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

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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.

When the Malaysian government announced its vision to develop a Knowledge-based society and K-economy in the Eight Malaysian Plan (2001-2005), teleworking has been accepted as one of the component in the plan. Several community projects have been implemented as initiatives of teleworking. In September 2008, the Ministry of Energy, Water and Communications (now known as the Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture) working together with Telekom Malaysia (TM) in their agreement on the Public-Private Partnership had launched phase 1 of the national High-Speed Broadband (HSBB) initiative. The agreement effectively brings Malaysians a leap closer to entering an era of teleworking, digital homes and tele-health (Suruhanjaya Komunikasi dan Multimedia Malaysia (SKMM), 2010).

A successful teleworking project that was implemented under the Ministry of Public Works in Decemberr 2009 is a pilot project where thirty-nine (39) draftsmen from Public Works Department (JKR) have been selected to work from home for three months ("Works Ministry launches three month work-from-home pilot project", 2009). The implementation of the project had positively increased the staffs' productivity has by 100% ("Works Ministry launches three month work-from-home pilot project", 2009). The staffs reported that they prefered to work from home if option given. This shows that the staffs are able to perform well while working from home. This pilot project was then continued for another three months ("Produktiviti kakitangan meningkat-JKR", 2010). However, the project was terminated due to the program was eventually terminated/not further extended due to directive of Public Service department. One of reason stated by Public Service Department was the low productivity result. In actual fact, the productivity was still above the normal target but the decline of

productivity because of lack of development projects due to the end of budget allocation (Wan Rozaini et. al, 2013)

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development had launched a programmed called eMAK (Ekonomi Menjana Aspirasi Keluarga) with the aim to provide various trainings such as ICT skills and setting up business from home (SOHO) to the low income community particularly women (Wanda, 2011). This indicates that teleworking concept can be another work options to organisations, employers and employees in Malaysia with the facilities provided by the present technology (Mustafa &Yuserrie, 2012).

Many jobs today and in future will be and can be carried out in teleworking centers or at home instead of in an office building. In addition, it could draw up interest among young workers especially when these young generations are more interested on jobs that have the flexibility for them to work and at the same time allow them to take care of their families (Spiro, 2006). Previous studies found that the most consistent individual's benefit among the teleworkers is job satisfaction (Igbaria & Guimaraes, 1999; Tremblay, 2002; Manochehri & Pinkerton, 2003; Jamal, 2007). They become more productive while working at home due to the feeling of less office pressure (Hill, Miller, & Weiner, 1998).

Others benefits may include increased opportunities and choices (e.g. taking care elderly family members or disabled as well as children), ease of mind (e.g. structure their work activities at any time they want), improved quality of life and the elimination of commuting to offices (Shamir & Solomon, 1985; Hill et al., 1998;

Tietze, 2002). The teleworkers will also have the freedom of organizing their work and family activities according to their needs. In addition, damaging situations such as the 911 tragedies, SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) virus, anthrax and terrorism, which contribute to the psychological effect to the individuals to travel safely to their various destinations, can be reduced.

However, all the benefits that mentioned earlier are from the perspectives of employees or teleworkers. It should be noted that teleworking may not be suitable to some people (Gray, Hodson, & Gordon, 1993). Therefore, the selection of workers, type of job is also important in determining the successful of teleworking program (Spinks & Wood, 1996). The teleworkers must have appropriate personal qualities that allow them to manage and negotiate conflicting work and family activities in order to attain balance (Thatcher & Zhu, 2006).

In the Malaysian environment, the majority of the organizations do not officially recognize an individual to work based on teleworking concept (Karia, Zainuddin, & Asaari, 2003; Ndubisi & Kahraman, 2005; Haitham & Wan Rozaini, 2005; Rafidah et. al (2006). Among the reasons that contribute to the reluctance of the organizations to adopt teleworking are security issues, performance control and career advancement. In relation to performance control, according to Davis (2011), the most common fear of managers who manage teleworkers is loss of control over their subordinate's daily job activities. Another concern is regarding to the management trust, as reported by a Public Relation Manager from Yayasan Kemajuan Sosial Malaysia (YKSM) stated that, "our employers still prefer to see their workers do work face to face. They are still do not believe that work can be

done remotely via online without the employee traveling to work place" (http:// .tcenter.com.my/vots/tcenter-newsletter.pdf.).

In order to make teleworking viable, it is therefore important to look at the ability of teleworkers in managing their work at home to meet the management expectation. Individuals who are able to manage their work and family while working at home can become a successful teleworker (Gurstein, 1996; Thatcher & Zhu, 2006). In relation to that teleworking can be accepted by the management as another work option to their employees with respect to the selection of the right person, type of job and other related issues. Thus, the traditional modes of control, such as onsite supervision, "are no longer necessary for effective management" of employees and in addition the latest developments in technology make remote work feasible (Baruch, 2000).

Researchers had also identified conflicts between paid work and family roles as a major problem for teleworkers (Felstead & Jewson, 2000). For example, teleworkers may have difficulties in separating their work and family activities, which sometimes may be problematic. Conflict arises when teleworkers have to fulfill the demands of work (e.g. completing a task) and at the same time family obligations (e.g. taking care of sick children or children with disabilities) (Carlson, Kacmar, & Williams, 2000; eHomemakers, 2003). The balancing of these multiple roles is known as work-family balance.

The work-family balance refers to individual are in control on their work and family life as well as leading them to be able to enjoy the quality of life (The Work

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Foundation, 2005). Balancing these multiple roles has become a critical challenge to many working individuals (Akdere, 2006). The failure to balance these roles may result in serious and undesired life events such as marriage breakdowns, social problems and ill health (Dowse & Underwood, 2001). It is reported that that when employees experienced conflict between work and family roles, they also experienced greater job dissatisfaction, fatigue and lower life satisfaction (Frone, Russel, & Cooper, 1992; Edwards & Rothabard, 2000).

Nevertheless, there are positive impacts on work-family balance to the teleworkers (Eaton, 2003; Kurland & Bailey, 1999). For instance, individuals are able to carry their work and at the same time spend time with their families. This gives them the opportunity to have more control over their children's life (eHomemakers, 2003). Even though work-family balance can be achieved in the teleworking environment, it should be done carefully to ensure that individual is capable to control and manage his or her work and family needs (eHomemakers, 2003).

Both work and family are fundamental to one's life (Akdere, 2006); Therefore, it is important for men and women to harmonize their working and family life especially for those who are working from home (Tan-Solano & Kleiner, 2001). Similarly, it is important for family life practitioners to be able to offer effective strategies to teleworkers (Wiley, Branscomb, & Wang, 2007). Finding the balance can help to improve the teleworker's well-being as well as his or her work outcomes (Standen, Lamond, & Daniels, 1999). One of the widely adopted alternatives to attain the work-family balance is through managing the border between work and family activities (Hall & Richter, 1988; Ahrentzen, 1990; Clark, 2000; Kowalski &

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Swanson, 2005; Matthews, 2007). The general aim of this research is to explore the experiences of Malaysian teleworkers by examining their practices in managing the border between work and family activities in order to achieve work-family balance.

The focus of this study is on the eHomemakers Malaysia - a cyber-community network that promotes working from home, teleworking and the running of Small Office and Home Office (SOHO) businesses through the utilization of ICT. eHomemakers is a project that was developed under the Demonstrator Application Grant Scheme (DAGS) from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation Malaysia (MOSTI) and is managed by the National Information Technology Council (NITC). Today, eHomemakers comprise of men and women bound together through an interactive portal, www.ehomemakers.net.

1.2 Problem Statement

Some researchers argued that teleworking is not the ideal solution for work-family balance (Duxbury, Higgins, & Mills, 1992; Hill et al., 1998; Kurland & Bailey, 1999 Baruch, 2000; Jamal, 2007). Teleworkers struggled to deal with blurring boundaries between work and home life although they are satisfied with the flexibility and control of working at home (e.g. individual has difficulty in separating work activities and family activities) (Hill et al., 1998; Igbaria & Guimaraes, 1999; Sullivan & Lewis, 2001; eHomemakers, 2003; Desrochers, Hilton, & Larwood, 2005; Tietze & Musson, 2005). Teleworking removes the physical separation between work and family roles, thus making it potentially more difficult to maintain a boundary between these roles. As a result, individuals tend to work longer hours

and may experience greater stress which will then lead to work-family imbalance (Desrochers et al., 2005).

The time spend with families is deprived when an individuals working on long hours (Ammons & Markham, 2004). If individuals were to perform multiple roles at the same time, work-family conflict will occur (Carlson et al., 2000). Therefore, individuals feel that it is very difficult for them to establish their multiple roles when working from home. The permeability of work-family boundaries is increased by using the ICT because it provide means to access individuals at anytime and anywhere which will make the boundaries of work and family increasingly blurred (Nippert-Eng, 1996; Lewis & Cooper, 1999). This creates impact on individuals and families by encouraging conditions such as overload and isolation, which may lead to greater stress (Baines & Gelder, 2003; Chelsey, 2005). Combining work and family may be problematic because it requires flexibility of the work role and increased permeability to home obligations as individuals may spend more and more time to do housework activities which may have negative impact on their job performance (Ahrentzen, 1990; Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Golden, Veiga, & Simsek, 2006; Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006; Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2006).

Distraction from family members often occurs while working at home because individuals are assumed to be available to visit, to run any family errands and to conduct household activities (eHomemakers, 2003). Children especially, do not perceive a dividing line of work and play when they see their parents at home all the

time (Tan-Solano & Kleiner, 2001). Each of these conflicting roles forced demand on time, energy and commitment, which eventually resulted in work-family conflict (Edwards & Rothabard, 2000). Bringing work to home can also interfere with home life because it becomes difficult to set a side work and have family activities (Desrochers et al., 2005). Figure 1.1 shows the conflicts between work and family domain towards work-family balance.
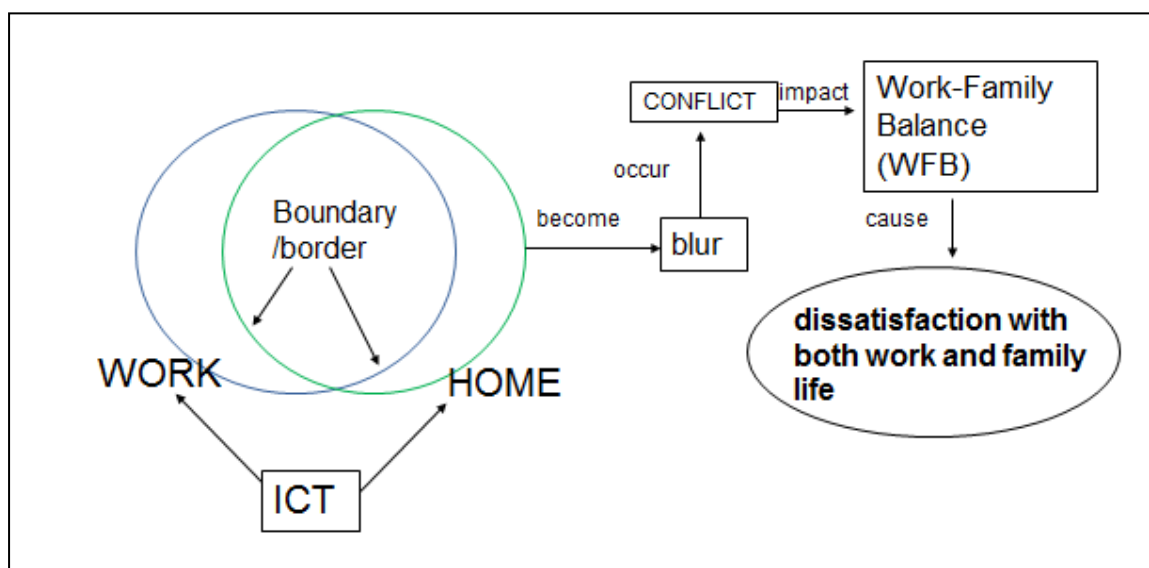
Figure 1.1: The conflicts between work and family domain towards work-family balance.

The problem of blurring boundaries can be minimized by structuring the working time and space (Ahrentzen, 1990; Salazar, 2001). To prevent their home from becoming a workplace, individuals are advised to work only at certain times and in certain places in the house to avoid interference (Ahrentzen, 1990; Nippert-Eng, 1996; Kossek, Noe & DeMarr, 1999; Salazar, 2001). In other word, the teleworkers should not be doing family activities while working and vice versa (e.g. provide space or room for office use only, phone off, work when no one else is home, etc.) (Nippert-Eng, 1996; Kossek, Noe & DeMarr, 1999). Nonetheless, due to the

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difficulty in time shifting between roles, there is a bigger potential for work-family boundaries to erode and for interruptions to take place (Ashforth et al., 2000). When these issues cannot be resolved, the merging of roles, space and time can cause disruption to both work and family life (Mahmood, 2002). Therefore, it is essential to find solutions so that individuals could handle their work and family activities in ensuring the achievement of work-family balance.

The research findings regarding the effect of telework on family life issues (such as quality of work and non-work life, and balancing work and family life) have been inconsistent (Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Sinha & Monroe, 2006). Rau & Hyland (2002) recommended that teleworking can lessen work-family conflict by giving the chance for individuals to accomplish the demands between work and family life. However, some researchers have reported that greater conflict will arise while individual teleworks because of additional family demands resulting from greater proximity and accessibility (Igbaria.&.Guimaraes, 1999; Kurland & Bailey, 1999). Furthermore, Hill et al., (1998) and Jamal (2007) found that teleworking has no effect on work-family balance. Figure 1.2 shows inconsistent finding for Teleworking towards Work-Family Balance (WFB). Due to these inconsistencies, Sinha & Monroe (2006) suggest that there is a need for further investigation on the balance issues among the teleworkers. Therefore, this study will further explore the experiences of teleworker in managing the border between work and family activities in order to attain balance.
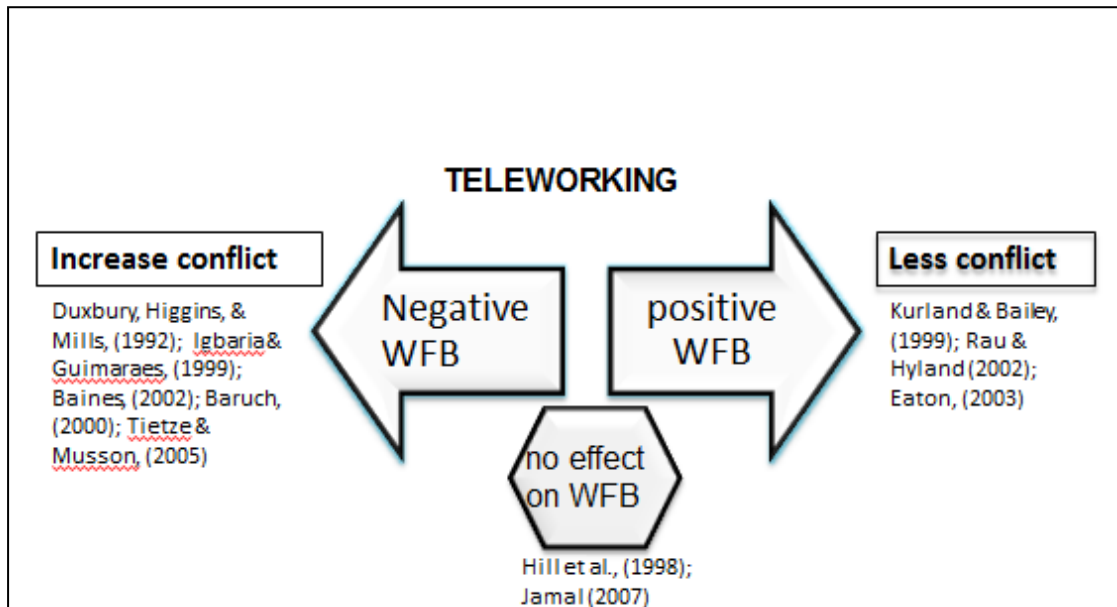
Figure 1.2: Inconsistent finding for Teleworking towards Work-Family Balance (WFB)

In exploring the experiences of the teleworkers, this study will identify the factors that influence them in balancing work and family life. In addition, an investigation on how the teleworker manage and negotiate the work and family border will also be done. In particular, the research will explore on how the teleworkers develop their practices in balancing their work and family demands based on the theory of work-family border proposed by Clark (2000). This theory explains how individuals manage and negotiate the work and family spheres and the borders between them in order to attain balance. Furthermore, this theory addresses how these boundaries divide times, places and people that are associated with work versus family.

1.2.1 Research Questions and Research Objectives

The research questions of this study are:

a. What are the factors that influence teleworker in managing border between work and family domain to attain balance?

b. How does a teleworker manage the border between work and family domain to attain work-family balance?

The objective of this study is to:

a. identify the factors that influence teleworker in managing border between work and family domain in balancing work and family life

b. to identify the practices in managing border between work and family domain in balancing work and family life

1.3 Scope of the Study

The scope of the study focuses only on a single case study. The individuals involved in this study are from the Malaysia eHomemakers group. This community is an example of a successful implementation of the home office concept (Ministry of Women Family and Community Development, 2004). This group comprises of housewives and home workers who have opted to work from home. They are actively promotes teleworking concept by organizing programs such as forums, and conferences to encourage people to work from home.

In 2005, they won the Gender and ICT (GICT) Awards sponsored by the Association for Progressive Communications Women's Networking Support Programme and the Global Knowledge Partnership as recognition to their contributions in promoting the concept of teleworking especially for women. The GICT Awards is supported by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Department of International Development, United Kingdom (http://www.ehomemakers.net, 2007).

The reason for selecting the eHomemaker's group is because they have been practicing this teleworking mode of work starting from 1998. Therefore, they should have more experience in managing their work and family life.

1.4 Significance of the study

People is forms one of the factors in the successful implementation of a computer system (Keen, 1981). Teleworking is the result of the implementation of a computer system meant for a community. Thus, this study is looking at the experience of teleworkers in balancing their work and family life. Even though the previous research findings have provided much knowledge on work-family balance, the scope only focuses on developed countries such as United States, Canada and United Kingdom (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 2005). In contrast, there are limited studies that address the existence of work-family balance in the developing countries especially among teleworkers. Particularly in Malaysia, to the researcher's knowledge, research that focuses specifically on the managing border among teleworkers has not being carried out. Therefore, the result of this study could expand the circle of knowledge on work-family linkages.

By understanding of this new way of working, it will help individuals and interested parties (e.g. self-employed people) to success in business and personal goals. In another word, work-family balance can be achieved. This study shows that teleworking is viable in Malaysia whereby those who have already adopted the concept proved to be successful in their work or business. This study further the research done by Mustafa & Yuserrie (2012) suggests that teleworking concept can

be implemented in Malaysian environment. Their study shows that Malaysian employees are already acknowledge and ready towards this concept wherreas, this study provides the practices of working used by the teleworkers and the factors that influence them in managing the border between work and family life that enable teleworkers to balance work and family life. By examining the experiences of teleworkers, it helps to improve our understanding on the characteristics that are vital for the survival of virtual employees or teleworkers. In addition, this study may also contribute in creating lessons learnt from the work experiences from individuals who telework and would provide insight to those who like to opted for this style of working. However, there is a need to provide a proper plan before implementing teleworking program to ensure that the benefit of this program could be shared by all related parties.

In the year 2007, statistics show that 55% of women are graduated from all Malaysian Higher Institutions (http://www.mohe.gov.my/web_statistik/statistik._2008_05/indikator_6-1.pdf). Most women will start working in the society after their graduation. However, according to Bank World Report up to 2011, the rate of Malaysian women participation in labor force was 47.9%, that still below the national average of East Asia Pacific countries ("55% pekerja wanita di Malaysia menjelang 2015", 2012). This is may be due to the impact of the global economic crisis ("55% pekerja wanita di Malaysia menjelang 2015", 2012) but may also because of they getting married, have to attend to child rearing and to take care elderly or the special needs (Shioya, 2000; Kaur, 2004). It is hoped that teleworking can become an opportunity to retain them in which government has targeted to

achieve 55% rate of women in labor force in the year 2015 ("55% pekerja wanita di Malaysia menjelang 2015", 2012). Indirectly, this helps to contribute to the labour market in the country and improve the nation's economy. This is another government's initiatives to help the nation to achieve Vision 2020 in becoming a high income society.

It is also consistent with the government's policy regarding on the principles of granting the improvement of existing facilities through Life Balance and Career Programme which was introduced to the implementation of policies on working from home as stated in the New Civil Service Remuneration Circular (SBPA) (JPA, 2011). In general, telework is treated as a new way of nationwide strategic survival of an organization compared to the conventional rigid organizational work culture that is fast becoming outdated (Silver, 2010).

1.5 Summary of the Thesis Structure

The current chapter presents an introduction to the topic and the research overview. The literature review and the research theoretical framework is presented in Chapter Two. The details of the research methodology using qualitative research method are presented in Chapter Three. The research design using a single case study together with a variety of data collection procedures and hermeneutic-interpretive data analysis are also explained. Chapter Four described the findings of this study. Chapter Five discussed the theoretical and practical contributions of the study. The chapter also outlined the limitations of the study and suggested some possible areas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of relevant research on teleworking regarding work-family issues and provides theoretical support for the research questions of this study. Section 2.2 presents the historical background of telework, conceptual definition of telework, types of telework, research related to teleworking in developed countries and the teleworking concept in a Malaysian environment. Section 2.3 will review previous research related to work-family balance, the definition of work-family balance, the need to study border management between work and family domain. Finally, Section 2.4 will discuss the theories related to work-family balance and the theoretical frameworks that will be used in this research.

2.2 The Historical Background of Teleworking

According to Vora & Mahmassani (2002), the concept of teleworking came from the field of automation, referring to the *electronic homeworker*. Teleworking research emerged during the oil crisis of the early 1970s, and concentrated on technological assessments and telecommunications penetration forecast with the primary objective of identifying ways of saving energy (Huws, Korte, & Robinson, 1990). The catalyst for the teleworking or telecommuting research is Jack Nilles, now an authority on telework (Ellison, 1999).

Although the development of teleworking started in the 1970s, the number of teleworkers was initially very low due to: a combination of technological limits and high costs in ICT at that time; companies reluctant; and union opposition (Perez, Sanchez, Carnicer, & Jimenez, 2004). In the early 1990s, the issues of teleworking arise again. The topic of discussion involved with the issues and challenges in the teleworking environment such as teleworking characteristics, problems faced by the teleworkers, various perspectives in evaluating the phenomenon as a solution to workers, and etc. (Pyoria, 2003). Toffler (1980) suggested that:

> *"The information age could shift literally millions of jobs out of the factories and offices into which the Industrial Revolution swept them and right back to where they came from originally: the home".*

Teleworking or Telecommuting has found renewed popularity (in order to reduce commuting, balance work & family, and increased productivity) (Perez et al., 2004) and there are significant numbers of employees involved in teleworking around the globe (Baruch & Nicholson, 1997). The governments from several countries have been promoting teleworking within their agencies. Table 1 shows the countries in which their governments support telework initiatives (The FactPoint Group, 2008)

Table 2.1: Global Governments that Encourage Teleworking

Adopted from: The FactPoint Group (2008)

European Union	4.5 million Teleworkers in 2007 growing to more than 17 million employees by 2010. In 2002, the EU agreed on a framework to regulate telework areas such as employment conditions, health and safety, training and collective rights. In the UK, 39% of firms offer flexi-time.

U.S.	41% of federal employees are eligible for teleworking, but only 19% do so. In June 2008, the House of Representatives voted to require federal agencies to expand teleworking.
Japan	Offers tax breaks to companies that allow teleworking, which has become widespread in the electronics industry. Matsushita Electric Industrial Co has 3,000 working from home. At NEC Corp., 20,000 employees telework one day a week.
Thailand	Starting in July 2008, more than 40% of staffers in a Finance Ministry unit are eligible to work at home one day a week.
Singapore	Started a fund to help companies to implement work-life or family-friendly work practices such as telework.

2.2.1 Telework Definition

Ellison (1999) states that the definitions of teleworking are many and varied. They are dynamic, as they reflect the changes that take place in society and technology and are often used to encompass a number of different styles of work. For example, it includes people working at home (such as programmers), people working from home (such as salespeople), and people working at work centers (such as telecottages and satellite offices) (Ellison, 1999). Other terms commonly used in place of teleworking are telecommuting, networking, remote working, flexible working, electronic homeworking and e-work (Gray et al., 1993; Baruch & Smith, 2002; Wilson & Greenhill, 2004; Avellino, 2005).

