A Review of Methodological Choices Relating to Work-Life Boundary Research

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With the rapid growth of information and communication technologies around the globe, now a day's people can connect with their workplaces 24/7. These developments in the world of work has blurred the boundaries between work and non-work life. This has promoted the integration of multiple life roles in everyday life, and consequently, these developments have caused many challenges and opportunities for individuals to manage their boundaries between work and non-work lives. The emerging trend of boundary management theories on work-life balance studies rightly coincides with these social and technological changes in the world of work. However, in order to uncover this phenomenon clearly, researchers need to make conscious and informed decisions when it comes to methodological choices related work life boundary research.

A methodological review was performed on work-life boundary-related studies published from the year 2010 to 2018. This review systematically selected 59 journal articles on work boundary phenomenon. Selection criteria for this review closely followed three previous systematic methodological reviews performed on work-life boundary research. Where possible, comparisons were made to integrate the findings of the current study with these prior systematic reviews.

Articles were reviewed based on methodological choices such as research design, sampling strategy, data collection, data analysis, reliability, and validity measures. Findings of the review revealed that researchers had utilised a variety of methodological stances to conduct their studies. Majority of the studies in the field have followed a quantitative approach, and most studies relating to work boundary management were field studies with a cross-sectional design. Qualitative studies in the area are primarily based on grounded theory. Significant methodological gaps were identified that could be filled by future studies. Notable suggestions were proposed relating to reliability and validity measures taken by the researchers.

Keywords: work-life boundary management, boundary theory, integration, segmentation, work-life conflict, methods