: Implications of Work Non-Work Boundary Management Fit

Individual

Figure 3 shows the implications of work non-work boundary management fit towards the informants. They stated that work non-work boundary management fit allowed them to manage their time efficiently so that they were able to have work life balance. In addition, the informants also stated that the practices of work non-work boundary management fit could improve their wellness by having a healthy lifestyle. It can be summed up that work non-work boundary management fit allowed them to be more productive and effective. Not only that, the informants also added that having good work non-work boundary management fit helped them to reduce stress as they could plan systematic strategies to complete all the works assigned to them. This finding is paralleled with Kossek's (2016) that stated managing work non-work boundaries well provides opportunities to minimise role conflict, enhance individuals' well-beings and improve the performance of an organisation. Consequently, it will cause individuals to be physically, mentally and emotionally healthy.

Team or Organisation

Four out of seven informants stated that work non-work boundary management fit gave implications towards their team and organisation. Having a work non-work boundary management fit enabled the informants to achieve good results working with their team and thus help the schools to achieve one of their key performance indexes. Not only that, work non-work boundary management fit gave opportunity to informants to build camaraderie between former colleagues and the management team. The informants also revealed that good teamwork reduced workload and stress at the workplace. As a result, it increased their work productivity. Moreover, the informants found it enjoyable working with people from in or outside the organisation.

Family or Children

Work non-work boundary management fit is proven to be beneficial for the informants' family and children. Five out of seven informants stated that by practicing work non-work boundary management, their quality of life had improved. They were able to spend and provide quality time for their family, children and spouse. This is in line with the findings by Russell and Bowman (2000). The practices of work non-work boundary management fit enabled the informants to balance their work and non-work as they were able to have quality time with their family. They even emphasised that "family come first". This is a clear indication that no matter how important their work domain is, their family is their first priority.

Society

An effective work non-work boundary management fit will give positive outcomes to society. A good work life balance will strengthen the relationship among society through social networking. Two of the informants stated that having a work non-work boundary management fit gave them more enjoyable time working and communicating with people within and outside the organisation. One of the informants even mentioned that the practices of work non-work boundary management fit allowed him/her to help his/her children and others providing better and brighter future through having a good work life. Work non-work boundary management fit also gives positive perception of the work life to the society.

Recommendations

The study has shown how good work non-work boundary management fit enabled informants to manage their work and non-work according to their own preference and time frame. The government should ensure further implementation of such practice in every department or organisation so to reduce individual stress, encourage a healthy lifestyle and improve their work life management in order to achieve work life balance purpose. Reinforcing the factors influencing good work non-work boundary management fit through interventions and support is highly recommended. This includes encouraging schools to promote supportive management culture, cultivate healthy working environment, allow structured autonomy, engage with individuals' family members and create network with the communities in order to have continuous support. The findings of this study have several important implications for future practice. It provides better and further understanding of the knowledge about work non-work boundary management fit, factors and implications that can be a reference to future researchers, educators, policy makers, communities and students. It also deepens understanding about work non-work boundary management fit particularly in secondary school environment based on the informants' perception and definition. This research also contributes to the knowledge about factors that will influence work non-work boundary management fit in order to have a quality

work-life balance. Besides, this research shows that the practices of work non-work boundary management fit will give positive implications towards individual, team or organisation, family or children, and society. Therefore, it can be said that the practices of work non-work boundary management fit can lead to positive outcomes. It is important to raise the awareness that such practice will help individuals to attain a good work life balance. By practicing work non-work boundary management fit, an individual can achieve a quality life in terms of work or non-work domain.

Limitation of study

There are some limitations in conducting this research. This research is conducted and focus on qualitative method. The future research may conduct using both which is quantitative and qualitative method to find out to get more precise results about work non-work boundary management fit.

Conclusion

In conclusion, secondary school teachers have positive perceptions towards Work Non-Work Boundary Management Fit. The factors of Work Non-Work Boundary Management Fit are peer support, self-autonomy, spouse, family and society support, and also supportive working environment. Work non-work boundary management fit has positive implications for individuals, organisation, family, children and community. It is important to study about work non-work boundary management fit to gain deeper information and knowledge about it. It is hoped that the finding from this study may provide a clear answer how the practices of work non-work boundary management fit could be used to enhance quality of life or work life balance among school teachers.

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