The term teleworking originally was coined to refer to the use of ICT to replace transportation (Nilles, 1994b). Gray et al. (1993) reported that some researchers use the terms telework and telecommuting interchangeably, often operating under the

assumption that telework is preferred by Europeans and that telecommuting is more popular in the United States. For example, Nilles (1998) defined teleworking "*as any form of substitution of information technologies (such as telecommunications and computers) for work-related travel; moving the work to the workers instead of moving the workers to work, more specifically, telecommuting is defined as periodic work out of the principal office, one or more days per week either at home, at a client's site, or in a telework center*". Furthermore, he indicated that *all telecommuters are teleworkers, but not all teleworkers are telecommuters* (JALA International Inc, 1997). For Nilles (1994), the importance of teleworking depends on the degree of its implementation such as for life-style, organizational design and etc.

Teleworking, as defined by Mokhtarian & Solomon (1994), is the use of technology to work at home or at other locations during regular working hours, instead of commuting to a workplace. It may be part-time or full-time, and need not exclusively involve computers. Mann et al. (2000) suggested that telework covers a whole range of different working patterns, including full-time at home working for one company, part-time home working for one or several companies, full-time at home but visiting the office for meetings, part- or full-time at remote or satellite sites. Avellino (2005) defined teleworkers as those home-workers who use personal computers (PCs) and/or the Internet, or mobile phones, during their work. She goes further to conclude that teleworking emphasizes reduction of work-related travel, whereas telework more broadly emphasizes the flexibility to work anywhere and anytime. The European Commission 2000 (E-Work, 2000) has defined telework as:

"…work performed by a person (employee, self-employed, homeworker) mainly or for an important part at (a) location(s) other than the traditional workplace for an employer or a client, involving the use of telecommunications and advanced information technologies as an essential and central feature of the work".

Tregaskis (2000) stated that this broad definition of teleworking includes:

-       People employed on corporate teleworking schemes;

-       People working from home with the personal agreement of their line manager but not part of a formal corporate teleworking scheme;

-       Self-employed who work from home

-       Field workers who use their home as a base;

-       Customer service staff who work in centralized telecommunications-based teams

The word 'tele' has a literal translation of 'far', or the production or recording of results at a distance (Wilson & Greenhill, 2004). The term 'telework' means the used of the telecommunications to perform work (Wilson & Greenhill, 2004). Thus, the term teleworking means 'distant working'. Teleworkers apply the technology such as telephones, fax machines, and on-line computers to accelerate their work (Mills, Wong-Ellison, Werner, & Clay, 2001). Although those who are self-employed are considered as teleworkers (Baines & Gelder, 2003), some researchers argue that teleworkers are only those who undertake work at home under an employment contract (e.g., Ellison, 1999; Pyoria, 2003).

In this study, telework is defined as working from home on a full-time or part time basis using information and communications technology (ICT) tools in performing paid work (Nilles, 1994b; Baruch, 2000; Vora & Mahmasani, 2002). This definition is chosen based on its ability to capture a wide range of activities, including work that is home-based, outsourced, self-employed, employed directly by a company, or freelance or mobile teleworkers (Qvortrup, 1998). For the purpose of this study, the researcher will use the term telework, teleworking and telecommuting interchangeably.

2.2.2 Types of Telework

Based on the European Commission's E-Work 2000 Status Report, Avellino (2005) indicated three main categories of telework: home-based telework, mobile telework and telework by self-employed. The third category is also known as Small Office/Home Office (SOHO). Initially, those who pioneered teleworking were mostly self-employed (Gray et al., 1993). Nilles (1994a) has classified telework into eleven forms:

1. **Typical home telecommuter**: Employee regularly stays at home and works, usually no more than two days per week.

2. **Full-time home telecommuter**: Employee routinely works from an at-home office or workstation within the same metropolitan area as the normal office and travels only once per week or less frequently to the normal office.

3. **Telecentre/branch telecommuter**: Employee works for reasons of convenience and travel-saving at a different facility provided by the employer but retains a desk in the normal office.

4. **Telecentre/branch workers**: People who are reassigned to working regularly and routinely from a remote telecentre or branch office somewhere else in the metropolitan area, their normal office being eliminated, downsized, or shared.

5. **Virtual office worker**: Employees who are provided with home or portable office equipment and have their normal office taken away because they spend the vast majority (typically 80% or more) of their work time in the field.

6. **Long-distance telecommuters**: People who would have a company office with the rest of their work group if they lived nearby, but instead are allowed to work from a residential location because their employer wishes to retain them. They may report to a more convenient branch office, work from a home office, or do both.

7. **Mobile professionals**: People who usually have a normal office to which they officially report to work, but who are able to work continuously with location independence because of extensive travel requirements inherent in job responsibilities. Includes traveling salespeople, field auditors, trainers, and maintenance technicians.

8. **Independent homeworkers**: Self-employed people or business owners who could have an office outside of the home, but who choose not to, and instead work routinely from an office at home.

9. **Remote regional field workers**: Employees assigned to cover a geographic area that is remote from the main office of their supervisor, so they are required to work from home, a branch office, a rented office, or some combination.

10. **Decentralized work groups**: All of the employees in a work group are reassigned to another employer-provided facility in a different part of the metropolitan area from the normal office.

11. **Remote branch/back office**: Rather than expand the staff and space at the normal office, the employer establishes a new office in a remote location. The employer transfers existing employees to live and work in the new location, or else hires new people who are already living nearby.

2.2.3 Research on Telework

Teleworkers and teleworking have been studied in a wide range of academic subject areas including sociology, organizational behavior, information science and urban planning (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). A few studies related to teleworking focused primarily on the employee's perspective, gender and its impact (Wilson & Greenhill, 2004). In another study, Gray et al. (1993) argued that people tend to choose working at home due to various possible benefits such as saving time, money and stress by not commuting; greater autonomy and flexibility of working hours; not having to wear office clothes, or being forced to socialize. In the Western world, telework arrangements had been praised as an alternative for performing work (Baruch, 2000).

In their study on information system managers, Ruppel & Howard (1998) have identified several environmental factors that relate to the diffusion of telework. Such factors include market competitiveness, competitor use of telework, industry globalization, and legislative mandates. Even though women rated the advantages of teleworking on average, those with children gave a higher rate, considering the fact of stress reduction and having more time with their families (Mokhtarian et al., 1998).

Another popular concept besides teleworking and telecommuting is the concept of the virtual office. Advocates for Remote Employment and the Virtual Office (A.R.E.V.O., 1996) had defined the virtual office as an operational domain of any business or organization whose work force includes a significant proportion of remote workers. On the other hand, Goldman et al., (1995) described a virtual company as one company where complementary resources exist in a number of cooperating companies and are left in place, but are integrated to support a particular product effort for as long as it is viable to do so. Resources are selectively allocated to the virtual company if they are underutilized or they can be profitably utilized there more than in a home-based company.

If organizations choose to implement this new working concept of teleworking and virtual offices, a new working structure should be considered. This new working structure is the adoption of flexible work arrangements. In general, a flexible work arrangement refers to an employee's ability to adjust his or her work time or workplace to his or her personal needs (Smart Valley Inc, 1994). Telework has been

practiced in private and government sectors in many countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Singapore, and Japan, since a very long time ago.

Evidence from the literature revealed that strategic use of ICT enables a new and flexible concept of working anywhere at any time. Ninety-one percent of workers surveyed said they are interested in telework, and 61 percent believe that technology can help them fully replace face-to-face meetings (PR Newswire, 2011). Based on a report by the International Telework Association and Council (ITAC), approximately 28 million people in the USA had opted to telework in 2001 (Kowalski & Swanson, 2005). The number increased from the year 1999, when around 19.6 million Americans teleworked (Pratt, 1999).

Telework also gained its popularity, not only in the United States, but also in Canada and Europe. It is estimated that 16.2 million, or 10.8 percent, of the entire European workforce will be engaged in some type of teleworking by 2005 (Inno Visions Canada, 2003). In 1999, the number of regular teleworkers as a percentage of the labor workforce was 10.8 percent in Finland, 8.3 percent in the Netherlands, and 8.0 percent in Sweden (Nilles, 2000). Ruiz & Walling (2005) reported that the number of teleworkers in the United Kingdom has increased by more than 150 percent (1.5 million) since Spring 1997 to Spring 2005 with the majority of teleworkers being self-employed (62 percent). However, Ilozor & Ilozor (2002), who did a case study on IBM Australia, reported that teleworking in the Australian environment may not

readily be seen as a work option for those in the lower levels and doing repetitive work, as well as those who have a high degree of responsibility.

The literature related to the teleworking concept has enumerated several advantages that points to a win-win situation (Bray, 1999; Dobrian, 1999; Hrisak, 1999). These advantages of teleworking can be viewed from the perspective of an individual or worker, organization, and society in general. The most significant benefits of teleworking, as identified in several studies, are job satisfaction (Igbaria & Guimaraes, 1999; Tremblay, 2002), stress reduction, and increased family interaction (Nilles, 1994). Igbaria & Guimaraes (1999) stated that many of the teleworkers have less pressure and are more productive when working at home because they experienced less role conflict and role ambiguity.

The teleworkers also claimed that their work followed a very flexible pattern that enabled them to improve their work-life balance (Wilks & Billsberry, 2007). For instance, the use of a PC at home allows work activity to take place at any time of the day or night, which will eventually give the chance of teleworkers to plan their leisure times, and to balance their time between their work and family (Harpaz, 2002). A work station at home allows work activity to take place at any time of the day or night, increased by a more efficient use of technological equipment, planning of leisure time, and a balancing of other tasks that individuals fulfill in the domains of family and community (Harpaz, 2002).

In addition, the organizations can structure their operations to cut costs, maximize resources, and improve productivity (Crandal & Gao, 2005). Teleworking can open the organization's access to pools of professional candidates who were physically inaccessible in the past by hiring workers under various contractual arrangements, including overseas employees (Gibson et al., 2002). Butler et al. (2007) found that there is a positive support that teleworking can increase productivity. Most importantly, the increased productivity can be sustained over time. Teleworking can also offer new jobs creation and geographical work restructuring.as such open to more business for suburbs and rural areas (Turban, Reiner, & Potter, 2003). For the organizations, the benefits may arise from better quality of work output and attitude of workforce in addition to financial benefits (Harpaz, 2002).

As for the community, the most significant benefit of teleworking is the decreased number of benefits, such as helping to alleviate the number of vehicles on the road (Harpaz, 2002). This will consequently reduce the amount of pollution and oil consumption (Mills et al., 2001), less noise pollution, less potential for accidents, less strain on the public transportation system (Harpaz, 2002). This will also open more opportunities for hiring employees with special needs (Harpaz, 2002). In addition, teleworkers are said to be less worn out from their daily commute counterparts (Nilles, 1994). The teleworking implementation also helps in lowering the impact of crime rate, such as property crime and drug sales in residential neighborhoods, as there would be more people present during the daylight hours. For rural communities, teleworking is viewed not only as a potential strategy for economic development, but one that is environmentally friendly (Mills et. al., 2001).

Besides the benefits listed above, one of the drawbacks of teleworking is the inability of workers to effectively manage their time well at home. Others may overwork, as they feel that they can never get away from their jobs. These weaknesses showed that these employees may have problems maintaining boundaries between work and home. Other potential problems identified are increased isolation, depression, lack of space for a home office, inability to take sick days off from work, and difficulties in accessing adequate telecommunications technology to support working at home, especially in rural or small town locations where the infrastructure may not be state-of-the-art (Baruch, 2001; Harpaz, 2002; eHomemakers, 2003; Kossek, 2003; Manochehri & Pinkerton, 2003). The telework benefits by employers, employees and society can be summarized in Table 2.2.

The organizations also encounter some challenges towards teleworking. From the employer perspective, federal government agencies encounter the lack of funds to support telework infrastructure; critical information security; loss of authority to supervise employees; less top management commitment and insufficient telework policy guidance. Employees view the challenges in terms of difficulty in measuring the results of productivity and accountability that is also difficult to quantify. Table 2.3 shows the telework challenges faced by employers and employees.

Table 2.2: Benefits Gained by Employer, Employee and Society

Adopted from Kang et. al. (2012)

Employer	Employee	Society
- competitive edge with private sector(Bridgeford, 2007; Silver, 2010) - avoidance of weather and disaster disruptions (Bednarz, 2006; Koontz, 2005; Shoop, 2010; HR Specializt, 2011; GAO Reports, 2003) - business continuity despite emergencies or terrorist threat (Bednarz, 2006; Agency Group 09, 2009; GAO Reports, 2003; Shoop, 2010; Bendarz, 2008; Joice and Noll, 2008; Communications News, 2007; Walker, 2006; PA Times, 2008a, 2008b) - saving on rent (Newell, 2004) and office space (GAO Reports, 2003) - profits in flexibility, productivity and creativity (Manssour, 2003) - Use of Alternate Facilities and Telework during Disruptions (Kootz, 2006) - major decentralization in some areas that will move government services back to communities (Agency Group 09, 2008)	- Saves commuting cost (Rosenberg, 2008; Agency Group 09, 2009; Rosenberg, 2008a; Manssour, 2003; PA Times, 2008b; Gross, 2008; Bednarz, 2006) and time (GAO Reports, 2003; Ramstack, 2001) or both (PA Times, 2008a; Agency Group 09, 2001) - flexibility of work schedule (Lee and Hong, 2011; Barr, 2005; Samenow and O'Keefe, 2011) - ease in taking care of dependents like elders and children and disabled (Lee and Hong, 2011) - employees balance their responsibilities in and out of the workplace (Agency Group 09, 2009; GAO Reports, 2003) - increases worker productivity (Censer, 2011; Cooney, 2007; Bendarz, 2008; GAO Reports, 2003; Agency Group 09, 2001; PA Times, 2008b; Agency Group 09, 2008) - maintains labor-management partnership/top talent employee (Long, 2011; Telework Exchange, 2011; Agency Group 09, 2009; Joice and Noll, 2008; GAO Reports, 2003; PA Times, 2008a;2008b) - enhances employee quality of life (Kosmetatos, 2004; Newell, 2004) and boosts morale (Agency Group 09, 2001) - more work oppurtunity for disabled, elderly, housewives (Norfleet, 2010; GAO Reports, 2003; Manssour, 2003)	- reduces energy use (Bendarz, 2008) - reduces emissions and air pollution(Telework Exchange, 2011; PA Times, 2008b; Bendarz, 2008; Barr, 2004; Bednarz, 2006; Joice and Noll, 2008; GAO Reports, 2003) - cuts traffic congestion (Newell, 2004; Manssour, 2003; Communications News, 2007; Cooney, 2007; Agency Group 09, 2009; PA Times, 2008a) - the growth of telework provides new opportunities for businesses (Agency Group 09, 2008) - work possibilities and aids, social and geographic redistribution of work (Manssour, 2003) - reduction of street maintenance costs, elimination of rush time (Manssour, 2003)

Table 2.3: The Telework Challenges Faced by Employer and Employee
Adopted from Kang et. al. (2012)

Employer	Employee
- IT requirement and support (Bendarz, 2008; Telework Exchange, 2011) - updating their policies for purchasing telework(Telework Exchange, 2011) - Security (Norfleet, 2010; Bridgeford, 2007; Ramstack, 2001) - Capturing data (Telework Exchange, 2011) - Data is protected (Telework Exchange, 2011) - Lack of funding from central federal government (O'Keefe, 2011; PA Times, 2008c; Bridgeford, 2007) - Top management's low awareness and resistance (Joice and Noll, 2008; Gross, 2008; Bendarz, 2008; Cooney, 2007; Telework Exchange, 2011) - Top management fear loss of control (Bridgeford, 2007) - Less communication / face-to-face interaction(Bridgeford, 2007) - Lack of Telework proper guidelines/not well defined (GAO Reports, 2003) - Managing Telework program metrics (Telework Exchange, 2011) - Consistency definition of telework (Larence, 2005)	- Difficult to measure Productivity (Norfleet, 2010; Barr, 2005) - Employee accountability (Bendarz, 2008) - Measure of result is very difficult (Rosenberg, 2008a)

Gray et al. (1993) reported that teleworking/homeworking covers a wide range of options in many combinations, such as from:

- senior executive to professional to clerical

- full-time to part-time jobs

- working at home almost full-time to occasionally spending a day at home

- wholly employed through part-time employed to self-employed

Generally, teleworking has been seen as a feasible work practice by those who are engaged with technologically simple jobs with low autonomy. This is possible since

these forms of jobs are easy to control remotely, especially when the focus is only on output. Similarly, for those who have highly autonomous and professional jobs where work is complex, discretionary and controlled by self-management (Baruch & Nicholson, 1997). Individual control of work pace and little need for face-to-face interaction are examples of suitable job traits for teleworking. Examples of those individuals are the knowledge and information workers, and sales and marketing personnel (U.S. Department of Transportation, 1993, as cited in Bailey & Kurland (2002). Others include computer programmers, sales executives, managers, systems analysts, editors, human resource managers, customer service officers, market research analysts, secretaries, administrative assistants, real estate agents, computer operators, data clerks, advisers and marketing managers, writers, travel agents, insurance agents, accounts clerks, bankers, brokers, counselors, lawyers, accountants, engineers, architects and planners (Supian, 2002).

Individuals that are not suitable to telecommute are those who demonstrate certain personal traits, such as a strong desire for self-verification, and a heavy reliance on external coordination and guidance (Thatcher & Zhu, 2006). Nonetheless, those who are relatively indifferent to having their identities verified and have strong self-guidance may make better telecommuters. In any case, the telecommuters showed quality-of-life changes that were more positive in every respect (general work-life, personal life, visibility, environmental influence, belonging, creativity, stress avoidance, liberation, apprehension, interdependence and continuity) than those of the non-telecommuters (Nilles, 1994).

Although the existence of teleworking depends on ICT, the adoption of teleworking and other instances of these new organizational forms is regarded as being social rather than technological in nature (Jackson, 1998). From the management perspective, Joice & Verive (2006) indicated that many organizations do not support the use of telework to assist employees with dependent care responsibilities; in fact, the standard practice is often to exclude this option in telework programs. The typical reasoning for this exclusion is the belief that telework should not be a substitute for dependent care and that blending the two reduces the quality of work and dependent care. Over the years, telework's potential in mitigating dependent care problems has been mentioned, but only anecdotally (Joice & Verive, 2006). Joice & Verive (2006) added that telework can be made more effective by restricting telework as a dependent care solution and instead, establishing it as an acceptable and supported practice for enabling employees to better meet their dependent care responsibilities.

2.2.4 Teleworking Background in Malaysia

As mentioned in chapter one, teleworking concept is one of the government initiatives towards closing the digital divide between the urban and rural sectors through its Infodesa Programme (Eight Malaysian Plan, 2001-2005) as well as in providing Malaysians a more flexible mode of working by its intention to amend the Employment Act 1955 (Eight Malaysian Plan 8, p. 115). The government hopes that this concept will help women, youths and pensioners to use their ICT skills and knowledge to earn income through teleworking and at the same time strengthening the family institutions. The teleworking project was managed by National

Information Technology Council of Malaysia (NITC) under the Demonstrator Application Grant Scheme (DAGS) initiative.

The first teleworking project started in June 2002 at Desa Tun Razak, Kuala Lumpur. The target groups are the people with low income earning parents and their children. The participants will be connected to a variety of enterprises to earn an income according to their skills, interest and knowledge. Next, the Ministry of Women and Family Development has given its consent to start another similar project for women in Bangsar Utama, Kuala Lumpur in 2003 (MOSTI, 2006) Another teleworking project was set up in 2007 at Seberang Jaya, Penang to assist the Northern Region community. This project was conducted by Yayasan Kemajuan Sosial Malaysia (YKSM) (http://www.tcenter.com.my/). Another teleworking pilot project was implemented under the Ministry of Public Works in January, 2010 ("Works Ministry launches three month work-from-home pilot project", 2009).

A study on teleworking, which was funded by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1999), suggests there is significant potential for teleworking within the Malaysia economy. They found that among the major disadvantages of teleworking identified in the study are high cost of hardware and software, lack of personal interactions, and the problems of telecommuter supervision (Ng, 2001). In Malaysia, the practice of telework arrangements has been initially embraced by certain multinational corporations. In fact, Supian (2002) reported that there is huge potential in the implementation of teleworking in Malaysia in the future, particularly for insurance and ICT-based companies. Another research done by Mustafa &

Yusserie (2012) stated that teleworking concept can be implemented in Malaysian environment due to the rapid growth in economic development and technology advancement in Malaysia. However, they proposed that the government must initiate and enact laws to ensure that this concept can be beneficial to all interested parties.

Although there had been several community projects undertaken with a focus on exploring different models and initiatives of teleworking (Ministry of Women and Community Development, 2004), there is minimal research on teleworking arrangements in Malaysia because the majority of the companies did not officially recognize individuals working based on teleworking concepts (Karia, Zainuddin, & Asaari, 2003; Ndubisi & Kahraman, 2005). In their study, Karia et al. (2003) reported that the motivating factors for human resource managers to consider teleworking as a part of their organization are those related to the working discipline, improved productivity, and quality of output. Another similar study done by Razak & Hamdan (2005) found that most employees and managers from the human resources department of selected companies in Kuala Lumpur favoured teleworking even though they believed that their companies were not ready to implement teleworking.

The main concern among the employers was the problem of supervision, lack of computer training, high cost of technology (Abdul Azeez et al., 1997), shortage of skilled IT personnel, and lack of personal interaction (Ng & Mitter, 2001). Therefore, rules, regulations and policies, infrastructure, finance, selection, training

environment, and benefits are among the requirements needed to implement teleworking concept in government agencies (Razak et al., 2006). Despite of the hesitance of certain employers, the top management of higher learning institutions agreed that teleworking can be an option in handling difficulties of recruiting and retaining academicians with a PhD (Rashdan & Wan Rozaini, 2005). To have a successful teleworking work arrangement, the potential teleworker must be self-motivated, knowledgeable, a good communicator, a wise decision-maker, less outgoing, manageable, reliable, independent, and aware of the concept of this work (Supian, 2002).

In terms of women and teleworking, a study carried out by eHomemakers (2003) found that ICT usage and time flexibility have improved the life of women teleworkers. Unfortunately, these women have greater difficulty in separating their work and home life as they often face problems in balancing their careers and family responsibilities. They do not know how to draw the line between work and home activities. They are often being disturbed by their family members (such as children and elderly or disabled family members) during their working hours. This will surely prevent them from completing their work on time if they were to fulfill the needs of their families' activities. Sooner or later they may feel that working from home has become a burden to them because they failed to properly manage their time, space, and people around them. In other words, they are unable to balance their work and family obligations.

2.3 Work-Family Balance

The purpose of this section is to discuss the related research on work-family balance among teleworkers. This section is organized into several sub-sections that include the definition of work-family balance, research on managing work and home activities through border management perspectives, and theories on the work and family interaction.

2.3.1 Work-Family Balance Definition

Work is viewed as a set of tasks performed with an objective or goal in mind (Zedeck, 1992), which is an essential part of people's lives in providing a livelihood for their families (Akdere, 2006). Further, he stated that this definition of work does not pose restrictions on where the work is actually performed. Family is defined as "persons related by biological ties, marriage, social custom, or adoption" (Edwards & Rothabard, 2000). Like work, family signifies membership in a social organization to which the person contributes (Zedeck, 1992). These contributions are concern on the maintaining family relationship and its well-being rather than earning a living goods and services (Zedeck, 1992). Based on these definitions, understanding the work-family balance has important implications, particularly for employers who are attempting to assist workers in coordinating their work and family lives (Voydanoff, 2005).

For Kirchmeyer (2000), living a balanced life is considered attaining satisfaction in one's life. This satisfaction is enabled through a good distribution of various resources such as energy, time, and commitment. This is similar to Clark (2000) and

Kofodimos (1993), who viewed the work–family balance as satisfaction achieved between work, play, and love. These definitions of balance share a number of common elements, which include the notion of equality, or near-equality, between experiences in the work role and experiences in the family role (Kofodimos, 1993; Clark, 2000; Kirchmeyer, 2000; Reiter, 2007).

Voydanoff (2005) argues that work-family balance is considered as a global assessment in which work and family resources are sufficient to meet work and family demands, thus the participation is considered effective in both domains. Greenhaus & Singh (2003) have defined work-family balance as "*the notion that simultaneously engaging in multiple work and family roles is beneficial for the physical, mental, and relationship health of individuals*". Hill et al., (2001) also defined work-family balance as "*the degree to which an individual is able to simultaneously balance the temporal, emotional and behavioral demands of both paid work and family responsibilities*". Others defined work life balance strategies as "*those activities that enhance the autonomy of workers in the process of coordinating and integrating work and non-work aspects of their lives*"(Felstead, Jewson, Phizacklea, & Walters, 2001).

