EXPLORING THE EXPERIENCES OF THE SELF-EMPLOYED TELEWORKERS IN MANAGING BORDER BETWEEN WORK AND FAMILY TOWARDS A BALANCED LIFE

NAFISHAH OTHMAN

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITI UTARA MALAYSIA
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Awang Had Salleh
Graduate School
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Abstrak

Keseimbangan kerja-keluarga adalah konsep yang mana seseorang individu mampu menguruskan kerja mereka dan pada masa yang sama mencapai kepuasan berkeluarga. Walaupun kerja dan keluarga adalah domain yang berbeza tetapi setiap satunya saling mempengaruhi antara satu sama lain sama ada secara positif atau negatif. Isu keseimbangan telah diberi perhatian dalam banyak kajian tetapi masih lagi tiada penyelesaian. Jika telekerja tidak memberi impak positif terhadap keluarga dan kehidupan, maka penentangan yang lebih besar daripada pihak pekerja dapat dibuktikan. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat sedikit kajian yang menunjukkan adanya penentangan besar daripada telepekerja. Oleh kerana dapatan ini tidak konsisten, maka kajian lanjut diperlukan untuk menangani isu-isu keseimbangan dalam kalangan telepekerja. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk meneroka pengalaman telepekerja yang bekerja sendiri dan faktor yang mempengaruhi mereka dalam menguruskan sempadan antara kerja dan kehidupan keluarga supaya seimbang. Ciri-ciri sempadan dianalisis untuk memahami sifat semulajadi interaksi antara domain kerja dan domain rumah. Ciri-ciri ini juga menjelaskan sejauh mana individu berupaya mengawal sempadan antara kerja dan keluarga terhadap keseimbangan. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kualitatif ke atas kajian kes tunggal. Seramai tujuh puluh enam (76) telepekerja yang bekerja sendiri telah dipilih sebagai responden. Dalam kajian ini, tiga teknik pengumpulan data telah digunakan: 1) temubual; 2) soalan secara terbuka atas talian dan 3) pemerhatian terhadap perbincangan di dalam forum. Teknik interpretasi telah digunakan untuk menganalisis data. Hasil dapatan kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa pengurusan masa, disiplin, sokongan keluarga, motivasi dan kesabaran adalah faktor penting mempengaruhi telepekerja yang bekerja sendiri untuk mencapai keseimbangan kerja-keluarga. Kajian ini menyumbang kepada badan ilmu pengetahuan dengan mengenal pasti faktor yang diamalkan oleh telepekerja yang bekerja sendiri. Faktor kesabaran telah dikenal pasti sebagai faktor utama yang perlu ada untuk setiap telepekerja. Cadangan untuk penyelidikan selanjutnya ialah dengan melakukan kajian yang sama terhadap persekitaran kerja yang berbeza. Hal ini adalah penting untuk lebih memahami struktur kerja tanpa menimbulkan sebarang masalah keluarga dan peribadi dalam mengimbangi kerja dan keluarga, seterusnya dapat meningkatkan kualiti hidup.

Kata kunci: Telekerja, Keseimbangan kerja-keluarga, Sempadan, Bekerja sendiri.

Abstract

Work-Family Balance is a concept where an individual is able to manage his or her work and at the same time accomplish family commitments. Even though work and family are from different domains but each of these domains will influence the other domain with either positive or negative effect. The issue of balancing these two domains has received a significant share of attention in published works. Nevertheless, these issues remain unsolved. Tele-working still does not provide a positive effect on family as well as life issues. There is evidence that this is caused by a strong resentment from the teleworkers themselves. However, there are very few studies that had been done, to indicate the effect is caused by any major resentment from the teleworkers. Due to these inconsistencies, there is a need for further investigation on the issue of balancing the domains of the teleworkers. The purpose of this study is to explore the experience encountered by the self-employed teleworkers and to look into the factors that influenced them in managing the boundary to balance work and family life. The characteristics of the boundaries were analyzed, in order to understand the nature of the interactions between work and home. These characteristics were then used to explain the extent in which individuals are able to control the boundary between work and family life in attaining a balance between these two domains. This study employs a qualitative methodology, using a single case study. Seventy six (76) self-employed teleworkers were selected as respondents. In this study, three data collection techniques were used: 1) face to face interviews; 2) online open ended survey; and 3) observations of online discussion forum. As for the data analysis, the interpretive technique was used. The findings that have emerged from this study showed that factors such as time-management, discipline, family support, motivation, and patience can influence the self-employed teleworkers in their attempt to balance their work and family life. This study has contributed to the body of knowledge by identifying the factors that are practiced by the self-employed teleworkers in managing the boundary to achieve the work-family balance. The findings have also shown that patience is a key factor for the teleworkers. Recommendations for further research include the conducting of a similar study but with a different set of potential employment. This is important to better understand the working arrangement, without incurring any family and personal problems, in balancing work and family life. This can further improve the quality of work-family life.

Keywords: Teleworking, Work-family balance, Boundary, Self-employed

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The emerging trend in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) today, has enable information processing to be done almost anywhere and anytime. Therefore, this technology plays the main role in contributing to the successful of business operations. Moreover, with the existence of telecommunication's facility and sophisticated tools such as Smart phone, PDAs and others had brought the opportunity to many employees to do work anywhere and anytime or otherwise work remotely (The FactPoint Group, 2008).

There also have been changes in organizational environments, particularly with regards to alternative work arrangements such as teleworking (Jamal, 2007). Thus, globalization and present technology could enable teleworking to be successfully implemented. The concept of teleworking is known as working away from the traditional brick and mortar office at anytime and anywhere through utilizing ICT tools to link workers to their main office (Ng, 2001).

Nilles (1994a) suggested that telework refers to all work-related with the use of ICT or travelling. Qvortrup, (1998) indicated that the concept of telework is involved with the interactions to all work related activities across the distance electronically such as self-employed, freelancer, mobile worker, virtual team, home-based, outsourced or employed directly by a company.

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