Work-family balance in this study refers to individuals having good functioning control over where, when, and how they work by meeting the competing demand between work and family life. Work-family balance is achieved when an individual is able to manage their work, and at the same time accomplish family satisfaction.

2.3.2 Research Related to Work-Family Balance of Teleworkers

The work-family issues also being discussed in the teleworking studies since the design and structure of work itself can be one of the root causes of work/life conflicts (Crandal &Gao, 2005; Kossek, 2003). Work-family balance has always been a concern to those interested in the quality of working life and its relation to the broader quality of life (Akdere, 2006). The demands of work could dominate life and result in imbalance, as such work–family balance could help promote well-being if properly implemented (Kofodimos, 1993). According to Guest (2002), most of the research confirms that a work-life imbalance has negative consequences for well-being and effective functioning. He urged that work-life balance is the essential in determining quality of working-life and its relation to quality of life.

The inability of individuals in balancing their work and family may cause them experience a high levels of stress, low quality of life and ultimately reduces their effectiveness at work (Kofodimos, 1993). Work-life balance appears to capture a widely-felt need to prevent paid work from invading too much into people's lives (Lewis, Gambles, & Rapoport, 2007). The issues of balancing work and life arise from work-family conflicts, which is a direct result of the mutual incompatibility between the demands of the work and family roles (Akdere, 2006). Work-family conflict is a form of inter-role conflict in which the role pressures from the work and family domains are mutually incompatible in some respect (Greenhaus & Singh, 2003). The inter-role conflict, defined by Greenhaus and Beutell (2003), is *conflict*

experienced when pressure arising in one role is incompatible with pressures arising in another role.".

Kossek (2003) suggests that there are two competing schools of thought on the effects of teleworking on work-family conflict. Some researchers believe that teleworking may decrease work-family conflict because employees are able to be close to their family to attend their needs and the problems of commuting times is reduce (Hill et al., 1998; Mokhtarian et al., 1998; Tietze, 2005). Others believe it may increase work-family conflict because employees may work longer hours as they are working when office employees in similar jobs might be commuting, or eating lunch or socializing (Hardwick & Salaff, 1997; Hill et al., 1998; Ammons & Markham, 2004)

Parasuraman & Simmers (2001) reported that self-employed persons also experiencing in work-family conflict and lower family satisfaction than organizational employees even though they have autonomy and schedule flexibility at work. Work family conflict is a cause of stress and may impact on the individuals life mentally and physically (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Females especially experience conflict when they have to fulfill the demands of work while at home and this may affect their performance on the family role (Sullivan & Lewis, 2001; eHomemakers, 2003; Noor, 2004). In telework, work-family role conflict may occur due to the difficulties in maintaining the boundary between work and family roles (Standen et al., 1999).

There are positive and negative emotional impact among teleworkers (Mann et al., 2000). Positive impact is such as travel stress reduction or irritation caused by office distractions, while negative emotional impact is such as loneliness due to work alone at home, frustration due to lack of technical support, guilty when unable to fulfill family demands. According to Moore et al. (2007), managerial women tended to have the highest level of time conflicts in family-work strain and non-family work strain. They were also reported to have the highest levels of negative work-home blur, and showed some evidence of higher levels of job stress, work overload, and emotional exhaustion. Higher levels of conflict and strain occur in those parents having schooling and teenage children at the age of 6-12 years (Barnett and Garies, 2006; Moore et al., 2007).

The occurrence of such work-family strain may be due to the fact that parents did not spend enough time with their children (Milkie et al., 2004). Good parents should make it a priority to spend time with their families so that their teens can benefit from such attachments (Snyder, 2007). However, Snyder also pointed out that parents have different views of quality time, as well as perceiving different barriers to spending time with their families. Although evidence from literature shows that teleworking can reduce the problems on the work–family balance issues (Felstead et al., 2001; Baines & Gelder, 2003), but there is suggestion that this form of work has more contradictory and ambiguous impacts on work–life balance (Felstead et al., 2001; Mann & Holdsworth, 2003).

Individuals have the ability in balancing work and family activities because due to being always at home and have the flexibility of hours to control their work (Baruch, 2001). However, problems arise when work activities can be disturbed by home-based distractions, and vice versa due to the overlap of work and home life in which resulted to negative balance (Baines, 2002; Tietze & Musson, 2005). It may create tension especially to freelance and home-based teleworkers if there are not able to overcome the problem of blurring boundary between both domain such as no a specially demarcated workspace at home (Jin, 2003).

Furthermore, there may actually be a reduction of actual leisure time; as such a form of work may result in a tendency to be 'available' outside office hours, whatever they may be. Finally, there is concern about a potential reduction in job security with less contractual oversight for freelancers and home-based teleworkers (Jin, 2003). It becomes more difficult for workers who wish to separate work and home life. Kim and Ling (2001) found three forms of work-family conflicts among female entrepreneurs in Singapore, which were job-spouse conflict, job-parent conflict, and job-homemaker conflict. Of these, interference between job and homemaker roles was found to be the most intense form of conflict. Job stressors (a conglomerate of work pressures, within-role ambiguity, and conflicting demands allied with the entrepreneurial role, along with business-related problems) were more closely linked with the three forms of conflict than family stressors.

Furthermore, the age of children was found to be correlated positively with job-parent conflict. To further support this correlation, they also noted that the majority

of women in their sample had adolescent children, and that this may be a difficult age for parents and place high demands on their coping ability. Although Sinha & Monroe (2006) believed that the work-life balance issues were not as bad as many had envisioned, most researchers admitted teleworkers are facing difficulties of drawing the line between work and home (Igbaria & Guimaraes, 1999; Baines, 2002; Tietze & Musson, 2005). For example, Ellison (1999) mentioned that the teleworkers, together with their families, often failed to distinguish their respective roles, even though they managed to develop spatial and temporal boundaries between work and home life, such as creating a room only used for work.

The juggling between roles of worker and parent causes a spillover of negative and positive emotions from work to family life and family life to work (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Unless they can maintain the boundaries between these roles, Allen et al. (2003) suggested that the teleworkers should adopt integration rather than segmentation. However, they need to be aware of this, since integration can increase flexibility of the work role and increase permeability to home obligations, and this in turn reduces the time available for work, reduces work efficiency, or increases stress (Ammons & Markham, 2004).

Nippert-Eng (1996) noted that the use of new telecommunications technologies has also impacted the work-family balance, especially when those technologies may provide the potential for employees to be available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Using such devices, these employees are expected to be available anytime and anywhere. However, at the same time these technologies may blur or

blend boundaries by keeping the domain of work constantly accessible. Consequently, this will lead to greater stress (Shamir, 1992; Desrochers & Sargeant, 2004). Tietze (2005) indicated that all teleworkers reported difficulties in adjusting to working from home. They found it harder to establish "*who they were*, *felt in-between"* or not quite sure "*whether I am suppose to be a father or a manager first and foremost"* (when working from home).

As mentioned earlier, work-family conflict occurred when individuals performed multiple roles (e.g., worker, spouse, parent, and volunteer) (Carlson et al., 2000). Each of these roles imposed demands on time, energy, commitment, and increased balance requirements, which resulted in role strain (Edwards & Rothabard, 2000). Therefore, by being unable to separate work from family life, the teleworkers might become more stressful (Jackson, 1998). Studies have shown that work-family conflict also causes other problems, such as the cost of turnover, unsatisfactory job or task performance, working capability reduction, and psychological and physical illness (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Mann et al., 2000; Edwards & Rothabard, 2000; Bellavia & Frone, 2005).

Two forms of work-family conflict are work interference with family and family interference with work (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Gutek, Searle, & Klepa, 1991 Carlson et al., 2000). Desrochers et al. (2005) argued that work-family conflict may start as soon as individuals bring work back to their homes, which then triggers the blurring of boundaries between workplace and home. Women were expected to

experience more conflict between work and family than men in multiple role conflicts.

Hunton (2005) reported that women, especially mothers, were expected to experience more work-family conflict than men because they tend to combine work and family activities at the same time while the male teleworkers prefer to accommodate time for work and family separately. Being at home all the time has made teleworkers easy to be disturbed by family members and friends and this may create tension to them (Hunton, 2005). Conflicts may occur if teleworkers unable to maintain their relationship with family members which result very stressful. This shows that teleworking does affect the lives of co-residents and can be a source of family conflict. Sullivan & Lewis (2001) indicated that working at home have created new ways for integrating their work and family activities because of the blurring boundary between work and family domain.

Mobile workers are more experience on work-family blurring boundary rather than office workers particularly to those who are unable to separate their work and family activities while work at home. Therefore, those teleworkers that have the problem of boundary maintenance need to separate work and home life and prevent mutual interference (Haddon, 1998). Generally, to be successful in working at home, workers need to have an organized workspace with clear boundaries between work and household spaces (Gurstein, 1996). Desrochers et al. (2005) suggested that high work/family integration tends to be associated with higher perceived work/family blurring, more transitions, more distractions, and greater work/family conflict.

Kossek et al. (2006) found that individuals with boundary management strategies that were higher on integration tended to have higher family to work conflicts. Their study reported that the fundamental problem facing growing numbers of individuals is how to develop appropriate strategies to maintain a positive work identity, given their increasing workload and non-work demands. Moreover, they suggested that individuals must renegotiate with household members in terms of schedule, and workspaces that may potentially intersect with relaxation and entertainment spaces. Teleworkers created various strategies to inform that they are working. For example, wear specific clothes to remind that they are working, provide an external door for office used; performed specific ritual as mark before switching from one role to another, etc. (Davies, 1996; Evans, 1999; Ahrentzen 2000).

Tietze and Musson (2005) reported the blurring boundary always occur to the teleworkers. For example, they may think of their work while doing family activities. Wilson and Greenhill (2004) mentioned that the flexibility of telework has allows teleworkers in negotiating their roles while at home. Tiete and Musson (2005) reported that there were teleworkers who were able to carve out *lazy time* to benefit themselves or their families and that these *snatched moments* were much appreciated. For self-employed home workers, they tend to spend much of their time on work because their income is highly dependent on the amount of work completed.

Teleworking is not a unitary pattern of work, and the methods of the people doing their work greatly affect how they take care of their children (Hardwick & Salaff, 1997). The decision on how to take care of their children was depending on their

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ability to control over the time of paid work (Hardwick & Salaff, 1997). Individuals who work at home are more likely to experience blurring boundary between work and home rather than office workers (Felstead & Jewson, 2000). Ahrentzen (1990) claimed that the work roles interfere with the family roles and vice versa in term of time and space while working at home. To control information or interaction from one role setting to another can be done by separating the spatial, temporal, behavioral, and social boundaries between work and home activities (Ahrentzen 1990).

Analysis of borders can be used to find how individuals are able to control their work and family life in determining the balance, because it allows for analysis of physical and psychological controls (Desrochers et al., 2005). The most important is to be able to make clear boundaries that can be discussed (Hall & Richter, 1988).

2.3.2.1 Managing Borders

According to the Oxford Dictionary (2005), a boundary is *that which serves to indicate the bounds or limits of anything, whether material or immaterial; also the limit itself. Whereas a border refers to the line that separates one country, state, province, etc. from another* (Dictionary.com, 2008a). A boundary or border shares the sense of that which divides one entity or other unit from another (Dictionary.com, 2008b). This study will use the term boundary and border interchangeably. Based on the literature, there are only a few studies that have examined home workers perceptions of a blurred boundary between work and family

roles; these are by Ahrentzen (1990), Hill et al. (1996), Nippert-Eng (1996), and Desrochers et al. (2005). Balance can be achieved by analyzing the border, because the nature of the border itself permeates into individuals to control it physically and psychologically (Guest, 2002). Zedeck (1992) mentioned that the heart of the issue of work-family balance is related to ways on how individuals are able to deal with the relationships between families and their jobs. Igbaria & Guimaraes (1999) believed that having clear boundaries between work and family is one of the critical success factors for the teleworker.

Ahrentzen's (1990) method consists of a taxonomy of boundaries: spatial, temporal, and socio-behavioral. Spatial boundaries are the walls, doors, and/ or arrangements of furniture that show where the home-based worker's office begins and ends. Temporal boundaries are the beginning and ending of a *work block*, the time consecutively engaged in paid work activities. Socio-behavioral boundaries, also mentioned as mental boundaries, are separations – or in some cases, the lack thereof between work and domestic/personal activities. For example, homeworkers generally did not supervise their children while working. The boundaries around that domain are somewhat characteristically constructed (e.g., one person allows home to cross over into work, whereas another keeps them separated) (Nippert-Eng, 1996). She further argued that boundaries enable one to concentrate more on whatever domain that is currently noticeable and less on other domains.

Nippert-Eng (1996) suggests that individuals construct mental, and sometimes physical fences, as a means of ordering their work and family environments from

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integration to separation to establish their unpredictable work and family roles. She defines boundary work as "*the strategies and practices that we use to generate, preserve and alter cultural categorie*s". Boundary work is used to substitute either greater segmentation or integration – that is, to construct or modify the temporal, spatial, and other boundaries that demarcate roles- and in doing so to create "*more or less distinct territories of the self* " (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Two strategies that have been recognized in managing the boundary are segmentation and integration. Segmentation strategies refer to the struggles to keep their work and personal roles very separate, while integration strategies refer to the struggles to make work and family roles blur (Nippert-Eng, 1996).

It was found that boundary management strategies that were higher on integration were positively related to family-work conflict (Kossek et al., 2006). They also proposed that further research should address how boundaries are endorsed, not only on an individual level, but also as a culturally-driven occurrence. It can be beneficial to understand how professionals in different cultural norms regarding the boundary management and how it can affect the individuals and the society conflict (Kossek et al., 2006). Work and family can be incorporated because of the flexibility in work arrangements. Individuals can used strategies to segment their work and family roles with the consensus from family members (Kossek et al., 2006). This means that they can provide room with door as their office or hiring maid to take care of babies or elders while working.

Moen & Sweet (2002) stated that boundary work is adaptive to their needs in highly integrated preparations, such as working with a spouse or other family member, or working at home. An employee depends on a variety of factors to decide on the degree of benefits offered from the integration and segmentation. The individual's characteristics such as having a good time management skill, able to work at home, good relationship with family, friends and employer can determined the successful boundary between work and home (Nippert-Eng, 1996; Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000).

Salazar (2001) specified that the boundary categories of time, space, and psychology can be useful in an understanding of how work is prepared so that it can be done at home, and in any conducive environment. These boundary categories can also help determine how the work environment is negotiated with other household members and how the boundary between work and home is maintained or blurred by the fact that many of the workers did the tasks while doing certain kinds of work that required little concentration. It is important to have separate office spaces and separate phone lines to connect the workers to electronic information in order to communicate with colleagues. The workers are aware of the need to do their work at home, but at the same time, they needed the varying degrees of separation from the home and family members. Therefore, it is showed that the boundary between work and home is not static it can be adjustable base on the individual circumstances.

Findings of the research by Salazar (2001) stated that work and home life appear to be blurring, at least in the case of certain types of professional workers. Past research

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findings suggest that teleworkers can balance work and family life by integrating work and family arrangements (e.g. scheduling work around family demands, or spending more time with family etc.) (Desrochers & Sergeant, 2004). However, work-family conflict might arise if individuals is highly integrated their work and family life which lead to blurring boundary (Desrochers & Sergeant, 2004). Tietze (2002) suggested that coping mechanisms can be used to solve the conflict. According to her, by labeling the house (or family) as a source of love, and work as the source of money will help teleworkers reduce conflict.

Kowalski & Swanson (2005) suggested a number of strategies in order to create boundaries between work and family. For instance, one can adopt approaches that provide a specific space for work only, establishing morning rituals at home to make the transition to a workday (e.g., dressing up as if going into the main office), using dependent care services (e.g., children or elderly parents), and introducing the teleworking concept to family, friends, and neighbors to inform them that they are not to interfere during his/her working hours. Kossek et al. (2006) stated that the professional workers apply the boundary management strategy to control how and when they telework. Boundary management strategies are said to be the ideologies one uses to organize and separate role demands between work and home life (Kossek et al., 1999).

2.3.3 Theories on the Work and Family

The relationship of work-life satisfaction and family life satisfaction has been focused on in the research regarding work and family issues. Some descriptive models or theories have been used to explain the work-family interaction (Zedeck, 1992). Three competing arguments, i.e., the spillover model, the segmentation model, and the conflict model attempt to explain, predict, and provide a model for investigating relationships between work satisfaction and family satisfaction in the telework environment (e.g., Duxbury et al., 1992; Hill et al., 1996; Madsen, 2006). These models are discussed in sections 2.3.3.1 – 2.3.3.3.

2.3.3.1 Spillover Model

The spillover model suggests that domain of work and home are related to each other which is what happen in one domain can affect to other domain either in a good or bad way (Guest, 2002). This model also suggests that emotional conditions created by work can influence how one feels and behaves outside of work, and that satisfaction derived from work will be positively related to non-work satisfaction, for example, that happiness at work leads to happiness at home (Staines, 1980, as cited in Zedeck, 1992). Hence, experiences at work have an impact on non-work domains, and vice versa. In other words, there are no boundaries for one's behavior (Zedeck, 1992).

Most of the researchers believed in the presence of work-to-family and family-to-work spillover will affect a healthy families and businesses life (Grzywacz, Almeida, & McDonald, 2002; Hill, Ferris, & Martinson, 2003; Chelsey, 2005). This model suggests the relationship is 'unidirectional'. Less involvement in the family affairs, marriage conflict, depression and etc. are the example of the negative work-to-family spillover whereas negative family-to-work spillover are such as job dissatisfaction, high absenteeism, low quality of work and etc. (Hill et al., 2003). Another term that refer to the spillover model are extension, generalization, familiarity, identity, isomorphism, continuation, and congruence (Staines, 1980, as cited in Zedeck, 1992).

2.3.3.2 Segmentation Model

This model suggests that nonwork and work are two separate domains and are not influenced each other (Guest, 2002). Bain (2000) identified that the followers of this view believe that each segment is lived out more or less independently of the others. The workplace has no effect on attitudes in other settings; therefore, this model predicts no relationship between family life satisfaction and work-life satisfaction. Segmentation means that people segment their experiences so that feelings derived from work and other roles are basically isolated. Work and family serve different devotions in society.

This particular theory has also been defined in theories under the labels of separateness, compartmentalization, independence, and neutrality theory; they

institute the null hypothesis of the work-family relationship (Zedeck, 1992). It is shows that working from home also contribute to the work-family relations either in a positive or negative way (Shamir, 1992). Hill et al. (1996) tested both theories to the mobile work and found out that the spillover theory is more supportive.

2.3.3.3 Conflict Model

The conflict model refers to the high levels demand in work or non-work domain to be fulfilled in which individuals have to perform multiples roles simultaneously that make lead them to make a difficult choice in their life (Guest, 2002). There are two roles involved that are role conflict and role ambiguity. Role conflict refers to the conflict of demands to be fulfilled simultaneously (e.g. finishing work task and at the same time to take care of children affair) whereas role ambiguity refers to the conflicting in the role performance (e.g. whether to act as employee and at the same time has to act as mother) (Shamir & Solomon, 1985). These models were used to study the psychological impact on the individuals who telework (Shamir & Solomon, 1985; Olson, 1989).

Based on role theory, the conflicting in role demand and role ambiguity may result negative impact to the individual. Teleworkers might experience role conflict if they unable to perform each role well (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999). Women reported that they experienced role conflict because they had to perform multiple roles to meet the work and family demands (Shamir & Solomon, 1985). There are three

types of work-family role conflicts identified by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985). The following are:

1. **Time-based conflict**: role conflicting with the demand of time where individual have to fulfill the demand of time in one domain and leaves demand in another domain unattended (Edwards & Rothabard, 2000). The example of time-based conflict is time schedule conflict because of the excessive time work (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964).

2. **Strain-based conflict**: This happen when one role is interfered with another role which may result individual experiencing in tension, stress, irritability and etc. (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

3. **Behaviour-based conflict**: This conflict refers to the inappropriate behaviors of the individual to acts in one role to another (Netemeyer, McMurrian, & Boles, 1996).

Guest (2002) urged that these types of models do not directly address on the balancing between work and home life. The spillover model and the segmentation models are essentially descriptive models. Clark (2000) argued that the research prompted by spillover theory has the relationship between work and family and influenced to each other domain. This theory does not explain the solution to problem faced by the individuals in the searching on the balancing home and work life. The most serious problems of this theory are limited focus, where it only addresses psychological aspects (e.g., depression, dissatisfaction, frustration), and gives little or no acknowledgement of the physical, time, social, and behavioral

connections between work and family. The theory is concern on the individuals'
reaction only rather than focusing on how individuals are able to control the
environments.

Spillover theory limits the individual issues to the psychological perspective, so that
this theory does not discuss the problem of work-family balance. Jackson & Schuler
(1985) argued that there are some limitations on role conflict theory in the research
on the work–family issues because of less attention given to the family roles. Role
conflict concerns on the individuals have to perform multiple roles simultaneously
and may experience conflicting demands if they unable perform each role which
leads to low quality of life (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1986; Kahn et al., 1964). The
theory focuses on the solution how to help home-based workers in reducing stress by
looking on the sources of stress. Ahrentzen (1990) suggested that to overcome the
role conflict among teleworkers is by managing at the boundary between work and
home domain.

Although these theories (spillover, segmentation, and role) recommended the
significances of work-family conflict, but they are limited in explaining actual
relationship between work and family conflict (Poelmans, 2004). In an effort to
address the lack of theoretical paradigms being used to guide research, a recent
avenue of research within the work-family field has focused on the how individuals
control and negotiate the boundaries between work and family domain , for example,
the work of Clark (2000).

2.4 Theoretical Framework of the Study

In this research, the theory of work-family borders will be used as the theoretical framework. A similar theory that also addresses the boundaries between work and family life is the boundary theory proposed by Ashforth, et al. (2000). Work-family border theory (Clark, 2000) and boundary theory (Ashforth, 2000) concerned with the impact on the individual wellbeing by focusing on the conditions of the work-family integration (Desrochers & Sargeant, 2004). Both theories address how people construct, maintain, negotiate and cross boundaries or borders, and how people draw the lines of demarcation between work and family (Clark, 2000).

Another similarity in both theories is the extent of integration or segmentation, as indicated primarily by two characteristics: flexibility and permeability. When two or more domains are highly flexible and permeable with respect to one another, they are said to be integrated. Boundary theory and work-family border theory also share a similar view that, in addition to flexibility and permeability, the extent of work-family integration depends on how similar these domains are to each other (Desrochers & Sargeant, 2004). However, the two theories differ on the nature of that relationship and its implications for work-family balance. Ashforth et al. (2000) proposed that the difference or contrast between roles is part of what determines how clear or how thick the boundary is between one domain and another, which in turn influences the likelihood of work-family conflict (Desrochers et al., 2005).

Matthews (2007) states that this theory tends to focus on transitions within an organizational context, although it also makes reference to transitions between organizational roles and non-organizational roles (e.g., retirement transition, transition between work roles and family roles). However, Clark (2000) believes that the clarity or strength of the work-family border is separate from the similarity of role domains, and that these two factors interact to influence work-family balance. The theory is primarily focused on the way people handle the transition between the work and family domains (Matthews 2007).

Work-family border theory is different from boundary theory in that its definition of borders encompasses not only psychological categories, but also those tangible boundaries that divide time, place and people associated with work versus family (Desrochers et al., 2005). Clark (2000) in her research tries to understand the process of work-family conflict. She identifies one of the shortcomings of the earlier approaches as their lack of predictive ability, and suggests that these theories offered little guidance in either predicting work-family conflict or solving problems that arise in trying to balance work and family responsibilities.

2.4.1 Understanding the Work-Family Border Theory

Work-family border theory explains the ability of individuals in managing and negotiating the borders between work and family to balanced their work and family life (Clark, 2000). Apparent this theory was created to bridge the gaps of previous theories on work and family (Akdere, 2006). Clark has divided the boundaries within

the employee's life. This theory addresses the state of domain whether integration or segmentation, border management and its characteristics, relationships between border-crossers and others at work and home influence the work-family balance.

"Border-crossers" is refers to the employee who making daily transitions between their work and family lives. The transition (border-crossing) between work and family domains will depend on the behavior of the domain. This theory provide the solution to the work-family balance, which refers to *satisfaction and good functioning at work and at home, with a minimum amount of role conflict'* (Clark, 2000). This theory was built on the role theory and has strong potential for further elucidating work and family conflict processes between the family and the workplace (Bellavia & Frone, 2005).

The reasons for choosing the work-family border theory in this study are: 1) it explains the ability of individuals in controlling of issues in finding balance; 2) it addresses the issue of crossing borders between domains, because its focus on how people move back and forth between work and home lives; 3) it looks at the nature of borders, and their characteristics; 4) it allows for analysis border in terms of psychological, temporal and physical and people around them. Moreover, Matthews (2007) suggested that boundary theory (i.e., Clark, 2000 and Ashforth, et al., 2000) is a viable and important theoretical framework in the work-family study. He believes that only by developing research studies that adequately represent the complexities that working adult's face, while drawing on strong theoretical frameworks, can work-family researchers hope to have a positive influence on organizational changes

intended to improve not only an employee's working environment, but their life as a whole.

The central concepts of the work-family border theory and their characteristics are 1) the work and home domains; 2) the borders between work and home; 3) the border-crosser; and 4) the border-keepers and other important domain members. Each of these concepts will be explained in the following sub-sections. Figure 2-1 illustrates the work-family border theory of Clark (2000).
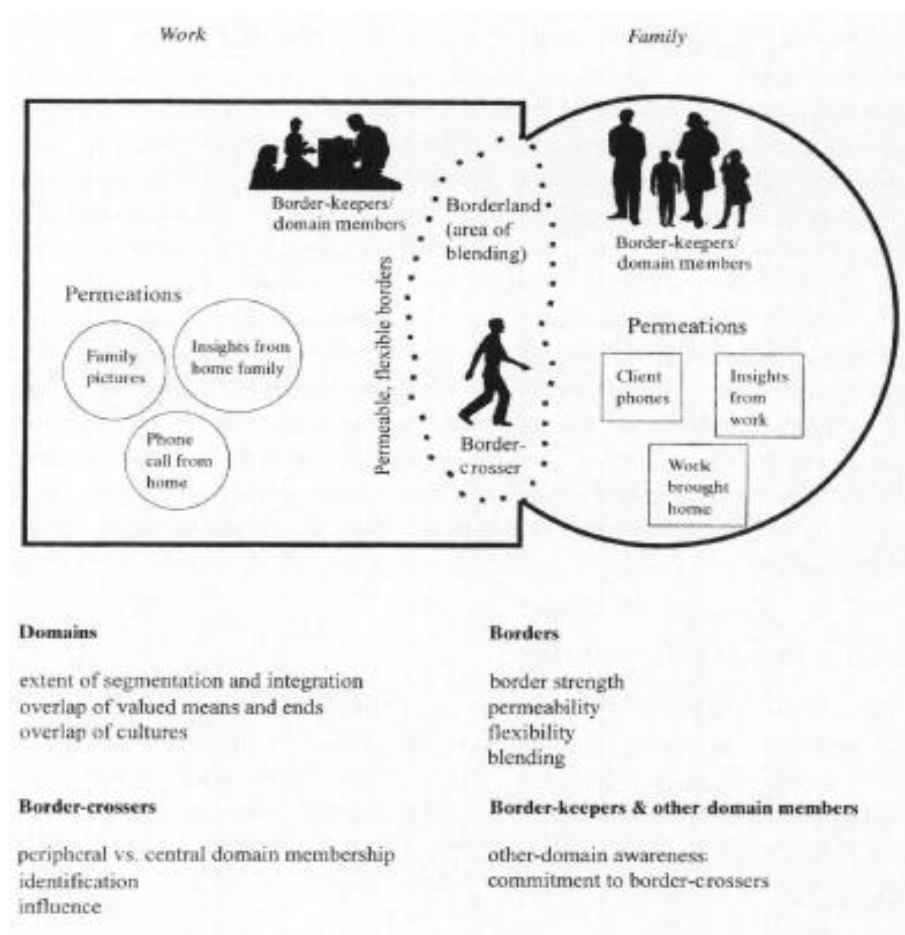
Figure 2.1: Work-family border theory (Clark, 2000)

2.4.1.1 The Work and Home Domains

Clark identifies work and home as two different domains that are associated with different rules, thought patterns, and behavior. The differences between work and home can be classified in two different ways: differences in value ends and differences in value means (Rokeach, 1973, as cited in Clark, 2000). Work primarily satisfies the ends of providing an income and giving a sense of accomplishment, while home life satisfies the ends of attaining close, personal relationships. Responsibility and capability were ranked as the most important means to achieve desired ends at work, while being loving and giving were ranked the most important means to achieve happiness at home (Clark & Farmer, 1998, as cited in Clark 2000).

Because of the differences in domains, individuals often manage to integrate both work and home to some degree (Clark, 2000). Nippert-Eng (1996) explained the way people deal with differences between the two domains on a continuum, with integration at one end and segmentation at the other end. Integration refers to the ability of individuals to juggle their work and family matters either physical, temporal or psychologically manners. Whereas segmentation refers to the distinction between work and family matters either physical, temporal or psychologically manners.

2.4.1.2 The Borders between Work and Family

According to the border theory, an individual roles was depends on the domain he or she entered. The domain between work and family is separated by border that is lines

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of demarcation that may be physical, temporal, or psychological (Clark, 2000). Physical borders is defined *where domain-relevant behavior takes place* (Clark, 2000). For example, use specific room or wall or furniture to separate the space between workplace and home. In terms of the role conflict boundary, Ahrentzen (1990) reported that most of the literature examines the impacts managing time rather than the workspace.

A temporal border refers time for work and time for family (Hill et al., 1998). Example of temporal boundaries is such as turning off the computer to prepare family dinner, or locking the door to the home office, mark the end of the day (Hill et al., 1988). Psychological borders refer to the rules of thinking and the actions that created by individuals for one domain (e.g., work), but not for the other (Clark, 2000). The psychological border was determined by the physical and temporal borders of the domain. Psychological borders are created as an enactment that refers to *a process in which individuals take elements given in their environments and organize them in a way that makes sense* (Weick, 1979, as cited in Clark 2000).

Those borders are characterized by a number of factors that impact them: permeability, flexibility, strength, and blending.

2.4.1.2.1 Permeability

Hall & Richter (1998) defined permeability as the degree to which elements from other domains may enter. It is the extent to which a boundary allows psychological

or behavioral aspects of one role or domain to enter another. For example, an individual may have an office at home, whose physical doors and walls create a sort of border around his or her work. However, the border may be very permeable because family members are accustomed to frequently entering and talking with the individual while at work (Clark, 2000). In other word the permeability of physical and temporal is regarding to the interruption (Hunton, 2005). The source of interruptions can come from work or non-work related (Hunton, 2005). Work-related interruptions happen when someone from work interrupts the individual to discuss business issues. Non-work related interruptions refer to someone outside of work interrupting the individual to discuss issues unrelated to business (Hunton, 2005).

Many teleworkers are subject to interruptions from non-work related sources such as friends visit, children need attention, salesman drop by and etc. This shows that work-to-family conflicts were more popular than family-to-work conflicts (Frone et al.1992). Permeability on the psychological may affect on the individuals emotions and attitudes (Clark, 2000). Boundary permeability helps to determine which kind of work or home will be the most demanding boundary work (Ashforth et al., 2000). Boundary permeability is a function of at least two elements: how different the divided categories are from each other, and how well the boundary works. "*The malleability of the boundary between two or more role/ domains - its ability to expand or contract - to accommodate the demands of one domain or another"* (Desrochers et al. 2005). In other words, when one is in a particular domain, it is easy for individuals, material, and thoughts from another domain to enter.

2.4.1.2.2 Flexibility

Flexibility *is the degree to which the spatial and temporal boundaries are pliable* that is *the extent to which a border may contract or expand, depending on the demands of one domain or the other* (Hall & Richter, 1988; Clark, 2000). In other words, boundary flexibility is the degree to which an individual is willing and able to move from one domain (i.e., the work domain) to another domain (i.e., the family domain) to meet demands in that domain (Matthews, 2007). Ashforth et al. (2000) indicated that *a role with flexible boundaries can be enacted in various settings and at various times*. Physical border allows individual to work at any location they choose while psychological border refer to the extent that individual is able to think about work when at home and home when at work. This means that individuals have the autonomy in controlling their work and family life.

2.4.1.2.3 Blending

Blending occurs when the border is permeable and flexible within the domains (Clark, 2000). There is no border exist between work and family domain. One example for physical blending is when individuals can share the same workspace with family to do work. For temporal blending, individuals can do work while discussing family matters and psychological blending when individuals apply their personal life experiences to their work life or used work techniques to enhance their family life.

2.4.1.2.4 Strength

The combination of the permeability, flexibility, and blending will determined the strength of border. The strong border is regarding to the border that is impermeable, inflexible and does not allow blending. In contrast, border that is flexible, permeable and allows blending occurs is considered weak. The determination of balance can come from either strong border or weak border between work and family. This is depending on the certain situation such the domain or the individuals itself (Lambert et al., 2006). Hetch & Allen (2009) found that high inter role conflict occurs because of weak borders. As a result, a high degree of separation between the two domains is more preferable. Thus, the permeability and flexibility of boundaries, and the experience of conflict between work and family, will depend on the border characteristic, aspects of the individual as well as those in the two domains (Lambert et al., 2006; Bellavia & Frone, 2005).

Hecht & Allen (2009) have divided boundary strength into two direction, that is boundary strength at home and boundary strength at work. Boundary strength at home refers to the permeation of the work (time, space, psychologically or behaviorally) into the home domain. Boundary strength at work is to what extent individuals is able to control their non-work life into work domain. They suggested that individual is less control of boundaries at work compared to boundaries at home. Some of the researcher suggested that to decrease boundary strength and reduce the separation between work and home domain in order to attain work-family balance (Hall & Richter, 1988; Hetch & Allen, 2009).

In this study, the researcher is interested to study the contributing factors that influence teleworker's decisions in managing the work and family domain in order to attain balance. The research will also explore how a teleworker maintains the balance between these two domains. Balancing work and family life can be done by analyzing the borders between the two domains. Thus, it is important to examine the nature of the border, their permeability, flexibility, blending, and strength in terms of physical, temporal, and psychological aspects.

2.4.1.3 The Border-Crosser

The border-crosser refers to individuals or workers who make frequent transitions between work and family domains. Border-crossers can be described on the degree to which they are peripheral or central participants in either domain (Lave & Wegner, 1991, as cited in Clark, 2000). The central participants in a domain (i.e., those who have influence in that domain because of their competence, affiliation with central members within the domain, and their internationalization of domain culture and values) have a good ability to control the border with the other domain, and consequently, to attain a good balance between work and family.

2.4.1.4 The Border-Keepers and Other Important Domain Members

The final features of this theory are border-keepers and other domain members, who play important roles in the border-crossers ability to manage the domains and borders (Clark, 2000).

Many researchers pointed to the existence of blurred boundaries from psychosocial factors, such as the spillover of stress from work to family, and situational factors such as the scheduling of homework, and its location within the household (Golden et al., 2006; Hill et al., 2001; Moen & Sweet, 2002). Moreover, researchers had treated work and family life independently (Clark, 2000). Although work and home were two different domains they are closely connected where what happens in one domain the effect will be in contact with another domain (Akdere, 2006). Boundary work can enable employees to maintain a clear work-family boundary (Desrochers et al., 2005). Thus, it is important to analyze the border between the work and family domain in order to manage and maintain an appropriate balance.

2.5 Summary of the Chapter

Teleworking is one of the alternative modes of working that offer individuals who are interested in changing their working style. Teleworking provides individuals the freedom to do their work at anytime and anywhere. Working from home offers teleworkers the chance to do their work and at the same time focus on their family life. In other words, teleworkers have to perform multiple roles at the same time. This is one the challenges for those who telework. Teleworkers may experience work-family conflicts if they cannot fulfil the demands of work and family as well. Teleworkers must be aware of how to separate their work and family activities in order to enjoy the satisfaction in job and family as well. Balancing work and family can be done if teleworkers are able to manage and negotiate the border between work and the family domain.

Three models, spillover, segmentation, and conflict, have been used to study the interaction between work and family activities. Another method of balancing work and family is through managing the border between work and family activities. The characteristics of the border between both work and family can be examined by using the work-family border theory. The main objective of these extensive reviews of studies and research is to guide the researcher to develop an appropriate conceptual framework that incorporates research and design issues encountered in the past. The conceptual framework and planned methodology for conducting this study will be demonstrated in detail in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE
METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of teleworkers in managing the border between work and family life in the search for a work-family balance. Working from home has challenged teleworkers with managing the multiple roles of work and family, as well. Both work and family are very important for individuals to succeed. When work life and family life are out of balance, it may have a major impact on their lives, either physically or mentally as well. This chapter highlights the research design and method of the study. The research design for this study is a qualitative method approach and the use of a single case study to explore this phenomenon.

This chapter will explain in detail the procedures in conducting the research. This chapter is divided into eight sections. Section 3.2 states the research process for this study. In Section 3.3 is a brief explanation of the conceptual framework of this study. Section 3.4 discussed the research design used in this study. The overview of the case study approach will be explained in Section 3.5. This study focused on a single case study of eHomemakers Malaysia. Next, Section 3.6 addressed data collection procedures, including semi-structured interviews, online open ended survey, and discussion forums. This is followed by Section 3.7, which discusses the procedures for sampling and selection. Finally, Section 3.8 discusses the data analysis procedure and the use of the interpretive technique to analyze data.

To restate, the research question for this study include:

    a. What are the factors that influence teleworker in managing border between work and family domain to attain balance?

    b. How does a teleworker manage the border between work and family domain to attain work-family balance?

3.2 Research Process

The research process for this study is illustrated in Figure 3.1.

STAGE	PROCESS	OUTPUT
Stage 1	Literature survey	Problem Statement Research Questions Research Objectives
	Theoretical and Conceptual Framework	Conceptual framework based on Work-Family Border Theory
	Identify and determine sample of population	eHomemakers Organisation (Detail explanation is in Chapter 4)
Stage 2	Research Design	Single case study Questionnaire design
	Data collection: On line Survey, Interview and Discussion Forum	Data from: Interview, on line Survey and Discussion forum (Triangulation)
	Data Analysis: analyze and interpretation concurrently	Findings
	Integration and review result	Validation
Stage 3	Produce Report	Final Report

Figure 3.1: Research process

The research process for this study can be categorized into three stages. The first stage is about the identification of the problem. The researcher conducted an extensive literature survey on the research background and related issues posed by the study in order to understand the problem. This is essential to ensure that the researcher can define the problem and in the proper direction for the research. Data was gathered through books, journals, and online information to make the researcher understand the research topic, and enable development of the conceptual framework. The sample of respondents was made after the researcher conducted the initial survey with member of eHomemakers by providing a one-page questionnaire to obtain information that meets the criteria as a teleworker (see Appendix A).

The next stage is the data collection procedure. The questionnaire was constructed from the literature survey. The data collection was conducted through online open ended survey and interviews, and used the same questionnaires. Meanwhile, another method of data collection was reading the messages from the online discussion forum. The purpose of the variety of methods for collecting data was to triangulate data to ensure that the data is valid. The data analysis was done immediately as soon as each or a group of questionnaires had been received. The data was analyzed using the interpretive technique until the information categories became saturated. Initially, the data was coded and then analyzed to produce results. The last stage produced the final results for the study.

3.3 Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review of work-family theories in Chapter two, the conceptual framework was developed to guide the study and this is shown in Figure 3.2.
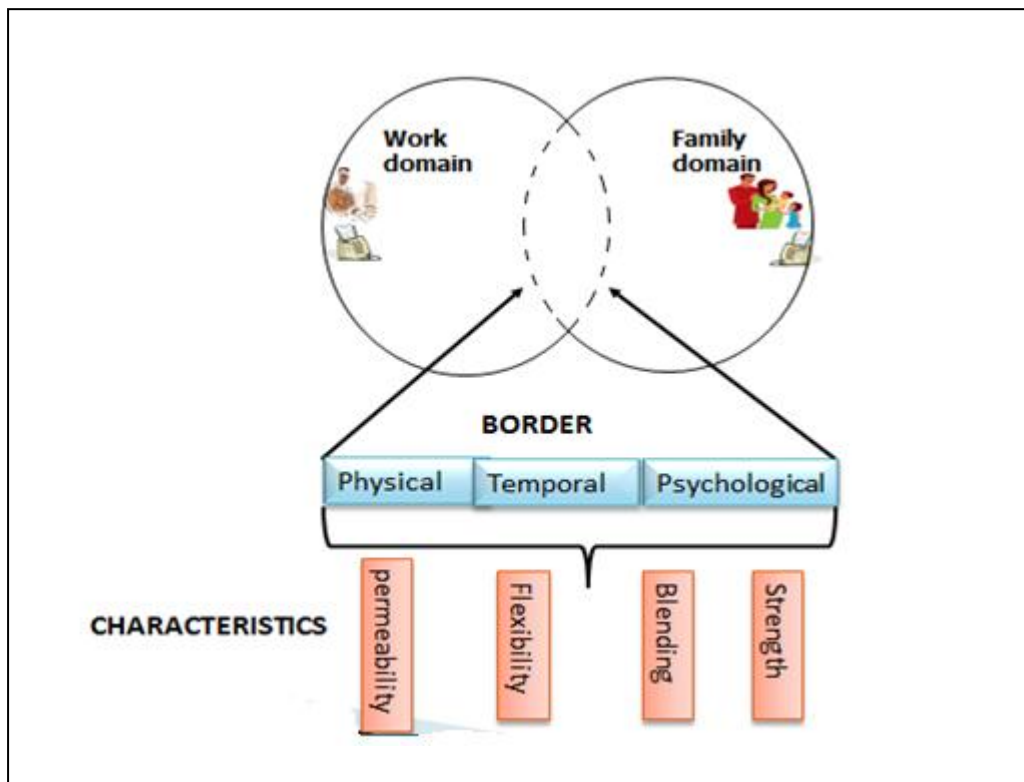
Figure 3.2: A Conceptual Framework of the Study

The study's objective is to examine the experiences of teleworkers in managing the border between work and home domains in the search of a work-family balance. The framework of this study is based on the work-family border theory. The theory stated that "work and family are two different domains that influence each other". The border between these domains is represented by the lines of demarcation between the work domain and the family domain. This border represents three forms, which are

physical, temporal and psychological. The physical border is related to domain behavior that takes place in spaces or rooms for the workplace, or places for the home. The temporal border is the time period allocated when work is done and time taken for family matters. The psychological border is concerned with the mind and thoughts of individuals regarding their work and family life. Each form of this border can be controlled through border characteristics such as permeability, flexibility, blending and strength. The relationships of these constructs are mapped to the research question in this study as shown in Figure 3.2.

The first objective of this study was to to identify the factors that influence teleworkers in managing the border between work and family in order to attain a work-family balance. The second objective is to explore the practices used by the teleworker in managing the border in physical, temporal and psychological terms of the work-family balance .In order to gather the answers from these research questions, the researcher approached the teleworkers (members of e-Homemaker) through interviews, an online open ended survey and reading the interactions from the discussion forum on the eHomemaker's portal.

3.4 Research Design

A research design is a plan to guide the researcher in following the process of collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data to ensure that the objectives of the study are achieved (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). Yin (1994) described a research design as,

"The logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions, and ultimately, to its conclusions. Colloquially, a research design is an action plan for getting from here to there, where here may be defined as the initial set of questions to be answered, and there is some set of conclusions (answers) about these questions. Between "here" and "there" may be found a number of major steps, including the collection and analysis of relevant data" (1994, p. 19)

This study used a qualitative method. The qualitative method provides opportunities for the researcher to understand the phenomenon or problem of interest (Patton, 2002), which is sometimes unavailable elsewhere (Silverman, 2006). One real strength of qualitative research is that it can use 'naturally-occurring' data to find the sequences ('how") in which participants' meanings ('what') are deployed, and thereby establish the character of some phenomenon (Marshall, 1996; Silverman, 2006). A detailed description about the phenomenon, such as life experiences, behaviors, feelings, thought processes, and cultures can be obtained by using the qualitative methodology (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). For this study, this method allows the researcher to explore the phenomenon and understand the teleworkers' life experiences towards the work-family balance. Qualitative inquiry offers a detailed explanation of people's stories with regard to their personal perspectives and experiences (Patton, 2002).

The case study approach is one of the qualitative methodologies, and consists of the research design, data collection techniques and data analysis (Yin, 2003). The researcher applied the case study approach because it will provide the researcher an

understanding of the experiences of teleworkers in managing work and family activities.

3.5 Overview of the Case Study Approach

Case study is used when the researcher wishes to add existing experiences, and to understand about people (Stake, 2001). Stake (2001) mentioned that the case study method *"has been tried and found to be a direct and satisfying way of adding to experience and improving understanding"*. Patton (2002) stated that case studies are quite "information-rich" and "illuminative". The case for this study was individuals. Yin (2003) argues that case study research lends itself to testing of existing theories. He suggests that case study research is able to investigate the *"why"* and *"how"* occurrences of existing real-life phenomena with minimal control from the researcher.

The case study has enabled several sources of evidence to be included, while the retrospective study contributed to a better understanding of the life of teleworkers. Furthermore, a case study can be a research strategy where in-depth research is required, and where little is known about a research topic (Creswell, 1994; Yin, 2003). Benbasat et al. (1987) stated that a case study has no standard definition. A case can refer to a person, a group of people, an organization, a process, or an information system. Experiences and practices can be documented through the case study method, as Benbasat et al. (1987) stated that a case study studies a phenomenon in its natural setting, and engages in multiple methods of data gathering to collect information from any number of entities (people, groups or organizations).

It is most efficacious in capturing information concerning practitioners, and then developing theories from the information (Cepeda & Martin 2005).

Three reasons are given why case study research is suitable as a research strategy: 1) the researcher can study the management of a company in a natural setting, learn about its technological levels, and take the management practices and generate theories from them; 2) the case method allows the *how* and *why* issues to be answered by the researcher in order to understand the substance and complexity of the processes seen; 3) the case study approach is appropriate for exploring areas with scant research studies (Cepeda & Martin, 2005).

Research using case studies have been applied in great numbers by qualitative researchers, e.g., Benbasat et al., (1987); Walsham, (1993). Yin (2003) gave a comprehensive look at case study research, including discussion of design issues, data collection techniques, reliability and validity standards, and methods for analysis and modes for reporting of case studies. Case study research can be used: 1) to generate, elaborate, or test theories; 2) using theory development to enhance one's understanding of that which occurs within an in-depth investigation of a single case situation, or using in-depth investigations of multiple cases (Lee, Mitchell, & Sablynski, 1999).

Zonabend (1992) stated that case studies are done by giving special attention to how complete the researcher is in observing, reconstructing, and analyzing the cases under study. Case studies incorporate the views of the *actors* in the case. To satisfy

the three tenets of the qualitative method (describing, understanding, and explaining) case studies can be used (Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003). In information systems (IS), the case study is the most common qualitative method used (Orlikowski & Baroudi, 1991). The object of the study is information systems in organizations, so the case study research method is particularly well-suited to IS research as interest has shifted to organizational issues rather than technical issues (Benbasat et al., 1987).

According to Creswell (1998), a case study is an

> *"...exploration of a 'bounded system' or a case (or multiple cases) over time, through a detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information that are rich in context. This bounded system is bounded by time and place, and it is the case being studied; a program, an event, an activity, or individuals. Multiple sources of information include observation, interviews, documents, reports, and audio-visual materials. The context of the case involves situating the case within its setting, which may be a physical setting or the social, historical, and/or economic setting for the case"* (1998, p. 61)

Yin (2003) suggested a more general approach to the design of case studies, and made recommendations as well for exploratory, explanatory, and descriptive case studies. For exploratory case studies, data collection and fieldwork can be undertaken prior to defining of the research questions and hypotheses. Explanatory cases are more suitable in doing causal studies, where pattern matching techniques can be used in the analysis of the data. The investigator must begin with a descriptive theory in descriptive cases, or face possibilities of problems occurring throughout the project. Though each design has its own distinctive characteristics, there are overlaps between the three methods, and the goal is to avoid misfits in the data.

Yin (2003) reported that a common critique of case studies method is that it is difficult to generalize one case from another. Results from case studies are generalizable only in a particular context and do not lead to the drawing of causal inferences (Yin, 2003). Sometimes the results may lead to 'side-trails' in reasoning. Stoecker (1993) concluded that with any case study, while the causal process within the case can be accurately specified, generalization is much more difficult. The results of case studies tend to be heavily dependent on the knowledge and experience of the researchers.

3.5.1 Type of Case Study

There are two types of case study that involve either single or multiple cases. A single case study is used to investigate a single subject or a few subjects, and it is more suitable in seeking in-depth data and richer descriptions than multiple cases. Multiple case studies refer to a single study containing more than a single case (Yin, 2003). A single experiment parallels a single case study, so many of the conditions that justify single experiments also justify single case studies (Yin, 2003). He pointed out that generalization of results, from either single or multiple designs, is made for theories, and not for populations.

Multiple cases strengthen the results by replicating the pattern matching, thus increasing confidence in the robustness of the theory. Further, he stated that there are five reasons for choosing a single case design, when: 1) the case represents a critical case in testing and well-formulated theory; 2) the case represents an extreme case or

a unique case that is of intrinsic interest to the researcher; 3) it is a representative or typical case that captures the circumstances and conditions of an everyday or commonplace situation; 4) case study is the revelatory case where an investigator has an opportunity to observe and analyse a phenomenon that was previously inaccessible; and 5) case study is a longitudinal case that studies the same single case at two or more points of time. Multiple case studies are more prevalent, but they are more expensive and time-consuming to conduct.

This researcher used a single case study in this research. A single case study allows the researcher to explore the nature of a phenomena and documents the issue in-depth, varied, and extensively. Case studies provide rich, engaging explorations of projects or applications as they develop in a real-world setting (Cepeda & Martin, 2005).   A single case study can be used by researchers to observe any kind of new theoretical relationships and/or questions (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991). By using a single case study, the researcher is able to understand and describe in-depth about the issue to meet the objective(s) of the research.

3.5.2 Six Sources of Evidence in the Case Study Approach

Generally the research results must be reliable and validated. Reliability refers to the stable quality of the findings, where validity represents the degree of truthfulness for the findings (Altheide & Johnson, 1994). To ensure the validity and reliability of the data, the researcher must use a *valid and reliable… information-gathering instrument* (Miles & Huberman, 1984). In qualitative studies, case study researchers

concern themselves with the clarity, accuracy, and confirmation of their own communications (Stake, 2000). Case studies are known as a type of triangulated research strategy (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The need for triangulation arises from the ethical need to confirm the validity of the processes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Triangulation strategies allow the researcher to identify different ways the phenomenon can be seen to clarify the meaning (Stake, 2000; Patton, 2002).

The triangulation method allows a study to yield more valid, reliable results by making use of different multiple sources, methods, investigators, and theories then to check and recheck findings (Bautista & Go, 1985; Creswell, 1998; Stake, 2000; Patton, 2002). Triangulation is also a way of "guarding against researcher bias" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). According to Denzin (1970), there are four types of triangulation:

1. Theoretical triangulation: involves the use of several different perspectives in the analysis of the same set of data.

2. Data triangulation: gathering data through multiple sampling strategies such as time, space, and people

3. Investigator triangulation: involves more than one researcher in the field situation.

4. Methodological triangulation: involves using more than one method to gather data, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents.

These mean that the greater the triangulation, the more the confidence there is for the findings (Denzin, 1970). As for case studies, we can use multiple sources of data for

the purpose of triangulation (Yin, 2003). Stake (1995) and Yin (2003) listed six sources of evidence that are commonly used in doing case studies: documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts. Each source of data will be explained in the following sections.

3.5.2.1 Documentation

Documents could be letters, memoranda, agendas, announcements, and minutes of meetings, as well as other written reports of events, administrative documents, formal studies or evaluations of the same "site" under study, newspaper clippings or any document that is relevant to the study. To support and augment evidence from other sources is the most important use of documents.

3.5.2.2 Archival records

Archival records may include service records, organizational records, maps and charts, lists of names, survey data, personal records, and other such records. The usefulness of these archival records will vary from case study to case study. For example, records can become so important that they become the object of extensive retrieval and quantitative analysis, while some studies may be only of passing relevance, not considered worthy of being important.

3.5.2.3 Interviews

One of the most important sources of case study information is from interviews. Exploring the respondent's point of view, feelings, and perspectives is the goal of the interview. There are several forms of interviews, such as open-ended, focused, and

structured or survey. The open-ended interview allows the interviewees to express their statements in their own terms, based on their experiences regarding the program that is being evaluated. Describing both program processes and outcomes from the perspective of the target audience or key stakeholder means that this method is well suited for gathering rich data.

Situations where the respondent is interviewed for a short period of time, usually answering several set questions is where the focused interview is used, and normally confirms the data collected from other source. The structured interview is similar to a survey, and is used to gather data in case studies looking at things such as neighborhood studies. The questions are developed in advance, and detailed much as they are in a survey. An essential source of case study evidence, overall, comes from interviews because many case studies are about human affairs. These human affairs are reported and interpreted through the eyes of chosen, well-informed interviewees and respondents who can provide important insights into many situations.

3.5.2.4 Direct observations

Direct observations occur when field visits are conducted during case studies. Observations can range from formal to casual data collection activities. This involves observing meetings, sidewalk activities, factory work, classrooms, and the like. Observational evidence is quite useful in augmenting information about the topic being studied.

3.5.2.5 Participant-observation

Participant-observation is a specific mode of observation where the researcher becomes involved in the events being studied as an active participant. This technique has been frequently used in anthropological studies concerning different cultural or social groups.

3.5.2.6 Physical Artifact

Physical or cultural artifacts refer to technological devices, tools or instruments, works of art, or other physical evidence. Artifacts such as these would be collected or observed as part of field visits and are used quite extensively in anthropological research.

As for this study, the data was collected from three sources, which are semi-structured interviews, an online open ended survey and exploring the interactions on the discussion forum for data validation. Yin (2003) stated that no single source has any complete advantage over any others. As a matter of fact, various sources can be highly complementary, and good case studies will want to use as many different sources as possible (Yin, 2003). This triangulation of source data will augment the reliability and validity of the data. To increase the reliability aspects, first, the researcher followed the procedure for conducting a single case study developed by Stake (1995). Stake (1995) stated that the protocols used to ensure accuracy and derive alternative explanations are called triangulation. This procedure was explained in Section 3.5.3.

3.5.3 Procedure for Conducting a Case Study

There are several procedures in conducting case studies. The researcher followed Stake's (1995) approach to conducting a single case study. There are six steps altogether, and these steps are as follows:

1. **Provide an in-depth study of a bounded system**

    The researcher develops an in-depth discussion and analysis of a bounded system. In order to begin this analysis, the category of case that will best harvest information about an issue, or whether the case is important in itself must be determined.

2. **Ask questions about an issue under examination or about the details of a case that is of unusual interest**

    The case study should contain research questions that address either an issue or a problem or a case. The research questions in this study seek to address the characteristics of teleworkers and their practices in managing the border between work and family in balancing their work and family life.

3. **Gather multiple forms of data to develop an in-depth understanding**

    For this study, data was collected through interviews, an online open ended survey and investigative messages from discussion forums.

4. **Describe the case in detail and provide an analysis of issues or themes that the case presents**

Data analysis has to be a detailed interpretation of information about people, places, and activities involved. A list of themes or issues was developed during the data analysis process. For this study, the researcher used an interpretive analysis as the data analysis technique.

5. **In both description and issue development, situate the case within its context or setting**

The case study researcher situates the case within its context so that the case description and themes are related to the detailed activities and situations involved in the case from the analysis. The researcher then can narrate the study through methods such as major events, followed by an up-close description, or a detailed perception.

6. **Make an interpretation of the meaning of the case analysis**

The last step of this process is by interpreting the meaning of the case, whether that meaning comes from learning about the issue of the case or learning about an unusual situation. Lastly, the researcher reports what has been learned. In this study, the researcher presented the experiences used by teleworkers in managing work and family in the search for a work-family balance.

Next, the researcher pursued the single case study protocol, which contains the instrument and the general rules in conducting research. Case study protocols are a primary way of increasing reliability and are intended to guide the researcher in carrying out the data collection for a single case study (Yin, 2003). Finally, the researcher handled the analysis of data together with another person in order to make

sure that the researcher had the same (or close to) degree of agreement of the interpretations of the data. Yin (2003) showed that the protocol is a major component in asserting reliability for the case study research. There are three principles of data collection in dealing with the problems of establishing the construct validity and reliability of the case study evidence. The three principles are 1) use multiple sources of evidence; 2) create a case study database; 3) maintain a chain of evidence. For this study, the researcher will only follow principle 1 and principle 3.

Using multiple sources of evidence in case study allow researchers to address a broader range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioral issues. The most important advantage presented for using multiple sources as evidence is the development of "*converging lines of enquiry*", a process of triangulation (Yin, 2003). Therefore, findings or conclusions for a case study are likely to be much more convincing and accurate if they are based on several different sources of information (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2003). The second principle is to do with the way of organizing and documenting the data collected for case studies. Yin suggested that every case study develop a formal, presentable database so that other researchers can review the evidence directly and are not limited to the written reports. Along this way, a case study database markedly increases the reliability of the entire case study. However, this principle only applies if researchers are using multiple case studies.

In this study the researcher focuses on a single case study that is eHomemaker's group so that the principle was not applicable. The last principle is to maintain a

chain of evidence in order to increase the reliability of information. This principle is based on a notion similar to that used in criminology investigation (Yin, 1994). The principle is to allow the reader of the case study follow the derivation of any evidence from the initial research questions to the ultimate case conclusions and vice versa. This mean that the links must be made between the questions asked, the data collected and the conclusion drawn.

As Yin (2003) stated, case studies are always considered contextual, consequently, it is not normally considered generalizing findings from specific case studies to other contexts. However, even though this is a case study, the organization and the findings are not unique and unusual, and therefore it is hoped that this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of work-life issues.

3.5.4 Unit of Analysis

According to Yin (2003), a general guide to defining the unit of analysis of the case study is related to the way the researcher defines the research question. The research question in this study is related to the experiences of teleworkers in managing the border between work and family to attain a work-family balance. The major entity that will be analyzed in this study refers to eHomemaker's community members. Therefore, the unit of analysis of this study is the individual.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

In any type of research study, data collection is considered an important aspect. Various methods of data collection such as personal interviewing, telephone, mail

and the Internet have been used. In order to collect data, the researcher needs to construct the survey instrument. The survey instrument is the tool used to gather relevant information (Nesbary, 2000). The primary method of gathering survey information is via the questionnaire (Nesbary, 2000). Dillman (2000) stated that in order to employ surveys more effectively, it is important to understand that a questionnaire is one element in a process that begins with defining the study objectives and ends with analysis of the data and reporting any results. Written questionnaires require the respondent to read questions, and then to reply in written form. In an interview, questions are asked by the researcher, the respondent answers the questions, and the researcher writes down the answer. Traditionally, questionnaires are administered in three forms, including mail surveys, telephone interviews and personal interviews (Nesbary, 2000).

Interviews are actually a combination of the face-to-face interview and the written questionnaire. Because they are conducted face-to-face, follow-up questions may be asked more easily than in telephone or mail surveys. The strength of interviews gives the researcher the opportunity to clarify responses from the respondents. However, it is relatively expensive. They comprise questionnaire construction, respondent identification, travel costs, and time. The capability of communication media to augment interaction and feedback is one of the most significant differences between e-mail interviews and face-to-face or telephone interviews, and is involved with a richness of media (Panteli, 2002; Robert & Dennis, 2005).

In the present day, with the advent of the Internet, interpersonal communications have changed dramatically. The Internet has provided powerful new methods of conducting survey research. Internet surveys are available in three basic 'flavors', including e-mail, disk-based, and web- or forms-based (Nesbary, 2000). An e-mail interview can be done conveniently and can generate high-quality data when handled carefully (Meho, 2006). He further added that semi-structured e-mail interviews can be considered a possible substitute for face-to-face and telephone interviews.

According to Sue & Ritter (2007), online open ended survey is an effective way to gather information from a large geographic region, quickly and inexpensively. With web surveys and e-mail surveys, there are no mailing or long-distance telephone costs. Further, coding and analysis costs may be kept to minimum, if database tools are used to retrieve survey responses (Nesbary, 2000) A number of advantages have been shown for using online data collection methods in survey research, for instance, lower costs, faster turnaround, higher response levels, lower respondent error; a greater potential for stimulation through including colour, graphics, and sound, flexibility in the use of adaptive questionnaires, and even greater enjoyment (Kehoe & Pitkow, 1996; Weible & Wallace, 1998; Comley, 2000; Dommeyer & Moriarty, 2000). Many of these advantages relate to what has been considered the efficiency of online data collection methods (Weible & Wallace, 1998; Mc Donald & Adam, 2003) .

The primary advantage of this method is in its simplicity: it is easy for researchers to form and send the survey, and it is a much simpler task for respondents to answer

and return it (Dommeyer & Moriarty, 2000). By using e-mail (whether in delivering a questionnaire, or an invitation to a web survey), error messages are sent back to the sender (the researcher), allowing them to select another set of individuals from the list in order to attempt to obtain a suitable sample size according to the planned research (Oppermann, 1995). Bachman et al. (2000) had indicated that participants of online open ended survey liked responding to open-ended questions.

In this study, data was collected using three sources of data and methods: semi-structured interviews, online open ended survey and interactions in discussion forum. The purpose of collecting data using these various methods is to increase the credibility and validity of the data. The data collection procedure for this study followed two of the three principles (1 and 3) that had been recommended by Yin (1994) as mentioned in section 3.5.3. These principles can help establish construct validity and study reliability Yin (1994), Yin (1994) stated that with triangulation, any potential problems in construct validity can also be addressed, because multiple sources of evidence lead to multiple measures for the same phenomenon. In this study, data was triangulated from semi-structured interviews, an online open ended survey, and interactions in discussion forums.

As for this study, the primary data collection was based on semi-structured interview (see Appendix B for the interview protocols) and secondary (but complementary) techniques include on-line questionnaire and interactions through discussion forums. As for this study, the constructs as well as dimensions and elements in the semi-

structured interviews and online open ended survey were based upon previous studies mentioned in the literature review section.

The semi-structured interview protocol for this study consists of three parts (see Appendix B). The first part contains demographics of the teleworkers. The purpose of this section was to create the respondent profile. The second part was questions related to management of the border between work and family activities in the form of border characteristics. The objective of this part was to explore the teleworkers managing and negotiating of the border between work and family life. The final part was questions regarding the factors that influence teleworkers in managing work and family to attain the balance between both domains. The objective of this section is to identify the teleworkers characteristics in managing work and family as well. The protocols for the semi-structured interviews and online open ended survey were similar. The protocol for the teleworkers had thirty-four (34) semi-structured questions. The questions were prepared in two languages, Malay and English.

3.6.1 Interview

Taylor & Bogdan (1984) said that getting to know people enough to understand what they are saying, and creating an atmosphere where they are more likely to talk freely, emphasizes the importance of in-depth interviewing. Use of the interview method enabled the interviewer to *"enter into the other person's perspective"* (Patton, 2002). An interview technique was selected because it elicits a richness of data that can be used in the analysis. Potter (1996) has defined interviewing as "a *technique of*

gathering data from humans by asking them questions, and getting them to react

verbally". Interviews are used to gain a complete, detailed account of the experience

under study from respondents (Polkinghorne, 2005).

In this study, the researcher employed semi-structured interviews to generate rich

descriptive data from the teleworkers. A semi-structured interview is chosen because

it provides a desirable combination of objectivity and depth, and often permits

gathering valuable data that could not be successfully obtained by any other

approach. The idea in choosing this technique is to allow the researcher to explore

the teleworkers' life experiences in managing the border between the work and

family domain, and to understand how they interpret the decisions that they make.

A semi-structured interview also allows the researcher to ask probing questions

without being constrained by a set of standardized questions. Through this technique,

the researcher can also make an interpersonal contact, and has the opportunity to

follow-up with comments when desired. Semi-structured interviews are conducted

as guided conversations, with broad questions being asked that do not constrain the

conversation, and as a result of the discussion new questions are allowed to be

inserted. This technique allows the interviewee to express their opinions, concerns

and feelings, and might be used to obtain feedback and offers the interviewer the

opportunity to explore any issues that arise. Often the informative data obtained from

semi-structured interviews provides answers, but the basic reasons for the answers.

In this study, the researcher was able to ask teleworkers about a general topic, and then following up with in-depth questions when their answers were not clear, or when a point required further clarification or justification. Next, based on the evidence given by all the teleworkers, the researcher analyzed and wrote out the findings. The interviews were carried out using the appropriate protocol as mentioned in the Section 3.6. The researcher made sure that the questions were clear, and then paraphrased their answers correctly. All the conversations between the researcher and the respondents were recorded with permission from the respondents. The researcher ended the interviewing process after reaching the point of information redundancy from the respondents (the sampling scheme is fully described in section 3.7.2). The next step was that the researcher started transcribing the answers from the respondents. In order to test the validity of the data, the researcher collected the data from additional sources, such as online open ended survey and interactions on discussion forums on the eHomemaker website (this is known as triangulation of multiple sources). The researcher followed the step-by-step procedures for conducting a single case study as described in Section 3.5.3. to ensure the data was reliable for this study.

3.6.1.1 Interview setting

In this study, the interviews were conducted face-to-face, or via telephone or electronic chats, or by e-mail or the online open ended survey. Data collection for this study began on the 10th of March, 2009 and finished on the 10th of May, 2009. The researcher started looking for potential respondents in August 2007. In order to

get potential respondents, the researcher attended one of the eHomemaker conferences in September 2007 (see Appendix E). Based on the information gathered during the seminar, the researcher contacted thirty one (31) of the potential respondents by telephone. During this initial phone call, the researcher explained the purpose of the study; that researcher wanted to interview them about their current practices in managing work and family with regard to the work-family balance. If they agreed to an interview, then the researcher arranged a suitable date and times to visit them, and also asked them whether the researcher could audiotape the interview. The researcher asked them to choose the medium that they were more comfortable with, either to do a face-to-face interview, or call them on the telephone, or set up a chat through the Internet or online open ended survey. Most of them agreed to participate in the study, but refused the interview session, and they asked the researcher to send the questionnaire via e-mail.

The researcher managed to get four (4) respondents willing to do a face-to-face interview, two (2) respondents agreed to interviewing by phone, and one respondent was available to do the interview through online chat. Telephone interviews are more efficient method of collecting data, particularly for situations where time is an important factor, and the time taken to conduct the survey is limited (Babbie, 1990). Face-to-face interviews usually result in very high completion rates, and allow the respondent to talk about any proposed products or services under the guidance of the interviewer (Babbie, 1990; Nesbary, 2000).

The researcher had made the appointment with the respondents for the interview session. The places taken for the interview sessions were at the respondent's house, hotel lobbies, restaurants, and the researcher's office. The interviews were taken either in the morning or the afternoon based on the availability of the respondents, as the time spent on the interview and phone interview was one to two hours. An interview guide for this study was used to fine-tune the information pursued, how to pursue it, and to ensure consistency of data across interviews (Patton, 2002). The guide was used to put questions to all respondents in the same order, and in exactly the same way (Patton, 2002). Patton (2002) advised that consideration should be given to the wording of the questions, and that any clarifications, elaborations, or probes should be written into the interview itself. The wording for the primary questions should be open-ended and encouraging enough for respondents want to express their opinions and describe their experiences.

Before the interview started, the respondents were asked to sign their names on the consent form to show that they agreed to participate in the study (see Appendix F). These forms covered issues such as confidentiality, anonymity, tape-recorded conversations, voluntary participation, and the right of respondents to withdraw without penalty from the study at any time they wanted. The respondents were informed that their answers were being recorded, and were only done when their permission had been obtained. The respondents accepted and understood the conditions under which it took place. During the interview, the researcher recorded the conversation and also summarized them in notes. For some of the questions, the researcher probed the respondents in order to get more detailed information.

When a researcher wants to illuminate subjective human experiences, in-depth interviewing is especially considered siutable (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Before the interview ended, the researcher went over the notes in order to correct any errors or interpretations. Patton (2002) stated that researchers can see a great deal of the accuracy, completeness, fairness, and perceived validity of their data analysis by having the people react to what is described and concluded. Once the the researcher recieved the agreement from the respondents and made the necessary corrections, then the researcher began the data analysis process. For the face-to face interview, researcher gave a small token to the respondents in appreciation for taking part in this study. The researcher did the same procedure for the telephone interview and online chatting except recording the conversation.

3.6.2 Online open ended survey

With the increasing suffusion of the Internet it is possible to perform surveys easily that are more cost-effective through webpages such as online open ended survey (Punter, Ciolkowski, Freimut, & John, 2002). Sue & Ritter (2007) stated that online open ended survey research offers the promise of speed, economy, and improved data quality. They added that the appropriate survey method may be determined by the type of people or group that is being surveyed. Moreover, the use of questionnaire is part of the qualitative data sources besides observation and participant observation (fieldwork), interviews, documents and texts and the researcher's impressions and reactions (Myers, 1997). Online open ended survey was chosen because this technique was suitable for the sample of respondents in this

study, where all the respondents were involved directly with ICT because of the nature of their work as a teleworker. This method of recruiting respondents is for researchers who are seeking data from the general population or specific target audiences (Sue & Ritter, 2007).

Moreover, the eHomemaker members are involved in business and located in different places in Malaysia. When surveying populations of online users that have similar demographics, online research can be a good means of data collection (Direct Opinions, 2012). Wilson & Larskey (2003), mentioned in Shafiz Afendi (2006), suggested that the best use of the Internet is by using other methodologies that pick up additional respondent groups, such as business people and teenagers that might be more difficult to access through personal, telephone or postal surveys. According to Dillman (2007), another motivation for conducting surveys through publications such as magazines, newspapers etc., is to identify people with rare characteristics in the population, and avoid the costs of large numbers of screening calls.

As for online open ended survey, the researcher used one of the online software services to create the questionnaire (see Appendix C). After creating the questionnaire and placing it online, the researcher sent the URL address to the eHomemaker web editor to be published in their monthly e-newsletter. For this study, the link on a website URL address for the online open ended survey was advertised in the monthly e-newsletter of eHomemakers.net published in April 2009 (see Appendix D). The questionnaire was posted at a specially-designed Internet site for one month. The respondents were invited to answer either the questionnaire using

Microsoft Word format or by visiting the link. An appropriate period was given to the respondents so that they had ample time to answer (one month: 1st April, 2009 to 10th May, 2009). All respondents who filled in the survey before May 10, 2009 received a cash incentive. During this period, sixty-two (62) respondents completed the questionnaire via online open ended survey, and seven (7) respondents delivered their answer via e-mail.

The potential to collect a large amount of data in a relatively short amount of time, and the elimination of the necessity for researchers to enter or process the data is one of the greatest strengths of Internet survey data collection (Direct Opinions, 2012). Moreover, researchers need not worry about issues of missing or out-of-range responses, proceeding directly to preliminary analysis of the data, as web-based questionnaires are automatically validated (Direct Opinions, 2012). During this phase, the researcher continuously monitored the incoming data so as to prevent repetitions of completed questionnaires. The researcher ended this method on the 10th May, 2009, after receiving the same answers from the respondents.

3.6.3 Messages from the discussion forum

Another technique for data collection used in this study was by exploring the relevant topics that were being discussed in the online discussion forum of the e-Homemakers website. The written record of discourse of the forum provides a rich source of data for evaluators (Anderson & Kanuka, 1997). They suggested that reading the transcript will help the researchers to identify and draw out the potential

value of the forum process, which was confirmed or refuted through the interviews and survey. Prior (2003) stated that paintings, tapestries, monuments, diaries, shopping lists, stage players, adverts, rail tickets, films, photographs, videos, engineering drawings, the content of human issue archives, and World Wide Web (WWW) pages can all stand as documents in one frame or another. The eHomemakers had created their own website, where the objective was to announce and advertise their activities to its users.

The eHomemakers discussion forum was prepared to accommodate their members in sharing information on their career and family life. All individuals were invited to participate and must register for this forum. There was no charge for the registration fee. The researcher registered on this forum and started collecting messages from the archival data, and examined the topics that had been posted by the eHomemaker members until the end on 28 May, 2010. The discussion forum data was used to look for agreements between interview data and current/archival discussions.

3.7 Sampling and selection

Choosing a study sample is an important step in any research project, according to Marshall (1996), since it is rarely practical, efficient or ethical to study populations as a whole. An appropriate sample size for a qualitative study is a sample size that adequately answers the research questions. The focus of qualitative research differs from the focus of statistical research, in that it requires a set of principles for the selection of data sources (Polkinghorne 2005). The focus of statistical research is to

make conclusions about a population on the basis of a study of a sample of that population that requires a random representative selection of data sources from that population.

The focus of qualitative inquiries is in describing, understanding, and clarifying human experiences, where the study requires collecting a series of intense, full, and saturated descriptions of the experiences under investigation (Polkinghorne, 2005). The goal and purpose of qualitative research is to gather data that is rich and descriptive, and intensely illustrates the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2002; Polkinghorne, 2005), so qualitative researchers must think carefully about the best strategies to accomplish this purpose.

Unlike quantitative researchers, who aim for larger numbers of context-stripped cases and seek statistical significance, qualitative researchers usually work with small samples of people, grouped according to their context and studied in greater depth (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Patton (1996) mentioned that in the qualitative approach, sampling issues are more concerned with gaining access to relevant evidence concerning the phenomenon under study. The two keywords in this approach are *access*, which reflects any practical concerns, and *relevance*, which reflects concerns with validity (Potter, 1996). Patton (2002) outlined a number of selection strategies for qualitative researchers that were more purposeful. He added that the total number of participants in qualitative studies is typically much smaller than those used in quantitative studies. For example, twelve participants in an investigation could be sufficient enough if the data collected from each participant is

varied and extensive, and manages to tap their experiences in greater depth and detail. Patton (2002) argued that:

"There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know; the purpose of the inquiry; what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources"(p. 244).

This study was designed to explore the experiences of teleworkers in managing work and family life and to generate insights into what are the factors that influence them and how they manage the border between work and family life in order to attain a work-family balance. Marshal (1996) stated that, for a qualitative study, the most appropriate sample size is that which adequately answers the research question(s). The sampling frame and population for this study are individuals that have registered with eHomemakers, Malaysia. Permission for this research study was obtained from the organization, eHomemaker (see Appendix I).

This study used purposive sampling because it offers the researcher the opportunity to obtain relevant information that is only available with certain groups (Sekaran, 2003; Patton, 2002). Moreover, Marshall (1996) stated that appropriate sample sizes for qualitative studies are those that adequately answer the research questions. Purposeful sampling is then used to select information-rich cases in order to understand and elucidate the phenomenon to be studied (Patton, 2002). The profile of the participants was considered a limitation of this study. The sample population was limited to individuals who registered with the eHomemakers organization and were involved with teleworking practices. Although the work-life balance is an

issue for both teleworkers and non-teleworkers, teleworkers experience more conflicts with juggling family responsibilities differently from   non-teleworkers because of the nature of their mode of work.

Purposive sampling, sometimes called judgemental sampling, occurs when the researcher selects samples in a subjective manner in an attempt to obtain a sample that appears to be representative of the population (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996). Purposive or purposeful selection of data sources involves the researcher in choosing people or documents that the researcher can use to learn more substantially about their experiences (Polkinghorne, 2005). Patton (2002) has said that selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study is of great importance. He explained that information-rich cases are those cases where the researcher can learn a great deal more about issues of primary importance to the purpose of the inquiry, thus the term purposeful sampling. Participants and documents in a qualitative study are not chosen because they fulfill the representative requirements for statistical inference, but because they provide more substantial contributions to augmentation of the structure and character of the experience under investigation (Polkinghorne, 2005).

In this study, the researcher obtained seventy-six (76) respondents from all the techniques applied. The sample of respondents enabled the researcher to produce richer information in order to achieve the objectives of the study.

3.7.1 The Problems Encountered in Participating in the Semi-Structured Interviews and Online open ended survey

The sample of respondents was chosen after the researcher did some Internet searching. This group had created their own website and was actively involved with business activities, especially home-based businesses. In order to know more about the group activities, the researcher attended their conference in December 2007 (see Appendix E). The researcher sent an e-mail to the conference organizer and explained the purpose of the study (see Appendix G) and asked permission to use their members as a sample for this study. In order to get information about the eHomemaker members, the researcher prepared the questionnaires to be distributed during the conference.

The questionnaire consisted of name, telephone number, e-mail address, occupation, and included a comment or opinion section from the eHomemakers members regarding the teleworking concept (see Appendix A). The organizer agreed to help the researcher in distributing the questionnaire by hiring two members of eHomemakers. The researcher paid certain amount of money for their services. The survey form also being published in their E-Newsletter for the month of September 2007 (see Appendix H). The researcher sent out a hundred questionnaires, and only forty-two (42) were returned after the conference. This is because not all the participants were working from home. Based on the returned questionnaires, only thirty-five (35) participants were working from home. Starting in March 2009, the researcher made a phone call to invite them to participate in this study. Most of them agreed to participate but were not available to be interviewed. However they

were willing to answer the questions through the online open ended survey or by e-mail.

Apart from that, the researcher received an e-mail from the web administrator offering help to publish a questionnaire through their e-newsletters for the April issue in 2009 (see Appendix D). Researchers are required to pay RM200 for the questionnaire to be advertised for a month. There will also be a set that the results of this study can be shared with eHomemakers. The researcher agreed to the offer and made a payment of RM200 along with a letter to state that investigators will present the research findings to eHomemakers (see Appendix J). Several changes were made to improve the comprehensiveness of the questionnaire and its various items. For that, the researchers reduced the number of questions from 44 to 34 questions based on the comments given by respondents that there were too many questions, and it was repetitive. Finally, the number of questions that were advertised in the online open ended survey via the e-newsletter was 34 questions (see Appendix B). The respondents could answer questions via the online open ended survey or save it as a Word document and send it via e-mail directly to the researchers. Researchers gave an incentive of RM10 for each respondent as a token of appreciation for participating in this study.

3.7.2 Saturation

In a qualitative approach, data collection ends when the researcher finds that little or no additional learning could be extracted from any additional data (Lee et al., 1999). The decision may be based on real-world constraints, such as the researcher

surrendering from fatigue, strong desires to write out the results from the data, and pressure from their supervisor (Lee et al., 1999). In this study, the main source of data was obtained from the interviews. The study was conducted through semi-structured interviews with the members of eHomemakers. The researcher stopped collecting data when the researcher began hearing a replay of the same information from the interviewees (Polkinghorne, 2005). The iteration of data collection would continue until the descriptions of the respondent's experiences become saturated, that is, the new sources repeat what has been previously extracted and become superficial (Glaser and Straus, 1967, as cited in Polkinghorne, 2005).

Data collection would be sufficient when there is evidence of coherent patterns, norms, and practices of how decisions were made in balancing their work and family life (Shafiz Afendi, 2006). The researcher also sought consistent themes from the online open ended survey and discussion forums. These multiple sources of data helped the researcher to triangulate the data to provide a rich description of the study. The collection of data ended after information from the informants became saturated, that is, when the data gathered from the informants has consistent patterns with other informants. It might be said that a sufficiency of data, not numbers, drives the selection process (Morrow, 2005).

Methodologists who conduct qualitative studies often use redundancy of data and theoretical saturation to determine if the data is sufficient (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Redundancy occurs when the researcher imports new data into the analysis, but no new findings of note are seen (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). True redundancy can never

be achieved because of the uniqueness of each participant's experience; indeed, additional data would add richness and complexity to the analysis (Morrow, 2005). However, categories or themes used in the analysis are theoretically saturated when they account for all the data gathered, and illustrate the complexity of the study of interest (Strauss, 1987 cited in Morrow, 2007). When theoretical saturation is seen, it may be reasonable to assume, in a practical sense, that redundancy has been achieved (Morrow, 2007).

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis was obtained from the multiple sources of data that were the transcriptions from the interviews, online chat, telephone interview, online open ended survey, e-mail and messages from the discussion forum. Data analysis was done immediately each time data was received from the respondents. After each interview session, data were transcribed accordingly. For data sent by e-mail, as questionnaires returned, each one was assigned a unique identification (ID) number. Identification numbers were typed onto the printed questionnaires. Data from the interviews was transcribed into a text document. Data collected by a Web-based survey host can be automatically tracked via the host software. In this study, the researcher downloaded responses everyday, starting from 1st April up to 11th May, 2009.

First the researcher reviewed and reviewed again the respondent's statements to identify the pattern of responses. Data were analyzed based on the questions of each

research objectives for each respondent. For the validation purposes, data from two different sources (i.e. online open ended survey and discussion forum) were compared with those received during the interview session. Table 3.1 shows the example of the similarity of data received from interview, online open ended survey and discussion forum. The process was terminated when answers received are almost the same. This signifies that triangulation has been achieved. The researcher applied the interpretive technique to analyze the data.

Table 3.1: Example of data mapping from the three sources of data under the theme self discipline

Interview question	Source of data		
	Interview	Online open ended survey	Discussion forum
What other considerations were taken in building your character towards balancing your work and home life	*"yang paling penting ialah saya amat mencintai pekerjaan saya jadi saya komited dengan kerja saya oleh itu saya sentiasa mendisiplinkan diri supaya saya dapat menguruskan kerjaya dan keluarga dengan lancar"* [*"The most important thing about my job is I enjoy it very much, so I always make sure I am committed to it, I always discipline my self so that I can handle my work and family matters easier"*]	*"Self discipline is most important to manage the time with home and work life"*	*"Well, anything you do, you must have self-discipline. Even though you work from home, you must be professional enough to separate the time for personal and work..."*

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The interpretive studies is in regard to the assumption that people create and associate their own subjective and inter-subjective meanings based on their interaction with the world around them (Orlikowski and Baroudi, 1991). Interpretive researchers are able to understand the phenomenon according to meanings obtained from the respondents. Denzin (1989) stated that interpretive interaction attempts to make the panorama of lived experience directly accessible to the reader, and focus on those life experiences that radically alter and shape the meaning people give to themselves and their life projects.

In Information System (IS), interpretive research is "*aimed at producing an understanding of the context of the IS and the process whereby the IS influences and is influenced by its context*"(Walsham, 1993). According to Klein and Myers (1999), interpretive research "*can help IS researchers to understand human thought and action in social and organizational contexts; it has the potential to produce deep insights into information systems phenomena, including the management of information systems and information systems development*".

3.8.1 Overview of Interpretive Technique

The researcher carried out data analysis simultaneously with the data collection. This means that data collection and data analysis were processed simultaneously. It is an iterative set of processes. The understanding of the researcher has is then tested and modified, then retested again through cycles of additional data collection and analysis until the most understandable interpretation is derived (Bredo & Feinberg,

1982; Van Manen, 1983 as cited in Kaplan & Duchon 1988).Generally, qualitative methodologists prefer not to separate issues of design from issues concerning data analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003), but recommend that both design and analysis should be described together.

Interpretive methods describe phenomena by way of the meanings that participants assign to them, rather than what the researchers assign as a meaning. Interpretative research permits the interaction of both actors and situations to blend together and grow (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994). The research data for this study consisted of the information from the questionnaires from the online open ended survey, interviews and documents of the interactions from the discussion forum. For the data analysis in this study, the researcher followed Creswell's (1998) initial step of description (phase one) and Stake's (1995) four forms of data analysis (phase two) using an inductive process.

The data collected in phase one (the questionnaires) were summarized in narrative form to provide a descriptive background for the participants. In this study, the fourth form in Stake's framework for data analysis is naturalistic generalizations(1995). Stake (2001) expressed their view that researchers in qualitative analysis do not attempt to make empirical generalizations from a small sample to a larger population; instead, the researcher is seeking insights into various phenomenon. Naturalistic generalizations are those insights gained concerning the phenomenon that people learn from the case (Creswell, 1998). In phase two, both

categorical aggregation and direct interpretation involve finding patterns within the results (Stake, 1995).

In order to apply the interpretive technique effectively and efficiently, there are seven principles based on the hermeneutic orientation. Hermeneutic technique is chosen in this research as the way to analyze the data. Hermeneutic techniques emphasize an in-depth reading or examination of textual data, which could refer to conservation, written words, or pictures (Lee et al, 1999). It is aimed at enlightenment of any overt or covert meanings embedded within printed text or oral text transcription by conducting an in-depth examination of the text itself, which is commonly used in linguistics and rhetorical studies (Lee et al, 1999). According to Neuman (2006), hermeneutics is a method associated with social science interpretation that begins in religious and literary studies of textual materials, where in-depth inquiry into a text, and relating its separate parts to the complete text, can reveal deeper levels of meaning.

Hermeneutics, as a scientific approach, was originally used to study written texts, both in detail and as a whole, to enable people to derive any deeper meanings contained within it. Interpretive social science expanded the approach to become a method to develop a deeper understanding of social events in the world. Myers (1994) suggested critical hermeneutics as an interpretive approach as one way of conducting research into Information System (IS) implementation. He urged that researchers regard critical hermeneutics as providing a richer, more integrative view

of IS implementation, with the total understanding in a given situation being critically evaluated by the researcher.

Researchers should focus on the broader historical and social issues surrounding the implementation of any particular system. The approach by Myers (1994) is consistent with what Walsham (1993) called an interpretive perspective on IS. Walsham (1993) believed that it is important for researchers to have an understanding of the context of IS, and the process where the context is influenced by and influences IS. He defined the context as the multilevel identification of the various systems and structures within which the IS embedded, e.g., the organization as a whole, the social structures, and the minds of the human participation involved with the system, including designers, users and any those affected by the system.

He assumed that human actors draw on elements of context, such as resources or perceived authority, to carry out actions, and this activity can reinforce existing systems of resource distribution or power as well as creating new systems of authority and meaning. There are various descriptions of the requirements for inducing theory from interpretive research (Klein & Myers, 1999; Walsham, 1995). The current study will focus on describing the requirements of Klien & Myers (1999) for evaluating case studies from an interpretive approach. Klien & Myers (1999) have listed a set of principles for evaluating case studies from the interpretive approach. Figure 3.3 illustrates all the steps of the interpretive technique used to analyse the data in this study. Below are the steps used in this study with referring to the principles proposed by Klien & Myers (1999):

1. **The fundamental principle of the hermeneutic circle.** This principle suggests that all human understanding is derived by the constant iterations between the meaning and interdependence of the parts and the whole that they form. This principle of human understanding is fundamental for all other principles. The process of interpretation goes from a pre-cursory understanding of the parts to the whole, and then from a global understanding of the complete context back to a more finely-tuned understanding of each part, i.e., the meaning of the words (Klein& Myers, 1999). The fundamental principle of hermeneutics as the interpretation of text, and specifically in this case, as the interpretation of the interview transcription, online open ended survey script, and messages from the discussion forum were the hermeneutic circle.

2. **The principle of contextualization**. This requires critical reflection of the social and historical background of the research setting, so that the intended audience can see how the current situation under investigation emerged. In this context it is not possible to discuss the teleworkers life and their operating environments in a detailed way. In this study the researcher wanted to understand how teleworkers manage and negotiate the border between work and family life in order to attain the work-family balance. From here, the researcher understood that teleworkers had their own ways/approaches/practices/strategies in managing the border between work and family life.

3. **The principle of interaction between the researcher and the subjects**. This requires critical reflection on how data was socially constructed through the interaction between the researcher and the informants. The researcher participated in interview cases and the remainder was from the online open ended

survey. Thus, in these cases the researcher did not interact directly with the respondents, but relied on the texts. After a number of iterations of the hermeneutic circle, a whole complex of shared meanings will emerge.

4. **The principle of abstraction and generalization**. This requires relating the ideographic details revealed by the data interpretation through the application of principles one and two to theoretical, general concepts that describe the nature of human understanding and social action. Walsham (1995) argued that interpretive case studies support four types of generalization: the development of concepts, the generation of theory, the drawing of specific implications, and the contribution of rich insights (Walsham, 1995). The key point here is that theory plays a crucial role in interpretive research and clearly distinguishes it from mere anecdotes. The researcher used the work-family border theory to understand how the teleworkers manage and negotiate the border of work and family life for the work-family balance. This theory guided the researcher in interpretations and meanings in order to understand how the life experience of the teleworkers augmented the search for the work-family balance.

5. **The principle of dialogical reasoning**. This requires the researcher to be sensitive to any possible contradictions between the theoretical preconceptions guiding the research design and the actual findings (*the story that the data shows*) with subsequent cycles of revision by the researcher. During the analysis process, the researcher made a distinction between the researcher's ideas and the opinions expressed by the interviewees. Using dialogic reasoning required the researcher to challenge the assumptions that guided the original research design (i.e., the original lens) with the data that emerged through the research process. This

principle allowed the researcher to identify contradictions between the theory and the data, before making any final conclusions.

6. **The principle of multiple interpretations.** This requires the researcher to be sensitive to possible interpretative differences among the participants, as these are normally expressed by the participants by multiple narratives or stories of the same sequence of events under study. This is similar to multiple witness accounts, even if all the participants tell it from their individual viewpoints. This principle requires the researcher to examine the influences of social context on individual actions by looking for and documenting multiple viewpoints, as well as the reasons for them. The analysis of those reasons should include verifying and understanding the relationship of social conflict with power, economics, or values. Moreover, researchers should come face-to face with the inherent, potential contradictions in those multiple viewpoints, and accordingly, revise their understanding.

7. **The principle of suspicion.** This requires the researcher to be sensitive to any possible *biases* and/or *distortions* in the narratives collected from the participants. The final principle of *suspicion* is where the researcher critically questions any possible false or negative preconceptions and aspects of reality presented to them. In this study, the researcher interviewed respondents to get their interpretation of the border of work and family. Each respondent had personal viewpoints, and every viewpoint may contain some distortions. The advantage of interpretive analysis is that each answer given by respondent is looked at from a critical viewpoint and not taken at face value. If there are inconsistencies in the answers provided by respondent A and respondent B, researcher can ask respondent C to

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justify or clarify those answers. The researcher can continue to reconcile the multiple viewpoints of the informants until saturation is reached in their answers.
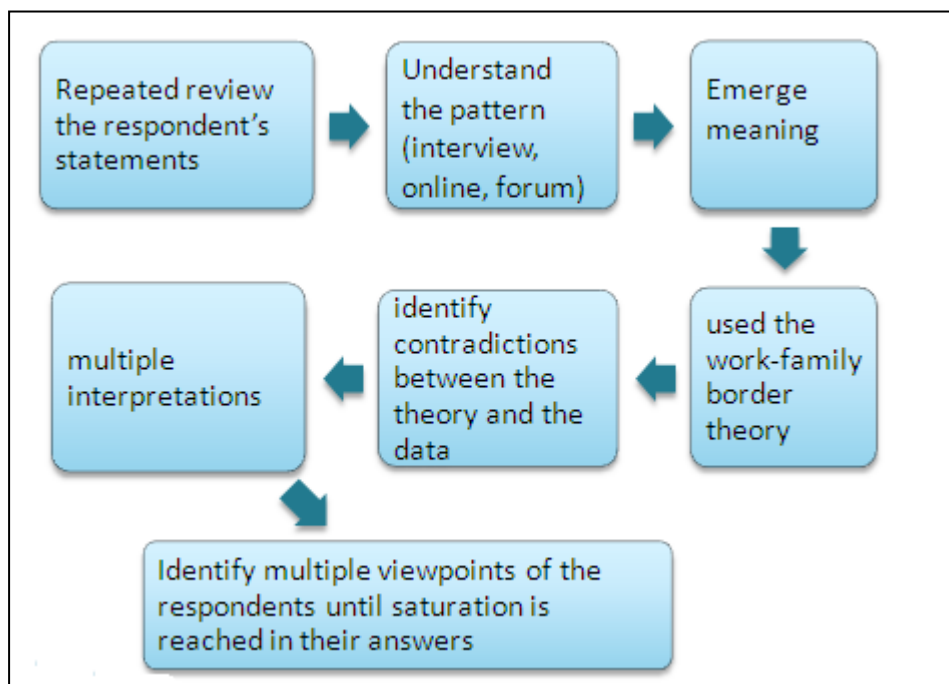
Figure 3.3: The principles of the interpretive technique used in the study

Klien and Myers (1999) believed that explicit expression of the principles of interpretation is a contribution that improves research methodology in management. The data from the interviews and online open ended survey were analyzed using an inductive process through thematic analysis. Thematic analysis, historically, is a conventional practice in qualitative research that involves searching through data to identify any recurring patterns (Subvista, 2011). Themes are defined as units taken from patterns such as "conversation topics, vocabulary, recurring activities, meanings, feelings, or folk sayings and proverbs" (Taylor & Bogdan, 1989). These

themes, patterns, understanding, and insight grow into the "meat" of qualitative inquiry (Patton, 2002).

The researcher identified each theme sufficiently so that it is clear to others exactly what the theme is. Then, the researcher analyzed the data and placed it with the corresponding theme. Thematic categorization was determined based on the responses. A theme was created according to the answers delivered by each respondent. Data was examined and compared for similarities or differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), then the researcher used open coding to highlight themes within the data and assign categories within these themes. Similar or almost similar answers were grouped under the same theme. Otherwise, a new theme was created. The process was repeated until all data were completely analyzed. The researcher categorized the statements based on the pattern that was identified before to verify, as well as to elaborate on the data. Table 3.2 shows the sample of data from interview and online open ended survey under the theme named Motivation. Finally, the researcher produced the final report based on the interpretations and the researcher's insights that came from the data analysis.

Table 3.2: Sample of data analysis from interview and online open ended survey

Source of data	Respondent code	Q34. What other considerations were taken in building your character towards balancing your work and home life? /Apakah ciri-ciri yang perlu ada bagi seseorang itu untuk mengimbangi pekerjaannya dan juga kehidupan di rumah?	Theme
Interview	62- chat	kena ada komitment dan fokus pada kerja .dan jangan terlalu banyak cabang kerja yang nak dibuat .fokus satu2 kerja sampai jaya	Motivation
	66- wfb4	Strong motivation, clear objectives	
	70-rani	motivate, and committed	
Online open ended survey	5	Motivasi yang tinggi untuk fokus pada setiap kerja yang perlu disiapkan.	
	9	Pekerjaan adalah tetap. anggap kerja itu wajib dilakukan walaupun bekerja di rumah	
	15	kekuatan semangat/ spritual strength	
	43	self-motivation	
	51	You have to be highly motivated and disciplined. If you don't have two of the character, you will be easily distracted and you will do less work	
	62- chat	kena ada komitment dan fokus pada kerja .dan jangan terlalu banyak cabang kerja yang nak dibuat .fokus satu2 kerja sampai jaya	

Finally, in addition to the principles of the intepretive technique (Figure 3.3), the researcher used member checking technique for the data validation. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) this technique is important to establish the credibility of data. Member checking is refers to the process of checking the interpretation of data with the respondents in order to ensure the meaning the data is valid and more credible. Member checking can be done at the end of the research or during the interviews. For this study, the researcher confirmed the answers with the respondents during the interview session. Stein-Parbury (2009) suggested that seek clarification during interview is preferable rather than follow up interview. After data

analysis, the researcher emailed the preliminary findings to the eHomemakers administration as part of member checking technique to seek confirmation of the validity of the data collected and analysed.

3.9 Summary of the chapter

This chapter presented an overview of the methodology that was applied in this study. The research design used a single case study approach, the work-family balance of the eHomemakers community. The researcher used three methods of collecting data; semi-structured interviews, online open ended survey and interactions through discussion forums from the eHomemakers.net website. Interpretive technique was used to analyze the data. Data analysis and findings will be discussed in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER FOUR
FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter present the results gathered from interviews, online open ended survey and discussion forums. The findings are based on single case study of eHomemakers organization. The following sections describe findings of the case study in detail.

4.2 Background of Study: eHomemakers Malaysia

eHomemaker organization originally was with the name of Mothers for Mothers and was established in 1998. This organization was founded by a voluntary group of Mothers from multi-ethnic communities with the aim to help homemakers, home workers, and the urban poor to improve their lives by promoting the concept of working from home with the use of information and communication technology as an instrument for their economic empowerment. The following are the eHomakers visions:

- to build an e-community of information technology (IT)-savvy homemakers

- to provide a learning platform for homemakers to become teleworkers

- to encourage homemakers, especially the disadvantaged, to generate income through home-based activities

- to offer a venue for virtual gatherings and support groups for homemakers

- to disseminate family-oriented information at a one-stop e-centre

- to integrate the principles of sustainable development into its programmes so as to support the Millennium Development Goals at the Malaysian level.

Other than an effort to encourage people working from home, eHomemakers intended to highlight the homemaker's business activities and to make recognition of their contribution in developing social and economic growth to the country. It was stated that, since 2003, eHomemakers has attracted men to become their member and today the ratio of ratio of men to women e-members is almost 50:50. They regularly organize seminar and training as for platform in promoting teleworking, discussing issues regarding teleworking, home entrepreneurship and ICT usage, as well as issues related to gender dynamics are the common complications that are faced by some of the teleworkers. Thus, e-Homemakers decided to conduct researches based on those concerns.

They have also published a guidebook entitled 'Working @ Home – A Guidebook for Working Women and Homemakers'. This guidebook is available in four major languages in Malaysia: English, Bahasa Malaysia, Chinese and Tamil. The guidebook explains the first hand-look at the push and pulls experiences of working at home. They publish two forms of newsletters to inform to all members about the activities and programs, the latest updates about the project to be carried out. A printed and paid newsletter with named 'Home+Work' is published quarterly for Malaysian members and the other one is monthly e-newsletter. which is free and available to all members over the world.

The community services are offered through e-Homemakers portal, www.ehomamakers.net. This trilingual portal was developed as a link between homemakers and homeworkers all over Malaysia into an e-community, bound

together by common interests in parenthood, homemaking and issues related to economic, social, family, and gender development. The portal compromises services such as forum, chat room, e-cards and a platform called Home-based Xchange for homemakers and home workers to market their products and services for free. These e-activities' initiatives consist of training sessions and discussions for life-long learning and community outreach, annual Mother's Day contests, and contests for home-based business ideas.

Salaam Wanita (SW) is a pilot project organized by eHomemakers specifically focused on special women in order to help them working from home. SW conducts training and promotes micro business networking through a distributed production chain. The network has been delivering choices and opportunities for women, providing them with a strong encouragement to fulfill their potential, and enabling them to acquire the voice and competency to counter their lack of socio-economic-political power in the community which is lead them to be awarded with several awards in national and international

4.3 The Research Question

The interview protocol for this study consists of three parts. The first part contains demographics of teleworkers. The second part consists of questions in relation to background of the lifestyle of teleworkers. The final part consists of question relating to the characteristics of teleworkers in managing border between work and family to

attain the balance between both domains. The interview protocol is provided in Appendix B.

The research questions to elicit answers are as follows:

a. What are the factors that influence a teleworker in managing border between work and family domains to attain balance?
b. How does a teleworker manage the border between work and family domain to attain work-family balance

4.4 Semi Structured Interviews (Telephone and in-person), on-line survey and on-line chat

The interview protocol for semi-structured interviews, online chats and online open ended survey were similar. This section presents the detailed results of data analysis.

4.4.1 Demographic information of respondent

In November 2007, the researcher attended "e-Homemakers Seminar" in Kuala Lumpur. During the seminar, the researcher managed to catch the attention of few participants to take part in researcher's study. Seventeen (17) of them agreed to do the study through an online open ended survey, four members chose to do face to face interviews, two members agreed via telephone, and a member agreed to do it via online chatting.

Apart from that, another additional 45 members have participated through online open ended survey advertised in the eHomemakers e-newsletter. Seven (7) more

members replied the questionnaire via an electronic mail. Therefore, the total number of eHomemakers members agreed to participate in this study was 76. The questions provided for this study for all data collection techniques were similar. Table 4.1 shows the number of respondents who participated through several data collection technique.

Table 4.1: Solicitation Techniques with the Total Number of Respondents

Solicitation Techniques	Number of Respondents
Face to face interview	4
Telephone interview	2
Online open ended survey	62
e-mail	7
Online chatting	1
Total Respondents	**76**

Demographic details of the respondents are presented in table 4.2. More than half of the respondents were women (54 out of 76, 71%). Respondents were spread across all age groups: from 21-30 to 56 plus, majority of the respondents, that is 47 out of 76 (61.8%) were in 31-40 age range, 14 out of 76 (18.4%) were between 21-30 years, 11 out of 76 (14.5) were between 41-50 years and 4 out of 76 (5.3) were above 50 years. Majority of the respondents were Malay who made up 71% (58 out of 76) of the total respondents. Most respondents were married (58 out of 76, 76%), 11out 76 (14%) respondents were bachelor and 7 out of 76 (9%) respondents were single parents. Referring to the academic background of the respondents, 37 (49%) of the

respondents possess bachelor degree, 24 (32%) respondents possess Diploma, 10 (12%) respondents possess Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (Malaysian Certificate of Education), four (5%) respondents possess master degree and one respondent possesses Sijil Tinggi Peperiksaan Malaysia (Malaysian Higher School Certificate).

Regarding to type of job, all of the respondents are self-employed. In relation to that, more than half of respondents (48 out of 76, 68%) doing online business. They are involved with Multilevel Marketing (MLM), selling products or services like cloths, health and beauty products, books etc. through the internet. About 22 out of 76 (29%) respondents working as freelancers which comprise of journalist, consultant, trainer, writer, translator, creative director, web developer, insurance agent, property negotiator, graphic designer and photographer. Another 8% (6 out of 76) respondents are doing home based business such as entrepreneur, home baker, tailor and caterer. They provide services and products through the internet.

Table 4.2: Demographic Characteristics

	Number	Percentage%
Gender		
Male	22	29
Female	54	71
Age		
21-30	14	18.4
31-40	47	61.8
41-50	11	14.5
Above 50	4	5.3

Marital Status		
Single	11	14
Married	58	76
Single parent	7	9
Race		
Malay	54	71
Chinese	16	21
Indian	4	5
Others	2	3
Formal education		
SPM	10	12
STPM	1	1
DIPLOMA	24	32
DEGREE	37	49
MASTER	4	5
Type of Job		
Online Business	48	63
Freelancer	22	29
Home based	6	8

Table 4.3 below shows the working experience of the respondents according to the type of job. Regardless of type of job, most of the respondents (52 out of 76, 68%) had working experience 1 to 2 years, 15 out of 76 (20%) respondents had experience between 3 to 5 years and eight (9 out of 76, 12%) respondents were more than 5 years.

Table 4.3: Type of Job and working experience

Type of Job	Online Business	Freelance	Home-based	Total	
Experience (year)				Number	Percentage (%)
1 - 2	31	17	4	**52**	**68**
3 - 5	10	3		**15**	**20**
>5	7	2	2	**9**	**12**
	48	22	6	**76**	**100**

In term of their working hour work per week, 31 out of 76 (41%) respondents indicated that they set working hours less than 40 hours per week, 36 out of 76 (47%) respondents work between 40 to 60 hours a week and 9 out 76 (12%) respondents allocate time more than 60 hours a week. Table 4.4 shows the work hour per week of the respondents according to their experience in working from home.

Table 4.4 Hours Work per Week

Experience (Year)	1-2	2-5	>5		
Hours per Week				Number	Percentage (%)
less than 40 hours	25	3	3	**31**	**41**
40 hours - 60 hours	23	9	4	**36**	**47**
More than 60 hours	3	4	2	**9**	**12**
				76	100

The average income per month of the respondent is shown in Table 4.5. Majority of the respondents (47 out of 76; 61.8%) have average monthly income between RM1001-RM3000, 11 out of 76 (respondents earn more than RM5000 per month and 12 respondents earn less than RM1000 per month.

Table 4.5: Income per Month

Average income	Number	Percentage (%)
less than RM1000	12	16
RM1001 - RM3000	47	62
RM3001 - RM5000	17	23
More than RM5000	11	15
	76	100

4.4.2 Background information on the lifestyle of respondent

Before proceeding to the research question, the researcher provides a few general questions regarding lifestyle of respondent. The first question is "Briefly describe about your family". Majority of respondents were whether married, single parent or bachelor living together with family that comprises of husband, wife, child, mother and father, mother and father-in-law, younger brother or sister or brother in-law as well as home maid. Slightly more than half of married respondents reported to have at least having a child. A respondent claimed that she has three young daughters, one of them was born with Down syndrome. Her statement is as follows:

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"Husband works full-time, have 3 young daughters, 2nd child was born with down syndrome, a communication person by profession for the last 12 years"

To obtain information about the space requirement to do work at home, the respondents were asked "When you chose your house or apartment, did you consider a need for space to do your work at home"? Majority of respondents (59 out of 76, 78%) did consider space to do their work at home. Among the reasons given are:

1) to create the right atmosphere to work,

2) to maintain order in performing work, and

3) to be free from external disruption.

Apart from that, room is needed to keep work materials. Below is an example quoted by a freelance writer with nine years of experience working from home:

"yes, of course! because I need a space to work? I cannot work anywhere else. I need a small office"

Seventeen (17) respondents chose to work anywhere such as in bedroom, living room, or in a car by using ICT facilities. A 42 years old male respondent doing Multilevel Marketing (MLM) commented:

"…, di mana2 boleh buat kerja, saya menggunakan mobile phone untuk segala urusan kerja dan keluarga"

[*"…, I can do my work anywhere and I prefer to use my mobile phone for work and familymatters "*]

The next question is "While you are working at home, who else in the house?" Fifty eight (58 out of 76; 76%) respondents work with family members at home while the remaining eighteen (18 out of 76, 24%) work at home.

For the question "Do you have enough time for yourself?" most of the respondents (51 out of 76, 67%) answered "Yes". Further question is "Why do you think it is important to have time for yourself?" Variety reasons received and sorted to four themes, namely:

1) balance physical and mental,
2) self motivation,
3) career plan, and
4) social life.

Majority of respondents allocate certain amount of time for these purposes in order to reduce stress, to relax mind and body as well as to stay healthy and energetic. A response of a mother of three children follows:

"Utk keterampilan, dan kecergasan fizikal dan minda"

[*"For appearance, physical and mental vitality"*]

On the other hand, a mother of four children stated that allocating specific time was necessary for her to stay motivated and energized to serve family better. As follows:

"untuk memotivasi diri sendiri disamping utk energize my energy utk layan anak-anak dan suami"

[*"To motivate and energize myself in serving husband and children"*]

Additionally, an online business mother with two years of experience working from home asserted that putting aside free time for herself was actually to appreciate the value of life, she said:

"because life is short and I need time for myself in order I need to know 'the value of me'"

Nearly identical statement also produced by a mother of four children with 6 years of experience working from home on the importance of having time for herself:

"*For me, time for myself is very important, as everybody need time to cool down and retreat from all the hastle of daily choores and to concentrate on oneself too***"**

Some respondents stated that time for a self was necessary to enable individual's plans for the future in terms of career, family and finance. A male respondent who is

working as an entrepreneur commented that spending time for himself allows him to gain higher achievement in life:

> *"Boleh mengurus masa dan kewangan mengikut usaha dan masa yang dikeluarkan. Makin banyak masa untuk diri, makin tinggi pencapaian dalam hidup"*

> [*"Can manage time and finance according to effort and time issued. More great deal of time for a self, more achievement in life"*]

Having own free time can make some feel contented and happy and simultaneously consolidate love among family members as claimed by a female respondent who possesses special children as follows:

> *"Because if when you have time for yourself, you will feel contented and happy enough to extend the same feeling to others"*

A male respondent who is working as Internet marketing commented that his amazing social life was pretty much contributed by having free time as follows:

> *"Yes of course, because my time is flexible so I can adjust it according to my needs. Sometimes I need to go to outside world, meet with friends, doing some workout etc"*

However, there is also an opposite opinion as mentioned by a female respondent. She has four children with six years of experience working from home. She talked about her challenges because of her job-related responsibilities and family activities take up so much of her time. From her experience as a working mother, she said that actually nobody has enough time when they start having kids. This is because of the kids always seeking for the attention from their mother at anytime. So she needs more effort in organizing her work and family activities.

4.4.3 Research Question 1: What are the factors that influence teleworker in managing border between work and family domain to attain balance?

This section describes the respondents answer regarding to the first research question of this study. Two questions were provided to identify factors influencing teleworker in managing border to attain balance. The researcher has classified the answers into five thematic categories:

1) time management,
2) discipline
3) family support
4) motivation, and
5) patience

Time management is a dominant theme in respondents' reflections on their relation to the implementation of working from home. A half of respondents (38 out of 76, 50%) stated that having a good time management such as scheduling and proper planning in terms of time, space and people will ease managing of make home and

work. According to a female respondent who works as Online business, she always sticks to schedule she made, as follows:

"Discipline and stick to time frame that I fix myself"

Another single female respondent with two years of experience working from home manages her time by limitation of working hours in certain days as stated below:

"Bagi saya, hadkan aktiviti bekerja, dengan bekerja dari jam 8 pagi hingga 11.15 pagi, 2.15 pm - 3.15, 5.30 pm hingga 7mlm, 9mlm hingga 12 mlm. Cuti Sabtu & Ahad"

[*"I have set a limit to do my work, which is from 8 am to 11.15 am, lunch break and continue at 2.15 pm until 3.15pm, 5.30 pm to 7 pm, then from 9 pm to 12 am. Saturday and Sunday are my off days"*]

A respondent who is a mother of a child aged seven months old claimed that she has made a proper plan and works in a special room, as follows:

"Must have a proper planning & separate working space at home, preferable a room with the door closed while working"

For **discipline**, about thirty out of seventy six (30 out of 76, 39%) respondents suggested that discipline is a vital factor that influence them in managing border

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between work and family domain to attain balance. Below is a response from a respondent with a year of experience working from home:

"Self discipline is most important to manage the time with home and work life"

Meanwhile, a Home-based mother claimed that she loves her career most therefore she was very committed to it, as follows:

"yang paling penting ialah saya amat mencintai pekerjaan saya jadi saya komited dengan kerja saya oleh itu saya sentiasa mendisiplinkan diri supaya saya dapat menguruskan kerjaya dan keluarga dengan lancar"

[*"The most important thing about my job is I enjoy it very much, so I always make sure I am committed to it, , I always discipline my self so that I can handle my work and family matters easier"*]

Another female respondent who aged fifty years old with six years of experience working from home suggested that self-discipline is the best recipe to manage her time wisely, as follows:

"self-disciplin and try not to procrastinate"

Next theme is **family support**. Many respondents (17 out of 76, 22%) identified support from spouses and children as critical to their ability to manage both their

professional and personal responsibilities. High on the list of family support was spousal support, in which respondents overwhelmingly credited their husbands' support as the reason they are able to meet the expectations and demands of their jobs. They agreed that understanding, negotiation and cooperation from the family members contribute to achieve balance in work and family life. A female respondent acknowledged support from her husband who assisted in managing her personal and professional responsibilities as stated below:

"as the matter of fact, there is.. I have support and help from my husband in a lot of ways…"

A freelance property negotiator claimed that assistance from husband is very crucial especially in taking care of the children as stated below:

"Yes. my husband is very supportive. sometimes when I need to see a client urgently during the weekend, he help me to look after the children"

In contrast, a male respondent doing online business said that he gets full cooperation from his family and consequently he will reduce working hours on weekend so that he can more spend time together with them as shown below:

"When I am busy, I informed my wife and daughter so they won't interrupt me. But, at weekend, I do less work and spent more time with family"

Meanwhile, a female respondent who is single and stays alone has informed her family members and friends about her job roles and work demands, therefore she is rarely interrupted as stated below:

> *"My parents and siblings and friends know that I am working from home so they do call first if they want to meet up with me and make sure that I am available"*

Another factor is **motivation** where thirteen out of seventy six (13 out of 76, 21%) respondents stated that strong self-motivation such as self driven, positive thinking, high spiritual, strong foundation in religion, and love for family influenced them in managing border between work and family in order to attain balance. A male respondent with five years of experience working from home stressed the need for strong motivation and discipline in order to complete work as stated below:

> *"You have to be highly motivated and disciplined. If you don't have two of the character, you will be easily distracted and you will do less work"*

Another respondent who is working as freelance writer with nine years of experience said that it is necessary to have mental strength in avoiding distraction of family activities as stated below:

"mental strength to pull myself away from work when I am supposed to be with my kids"

Further, a male respondent with two years of experience working from home advised not to be stressed out with work too much, separate personal business from work matters and most importantly, always pray to the Creator as stated below:

"don't stress up your work too much, try don't mixed up with personal life, and connection to Allah is very important, and make sure your work is Halal"

The next theme for the factors that influence teleworkers in managing border between work and family is **patience**. There are about seven out of seventy six (7 out of 76) respondents claimed that patience is a fundamental characteristic in order to achieve work-family balance while working from home. For instance, a respondent with two years of experience working from home has talked about patience and passion and both should come together in order to manage work and family effectively as stated below:

"The most important thing is 'patience and passion' without either one, you might not make it"

Similar response received from the self-employed female respondent with fifteen years of experience working from home. She explained in detail the characteristics in meeting the work and family demands as stated below:

"bagi saya ciri-ciri seperti disiplin, sentiasa sabar, minat, kesungguhan melakukan kerja dan sokongan dari suami amat penting tanpanya hubungan keluarga akan menjadi tidak seimbang"

[*"Characteristics such as discipline, patience, passion and hard work are necessary to meet work and family demands. Not forgetting a supportive husband who can ease the tension between both domains at times"*]

Last but not least, there are other factors influencing balance between work and family namely **spirituality, professionalism, responsibility, love, passion, teamwork, knowledge as well as IT Literacy**. Several respondents credited the strength they draw from their spiritual faith as foundational to their ability to cope with and manage their professional and personal responsibilities. A statement by a male respondent is as follows:

"Make sure waktu solat dijaga & tidur mencukupi"

[*"Make sure prayer times are preserved and get sufficient sleep"*]

Interestingly, a male respondent who is Internet Marketing said that achieving balance between work and family depends largely on individual's ability in controlling and managing him/herself, as he explained below:

"Bagi saya, tak kira cara mana pun yang kita guna yang penting ialah diri kita sendiri, semuanya bergantung pada diri kita, kitalah yang kena bijak urus dan kawal diri sendiri, kerja jadi lancar dan keluarga pun seronok

["The methods we use do not matter. It comes back to ourselves; we are the as who have to be smart in managing our time so that work can be efficiently while family stays happy"]

Another female respondent who is doing online business stated that she always study the customer needs in order to plan her work well without interfering family activities:

"Just try to learn more, must know customer needs and our family needs to cope up with the time frame as well as working place"

4.4.4 Research question II: How a teleworker manage the border between work and family domain to attain work-family balance?

The next interview explored ways in which the border of work and family intersect. Border is a line that represents the physical, temporal, or psychological between the

world of work and family (Clark, 2000). Border can be manage either through the process of segmenting or integrating both work and family domain as stated in border theory. In other words, border is a way in which it is established, crossed and it is being characterized by four factors namely permeability, flexibility, strength and blending. The researcher investigated border management practices in relation to the characteristics of border of work and family life.

4.4.4.1 Permeability

According to Hall & Richter (1998), permeability is defined as "the degree to which elements from other domains may enter". In this case, permeability refers to how far individuals allows activity whether physical, temporal or psychological from a domain (work) to get to the other domain (family) or vice versa. In other words, when A is in a particular domain, it is easy for individuals, materials, and thoughts from other domain to enter. According to Hunton (2005), interruption is referring to the physical and temporal permeability. For example, doing family matters while working is consider as work boundary is permeable. Physical permeability is such as allowing other individuals (children, guest, and salesman and so on) to be in the same room while working. Whereas example of temporal permeability refers to working hours used to place family attention such as personal calls, entertaining guest etc. While psychological permeability is referring to emotion or attitude individual towards work on family or vice versa.

The first question for this section is "Are you being interrupted while doing work at home?" Fifty out of seventy six (50 out of 76, 66%) respondents answered "yes"

indicating that they are being disturbed while working at home. One of the respondent told that she always has to stop working for a while in order to pay attention to her children needs:

"*Always. During that time, I have to stop for a while and attend to their needs*"

The next question is related to the previous question that is "What types of interruption that you face while working at home?" Based on the answers given by the respondents, the researcher has divided them into four types of interruption as shown below:

1. Physical permeability

All respondents' stated that the interruptions come from their husband, wife, parents, children, neighbors, relatives, housemaid and visitors while they are working. For instance, their children or husband may enter their working place to ask about housework. An online business mother claimed that she has to fulfill her husband's needs while working as stated below:

"*Yes. My husband will ask me to do a lot of things such as take drinks for him or ashtray when he needs to smoke*"

A single female respondent who stay with family told that she also being asked to do housework:

"Being called to lend a hand or put out the clothes to dry"

A home-based mother stated that her children always seek attention from her while she was working as stated below:

"my son want to go to the toilet, want to play which is almost about him only"

2. Temporal permeability

Working hours also can be disrupted if there is unexpected guest as mentioned by a female respondent who works as freelancer:

"guests, families, friends who visit/stay during my working hours/days"

Other types of temporal permeability during working hours are such as making or receiving personal calls, yahoo messenger, attend to needs of children or family, noise from the construction area, entertain guest, cannot access to the Internet and etc.

In order to obtain information related to making personal calls while working, respondents were asked with the following question: "Do you make personal calls

during working hours?" The result shows that 50% of the respondents made personal calls while working. Among of the reasons are flexible working hours, to reduce stress, prioritizing attention to families and business networking purposes.

For a male respondent, he makes personal call during working hours to reduce stress so that he can give more attention to work:

"To release some steam so that I can focus better"

Meanwhile, a female respondent told that it is necessary to maintain communication with others even though it is personal matter but should able to control the length of conversation as stated below:

"Perlu mengekalkan komunikasi dengan orang lain walaupun ia bersifat peribadi. Walau bagaimanapun, ia tidak harus berlangsung lebih daripada setengah jam"

["*Should maintain communication with others even though it is a personal matter. However, it should not take place more than half an hour*"]

On the other hand, a respondent who works as a consultant with six years of experience working from home claimed that each call for her is an opportunity, as follows:

"calls usually mean business, seronok. byk duit masuk"

[*"Calls usually mean business or fun. It also means that a lot of may getting in"*]

Another example by a freelancer property negotiator who has problem with her working hours due to changes in her children' tuition schedule is stated below:

"the change in my kid tuition schedule"

Other type of interruption is technical problem which may impact the working hours as stated below:

"Line down or disconnect or receive in coming call"

3. Psychological permeability

Psychological permeability relates to such as feeling drowsy, thinking of entertainment, noise of children cries, television sound, dog barking etc. Following is an example of a male respondent working as freelancer who claimed that he is always tempted to play computer games while working:

"The incessant need to play computer games"

Majority of respondents claimed that they feel depressed due to the interruptions as stated by a female respondent:

"Yes..it takes a lot of motivation to stay focused & you get easily distracted.

Also, it can be very depressing as you don't go out as much as you used to"

A female respondent who works as part time account assistant claimed she often feel angry if she does not met the deadline:

"Irritated if I'm working towards dateline, other than that I am ok with it"

The feeling of irritation due to the interruption can be reduced through compromise. This is claimed by a mother of four children with six years of experience working from home:

"At first a bit piss off, but later on I'm used to it. And no more 'ibu marah'"

[*"At first I was a bit pissed off but after some while I get used to it. I am no longer an 'angry mother' I used to be"]*

In contrast, a male respondent who is father a said that he is not bothered by the interruption he himself made a decision to work from home so that he has more time to focus on family matters as depicted below:

"I don't mind because that is the beauty of working from home. I'm always being close to my family. They won't interrupt me for a long time. After a while, they will leave me alone because they know I have lots of work to do"

However, there is also an opposite opinion on children' interruption at home. The following is what a homemaker mother of two children had to say about the interruption:

> *"Saya tidak rasa itu satu gangguan..kerana anak saya nak minum air/or buang air sahaja"*

> ["*I do not consider it as an interruption. My children just want to drink or go to the toilet*"]

Another male respondent who works as an internet marketing does not have any problem in dealing with the interruption because he can do his work in some other time:

> *"Tiada masalah. Masa saya banyak"*
> *"No problem, I have a plenty of time"*

Further question is "How do you feel when you are being interrupted (e.g. personal calls or visitor or etc.) while working? What is your action?" Most respondent (90%) felt that this interruption does not give much impression on them. They were able to control the situation between personal and work issues. Only small amount of respondents (10%) took actions to ignore the interruption by continue working in the room with locked door or switch off telephone or yahoo messenger or ask other family members to take care of the matter. Below are answers given by several respondents to tackle problem according to the situation such as:

a. Unexpected guest/parents/salesman

A female respondent mentioned that she will cut conversation short unless it is an important matter. She will also inform the visitor that she is not to be disturbed while working:

> *"I don't like it and I'll cut the conversation short (unless it's an important call) As for visitors, if it's family or relatives; I'll entertain them first and let them know that I am working, as for others (salesman etc) I'll tell them that I am working now can't bedisturbed"*

Another a male respondent said that usually he will take a short break to entertain guests and will set up another time such as late night to continue working:

> *"Take it as a short break. Will attend to that call or visitor. Choosing the correct time to work e.g. during late night when everybody is asleep"*

A self-employed female respondent explained that she will stop working for a while to please the guest but for close friends, she will entertain them while working as stated below:

> *"If any calls I will answer. if visitor I will serve them first. Ill put aside so that serve them first .later continue the things. If they are very close I will just continue the work while entertained them"*

And another female respondent who is still single just simply had this to say about what she did during interruption:

> *"Locked myself in the room"*

b. Children attention

According to a mother of two young daughters, she will fulfill the needs of her children and continue working when they have fallen asleep:

> *"Attend to theirs needs immediately. they will tend to be more cooperative if I attend their need soonest than later. researching work while the kids are awake, writing and respond to email after they sleep"*

As for a male respondent who works as graphic designer, he asks his wife to manage the family business during his working hours as stated below:

> *Suruh isteri untuk menyelesaikannya"*
>
> [*"My wife helps to solve it"*]

c. Phone call

A respondent who is mother of four children said that she will cut the conversation to avoid talking about unimportant matter:

> *"Cuba memendekkan perbualan dan ucapkan kepada perkara2 yang penting dan berkaitan sahaja. Cuba elakkan daripada melalut kepada perkara2 yang membolehkan perbualan lebih panjang"*

[*"Try to shorten conversation and respond to important and related matters only because nonsense matter will lead to longer conversation"*]

Additionally, a female respondent who works as freelance claimed that he will only answer the phone if it is necessary and set up busy status to continue working as stated below:

"Will only pick up urgent calls..others will get them to call back or set my msn to "Busy" status"

Respondents were also being asked whether they make personal calls during working hours. More than 50% of respondents did make personal calls during working hours while the remaining only entertained urgent calls, as stated by a male respondent:

"personal call hanya dibuat jika ada urgent matters. jika tader..memang tak buat. bcoz a call may make my work tergendala and so on"

[*"Personal calls can only be made for urgent matters, otherwise no personal call…actually I do not do that because calls usually disturbed my work"*]

Another question in this permeability section is "Are you concerned with your appearance while working at home (e.g. dress, make-up etc.)?" Most of the respondents (90%) did not distinguish their appearance while working and with family. They are more comfortable to wear casual, sometimes even pyjama while

working. Smart appearance is only practiced if they need to meet client. For instance, for this female respondent, appearance do not play important role as stated below:

"I don't care so much because I work at home, on my own .nak mekap2 buat apa? Normally I do work in my pajama only"

[*"I don't care so much because I work at home, on my own. There is no need to apply make up. Normally I do work in my pajama only"*]

However, a mother of four children claimed that she is concerned with her appearance, as follows:

"Of course. I still wear makeup and well dress"

For a final question in section is "Do you apply any work techniques/behavior towards your family? Please explain." As many as 21 respondents adopted a few techniques during work towards their family. The technique or work procedures are such as discipline, time management, IT literacy, teamwork, multitasking, organizing, filing system, home financial planning, home decoration, caring and cleanliness.

Five respondents discussed about practicing time management towards their family like those notified by a female respondent with six years of experience working from home:

> *"I try to practise what I preach especially in regards to time management, planing and setting goals and targets"*

Another female respondent actually took an initiative to teach her children to work cooperatively and independently as stated below:

> *"Teknik kerjasama, sentiasa mengajar anak2 untuk berdikari dan bekerjasama"*
>
> ["*Always teach children to be independent and cooperative*"]

Meanwhile, another home business mother practiced disciplined her children as stated below:

> *"discipline to work that I apply to my son , he need to discipline to his home work"*

On the other hand, a mother of three children exposed her children to the use of ICT in early age, she hopes that she can pass her business to his children in the future:

> *" I expose my kids to computer & IT at young age, and wish to lead them towards computer-related studies in the future so they will have the capabilities to continue my business one day"*

In general, the finding shows that all of the respondents' regardless types of job or working experience have the similar practice towards the permeability of border.

4.4.4.2 Flexibility

Flexibility is about how flexible is border in one domain (e.g. work) may extent towards to the other domain (e.g. family). Flexibility here refers to individuals who are free to work at any hour in any location and to think of other things while working or together with family. For example, individuals allow themself to leave work in order to attend family matter, so the work boundary is flexible. The questions prepared for this section is regarding the flexibility of border in terms of physical, temporal and psychological.

1. Physical border

The first question for the physical border is "Please describe your workplace while you are working at home". Most of respondents (60 out of 76, 79%) did provide special workplace to perform work such as a special room equipped with ICT facilities. Table 4.6 shows the number of respondents did provide special workplace for work according to year experience and type of job.

Table 4.6 Provide special workplace according to year experience

Experience (year)	Number	Type of Job
1-2	43	Business online, Creative Director, Consultant Trainer/Writer & Translator, Internet marketing (MLM), home based, entrepreneur, Art Director/Photographer, Freelancer as insurance agent.
3-5	7	
>5	10	
	60	

A female respondent who works as online business with six years of experience working from home provides an example as stated below:

> *"My husband has transformed one the room at home to be an official office for us to work. There, all the stock, laptop, fax etc are stored"*

For a female respondent who owns an online bakery shop claimed that she has a specific room which is fully occupied with bakery's tools:

> *"Sebuah bilik untuk alatan bakery untuk urusan kerja selain itu saya gunakan ruang tamu untuk melakukan hiasan ke atas kek dan melihat email dari pelanggan"*
>
> [*"A room to keep all bakery tools. Other than that, I use the room to do decoration on cake and check email from customers"*]

Another 21% of respondents used places such as living room, bedroom, or car to do work as long as equipped with ICT facilities as practiced by a male respondent who works as MLM agent:

> *"Besides my laptop, I have a handphone that can be use to check email and browse internet. So even though I'm not bring my laptop, I always can communicate with my clients"*

Table 4.7 shows the respondents can work at anywhere workplace according to year's experience and type of job.

Table 4.7 Work at anywhere workplace

Experience (year)	Number	Type of Job
1-2	12	freelance writer, Online business, Freelance property negotiator, Graphic designer, Home based, Internet marketing (MLM)
3-5	3	
>5	3	
	16	

The next question is "Does your family use the space when you are not there?" Majority of respondents (41 out of 76, 549%) have answered "no" to this question. From this number, 36 respondents that have specific room do not allow their workspace or equipment to be shared. They do not allow family members to use the work space and equipment due to security purposes because the room is full of their valuable work equipment's. A male respondent who is doing online business mentioned that the reason he needs a special room for work is because his room is very sensitive, as follows:

> *"tidak, kerana ruangan tersebut adalah untuk saya dan ruangan tersebut terlalu sensitive dari sebarang gangguan"*
>
> ["*No, because that room is purposely for me and it is sensitive of any interference*"]

To this female respondent, she does not share her room to others because she stays alone:

> "*no, I live alone*"

Some of the respondents did allow their family members to use the work space and equipment when they are not working. According to a female freelancer, she lets her husband and children to use the computer when she is not using it, as follows:

> *"ya, suami saya boleh menggunakan computer saya sekiranya saya tidak sibuk begitu juga dengan anak-anak saya"*

> [*"Yes, my husband and my children can use computer whenI am not busy"*]

A male respondent who works as MLM agent said that his family can always use the room while he is working as stated below:

> *"Ya saya boleh bekerja di mana-mana sahaja, jadi saya tidak kisah jika keluarga saya menggunakan ruang yang sama dengan saya"*
> [*"Yes, I can work anywhere, I do not mind if my family shares the room with me"*]

2. Temporal border

There are two questions prepared for this section. The first question is "Please tell me official hours expected to be at work or do you work at any time you like"? The second question is "What are the reasons you choose to have specific time?" For the first question, most of respondents (53 out of 76, 70%) reported that they have set their workings hours while twenty three respondents (23 out of 76, 30%) told that they can work at anytime they like.

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Majority of respondents set their working hours starting from morning. Most of them mentioned that they start working at 9 am to 4 pm or 5 pm. They choose to work in the morning because their children have gone to school. Some of these respondents (17 out of 53) reported that they will also continue working at night as depicted in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Working time according to year experience and type of job

Experience (year)	Number Morning	Number night	Type of Job
1-2	33	9	Online business, Consultant Trainer/Writer & Translator, entrepreneur, internet marketing, web development, home based, Graphic designer, Freelancer as insurance agent
3 -5	9	5	
>5	11	3	
	53		

Below is an example response of a single female respondent doing online business with two years of experience working from home:

"*Secara umumnya 9 pagi hingga 6 petang tetapi masih mengadap komputer sehingga 12 tengah malam. Kerana sesuai dengan waktu pejabat memandang ramai pelanggan adalah pekerja pejabat*"

["*Usually 9 am to 6 pm but I still sit in front of the computer until midnight. I work during office hours because most of my customers can be contacted during those hours.*"]

Another male respondent working as online marketer with five years of experience commented that his working time starts at 7.30 am ends at night. He chose to work early in the morning due to two reasons; he feels fresh and his family is not in the house, as stated below:

"*Morning is the best time for me to work especially when my wife and daughter goes to school. I always start working at 7:30 am and stop working at noon for few hours before continue working at night, I always feel fresh in the morning and I feel that is the best time for me to work*"

A consultant and also a translator with six years of experience working from home set her working time from 9 am to 3 pm. When her schedule is hectic, she starts at 8 am and ends at late midnight, as stated below:

"*Normally, my official hours are from 9am to 3pm with breaks for lunch. But when there are packed schedules, then the hours may start as early as 8 and end past midnite*"

Other respondents told that she sets her working schedule according to family and client's needs as stated below:

"*Suit the schedule of my familys' needs and of course, clients*"

A respondent who works as an internet marketing with two years of experience working from home claimed that he fixed his working time according to customer suitability, he started working at 8 am, attend course or meet friends in the evening and perform online business with subscribers in overseas at night:

> "*biasa jam 8 pagi, saya tetapkan masa sbb subsriber akan faham masa online saya. belah ptg mungkin ada outstation jumpa kawan atau buat kursus, waktu malam online dengan subsriber luar negeri…*"

> ["*I start working at 8 am, have an outstation in the afternoon like meet some friends or organizing courses, I do online business with my subscribers in overseas at night*"]

Many respondents start working in the morning and they are free to fix work in some other time. As stated by an internet marketing respondent:

> "*9 a.m. - 6 p.m. or if for some reason this cannot be achieved, will replaced with night time*"

Some respondents (23 out of 76, 30%) chose to work at anytime they like. The reasons reported are easy to manage the household chores, can spend more time with children, can freely manage time as well as free from employers' authority. Table 4.9 shows the respondents can work at anytime according to year experience and type of job.

Table 4.9 Work at anytime according to year experience and type of job.

Experience (year)	Number	Type of job
1-2	13	creative director, online business, photographer, Home based, Entrepreneur, Freelance property negotiator, Freelance writer
3-5	6	
> 5	4	
	23	

A male respondent with 4 years of experience working from home claimed that his work as internet marketing is very flexible so that he can work at any time he wants, as stated below:

> "*Bila-bila masa berdasarkan kepada keadaan/keperluan, perniagaan melalui Internet adalah fleksibel*"

> "A*nytime. Whenever is needed, business over Internet is flexible*"

Another female respondent who is a freelance property negotiator for 4 years working from home sets her working time freely so that she can attend to her family needs, as follows:

> "*For me, I worked whenever I'm free The reason is that, working from home do give me flexibility in time, means whenever I'm free and at the same time I can take care of my 4 childrens*"

However, a respondent working as creative director claimed that he always sets up his daily schedule because his working time constantly changes. He feels that he has the freedom to work at any time he likes as stated below:

> "*I keep a daily schedule instead of a monthly one, as my time varies everyday, because of freedom*"

2. Psychological border

In this section, a question was asked: "Do you think about other things (e.g. family) beside from work while working at home?" Many respondents (49 out of 76; 64%)

respondents agreed that they always think about other things while working like those informed by a respondent who has two daughters:

> "Yes..all the time..my daughter is only two..that's the reason why I work at home in the first place"

The similar answer received a female homemaker with six years of experience:

> "Of course. When u r working at home, u have flexibilty to work at anytime u want, but doesn't mean that u have to neclect your family"

Small amount (27 out of 76, 35%) of respondents told that they avoid thinking of other things while working in order to focus on their job as said by a female respondent working as MLM agent:

> "Tidak kerana boleh mengganggu focus terhadap kerja"
>
> ["No, it may distract my focus on work"]

The last question in this section is regarding the flexibility of the use of ICT facilities while working at home. The question is "Do you use ICT for work purposes at any time you like?" All respondents agreed that they use ICT facilities for work purposes at anytime. A male respondent claimed that ICT is very important to him and he simply cannot work without internet connection, as stated below:

> "ICT is my work! I don't work when streamyx is down"

Another respondent who is self-employed with five years of experience working from home always keep in touch with his clients by using ICT facilities:

"Besides my laptop, I have a handphone that can be use to check email and browse internet. So even though I'm not bring my laptop, I always can communicate with my clients"

4.4.4.3 Blending

Blending refers to significant amount of permeability and flexibility which occur around the border. According to Clark (2000), border is no longer exclusive due to the permeability and flexibility of a domain onto another such as doing family activities or household chores while working. The strategies used by individuals to manage their work and family life can be either segmented or integrated between both domains. Segmentation exists when the flexibility and the permeability of boundary between both domain work and family are low. Individuals are able to separate their work and family matters (e.g. not doing personal or family's business during working hour or vice versa) which means that the border of work and family domain can be maintained. Contrast to the integration, where the flexibility and the permeability of border between both domain work and family are high. They are able to do work and multiple household chores simultaneously.

In this part, respondents were asked whether they do any house chores while working. Some respondents (26 out of 76, 34%) told that they did the house chores while working such as cooking, washing clothes, tidy up the house, attend to children' needs etc. For example, a homemaker mother claimed that she cooks while download or upload files from computer as stated below:

"Ya. Cth..download or upload files ketika memasak"

["*Yes, e.g… download or upload files while cooking*"]

A female respondent does house chores while working because her maid comes only once a week, as follows:

"*yes, all housework, cleaning, laundry, cooking, ironing, etc. maid comes in once a week*"

Another male respondent helps her wife in chores such as wash the dishes and prepare his daughter for school:

"*Yes I do, I help my wife with the dishes, laundry and prepare my daughter for school*"

Meanwhile, fifty out of seventy six (50 out of 76, 63%) respondents did not do the house work during working hour. They prefer to concentrate on their job rather than do the house work. An internet marketing with four years of experience working from home stated that he will complete the job during allocated time:

"Tidak. Apabila melakukan kerja, masa adalah 90% diperuntukkan untuk siapkan kerja"

["*No. When doing the job, time is 90% allocated to complete it*"]

A self employed female respondent with two years of experience working from home does not like to integrate house chores with work. She will start chores is completed as stated below:

"Tidak,saya uruskan kerja rumah seperti membasuh mengemas dsb kemudian baru saya buat kerja saya, saya tidak suka mencampuradukkan kerja rumah dengan urusan kerja"

["*No, I deal with chores first before I begin my work. I dislike mixing house chores with work matters*"]

And another female respondent will start working at night time as she stated below:

"*Usually I work at night after I complete my house work*"

The next question in this section is about working style practiced by the respondent while working from home. The question is "Do you currently see yourself as someone who tries to keep work and personal roles separated most of the time?" Majority of respondents (48 out of 76, 63%) preferred to separate work from family activities. Among the reasons given were they need to focus on work, not interested to mix up work problems with family life in order to maintain family happiness as well as to have a healthier life. Table 4.10 shows the numbers of respondents choose to separate their work from family life according to year experience and type of job.

Table 4.10 Separation of work according to year experience and type of job.

Experience (year)	Online Business		Freelance		Home-based	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1-2	21	68	10	77	3	75
3-5	7	22	2	15		
>5	3	10	1	8	1	25
Total	31	100	13	100	4	100

Below is an example answer of 43 years old self employed male respondent with two years of experience working from home:

"Urusan kerja jika dicampur urusan keluarga akn menjadikan kerja tak keharuan dan keluarga tak tentu arah"

["*If I mix work with family affairs, everything will turn upside down"]*

Separation between work and family is necessary to elude 'burn out' as mentioned by a male respondent below:

"need to set limitation in life to avoid burnt – out"

Meanwhile, a female respondent with two years of experience working from home chose to practice work-family separation to avoid work problems from interfering her quality time with family, as stated below:

"Yes.because I do not want to let that unhappiness in work to affect the quality time with my family"

On the other hand, twenty six respondents chose to integrate the matters of work and family activities. The following were reasons given by the respondents: to satisfy family needs, to maintain family happiness, flexibility in terms of working hour and job condition such as self-employed or freelancer. In order to achieve balance between work and family activities, a female respondent prefers to mix both of these domains, but she may reduce the working hours while having family activities. She has two children and four years of experience working from home. Below is her response to the issue:

> *"I tend to be a multitasker, so I mix both in my life. I cannot separate work with my life , but I try to reduce work interruption while having family activities"*

Other reasons for choosing work and family not separately is because of the flexibility as told by a male respondent working as internet marketing. He is free to reschedule his work at anytime he wishes as stated below:

> *"Saya biasanya campur aduk sahaja. Sebab saya boleh mengubah waktu bekerja bila-bila masa. Fleksible"*

> [*"Usually I mix both because I can change my work schedule anytime, it is flexible"*]

In addition, a mother of two children stressed that she could not separate her work from family activities because she is afraid that it might disrupt her family life as she stated:

"because as a mother, we cannot afford to inter-change roles or this will disrupt family life"

However a few respondents chose to carry out work and family separately. Sometimes, they are forced to juggle work and family activities due to workplace condition itself which does not allow them to separate work and family matters. An example mention by a female respondent with five years of experience working from home:

"Yes, even though I work from home I try to separate work and personal roles. But it is very hard because your office is at home and sometime I met my clients at home"

4.4.4.4 Strength

Border strength is determined by the permeability, flexibility and blending of the border. If it is impermeable, inflexible and do not allow blending to occur than the border is strength. For example, individuals with strong border will work only at the workplace, during office hours and do not do or think about any personal or family issues (e.g. phone call, think about, meeting friends etc.). In contrast, individuals who are juggling work and family an issue (in term of workspace, time and thought) is refer having a weak border.

Researcher has divided border strength into two parts namely border strength at work and border strength at home. Below are the example answers from the respondents:

1. **Border strength at work**

Border strength at work is where individuals give full attention on the work related issues only in term of space, time and thought.

In term of thought, majority of respondents (50 out of 76, 66%) respondents focused completely on work related issues while working. For example, a single female respondent reported that she is more concerned on work activity as compared to family activity. In fact, she always ready for works all the time as stated below:

> *"Aktiviti pekerjaan lebih banyak daripada aktiviti keluarga. Apabila saya bekerja di rumah, saya sentiasa dalam keadaan bekerja."*
>
> [*"Work activities are more than family activities. When I work at home, I am always in working state"*]

In term of time, the respondents (26 out of 76, 34%) also reported that they also do personal errands during working hours as claimed by a female respondent working as baker:

> *"ya sambil bakar kek boleh sambil buat kerja rumah seperti membasuh dan berkemas"*

> *"Yes, I do personal errands such as washing and tidying the house while baking a cake"*

Forty out of seventy six (40 out of 76, 53%) respondents agree that they did other personals errands such as make or answer a phone call, communicating with family or friends during working hours.

In term of space, majority of respondents (55 out of 76, 72%) have a specific room to do their work purposes only as told by a male respondent working as an entrepreneur below:

> *"Satu bilik khas di panggil Small Office Home Office"*
>
> *"A special room called Small Office Home Office"*

2. Border strength at home

Border strength at home is where individuals are not doing work matters while having family activity (in term of space, time and thought).

About twenty six out of seventy six (26 out of 76, 34%) respondents stated that they have their own work schedule based on the situation at that time. For instance, a female respondent who has two children told that she has own work schedule so that she can manage time properly between work and family needs. She has to be smart in doing that because she does not has helper to assist her in managing the household chores:

> *"Saya mempunyai jadual sendiri,ttp adakalanya saya melakukan kerja bila2 masa(mengikut situasi). Saya membuat jadual kerja sendiri agar saya dpt menguruskan masa saya dgn baik(antara kerja*

dan family). Saya perlu bijak utk menjadualkan kerja saya kerana saya tidak ada pembantu rumah."

[*"I have my own schedule, but sometimes I do the job whenever (according to situation). I make my own work schedule so that I can manage my time wisely (among work and family). I need to be smart in scheduling my work as I do not have a helper"*]

Some of the respondents do not like to talk about work related issues while being together with family. A mother who has a daughter claimed that she does not like to distract her precious time with family by discussing about work as stated below:

"Yes.because I do not want to let that unhappiness in work to affect the quality time with my family"

Another fémale respondent with six years of experience working from home stated that family related issues is always be the top priority to her, as follows:

"urusan keluarga mesti diutamakan dan kemudian barulah kerja pun menjadi tenang dan licin"

[*"Family affair must be prioritized so that can work comfortably"*]

Meanwhile, another female respondent separate her work and family business by specifying her working time in the morning only afternoon is reserved for family, as stated below:

"Urusan kerja hanya waktu pagi. Petang untuk keluarga"

"*Morning is for work and evening is for family*"

For a male respondent working as an internet marketing, he puts more effort on his family related issues by lessen his working time as he told below:

"less work, more home.. because 1/3 of my time only for work"

However thirty eight out of seventy six respondents (38 out of 76, 50%) reported that they always think about work while doing family related activities. The reasons are to settle unfinished work or the need to catch the dateline as stated by a female respondent below:

"Kadang-kadang sahaja. Biasanya kerja yang belum siap atau yang lari daripada dateline."

[*"Only occasionally. Usually unfinished work or miss of dateline"*]

As opposed, a female respondent claimed that she can separate her work from family life but she cannot control her mind in term of ideas:

"sometimes ideas come without control"

Balance between work and family life becomes her priority as she stated below:

"No. Work and life balance is my priority"

4.5 Discussion forum

The last method of collecting data in this research is by studying the discussion forum from the eHomemakers portal. Discussion forum or internet forum is an online discussion which is a venue that people can share and discuss information and opinions. People participate in the discussion forum may discuss on variety topics such as health, arts, literature, religion, culture, family life and entertainment. This forum is controlled by a group of individuals that referred to administrators and moderators which they are responsible for the forums' conception, technical maintenance, and policies (creation and enforcing).

The individual who have overall control of everything that happens on the board like managing the technical details required for running the site and make forum-wide announcements is called administrator. While the moderators responsible to oversee the running of the forums from day to day. They have the power to edit or delete posts and lock, unlock, move, delete and split topics in the forum they moderate. They may also answer users' concerns about the forum, general questions, as well as respond to specific complaints. Most forums have a list of rules detailing the wishes, aim and guidelines of the forums creators. For example, in an eHomemaker forum any discussion regarding anything but advertisements/ solicitations for products/ services will be deleted.

eHomemakers provides its own portal website as mean to announce and advertise their activities. The eHomemakers discussion forum was prepared to accommodate their members to share information on their career and family life. Researcher has

used this forum to gather information from the discussion done. Individual that wants to be involved in this forum is required to register at eHomemakers website. The registration is free for all of the members. Thus, this forum has been opened to all walks of life worldwide.

The data derived from this forum was until May 28, 2010. There were 15575 registered users and 3843 articles have been posted to this forum. The issues related to career and family problems are also being discussed in this forum. The forum was divided into three main topics: Work@Home, Domestic and Single again. The Work@Home column discussed about the issues related to work activities such as starting business at home, managing time, and the use of ICT, setting up home business, business networking and frauds for working at home. The articles posted in the Domestic column were related to family activities such as handling a special child, children education, health and fitness, a group for mothers united, housemaid issues and doing activities with family. The Single Again column discussed issues related to the marriage problem and sharing life experiences for single women or men.

The administrator had created several sub-topics for each column. There were six sub-topics under the title Work@Home column; Decision Making, Teleworking why is not it a trend, work at home scams, time management, networking corner and guidelines for setting up home businesses. The Domestic column consists of eight sub-topics that is Special Corner, Health and Fitness, Is Crying A Shame?, Tuition For Toddlers?, Education Matters, Homemakers Unite, Family Time and To Have

Or Not To Have A Maid. In the Single Again column consists of two subtopics that are Healing and Single and HAPPY!

The Decision Making's column offer participants to suggest or share their experiences about the opportunities and challenges that teleworkers faces while working from home. The Teleworking's column open to discussion regarding to the home office concept such as employers perception on teleworking, advantages and disadvantages working at home and etc. The Time management's column allow participants share their ideas or experiences in managing time in order to balance family life and work under the same roof. The column of Networking Corner provide participants share their common experiences, seek information or just say hello to the others who have chosen this alternative lifestyle. The participants can state their opinion regarding to the concept of home business such as registration of home offices, insurance issues, types of houses suitable for these home offices and etc. under the Guidelines for Setting up Home Business column.

Many suggestions and recommendations based on own experiences were posted to help members who need help in managing their work and family while working at home. Some of the issues that are being discussed are relevant to the research questions in this study especially from four subtopics under the column of Decision making, Teleworking, Time management, and Networking Corner.

Regarding to the individual factors while working home, most participants who discussed the issues agreed that**, good time management, self-discipline, family**

support, motivation and patience are important factors in the search of balancing work and family life. This was based on the responses from the participant's question (*Working at home, Is working at home is difficult? and How do you manage your time?*) and the suggestion or experience given by the participants (*The best decision we ever made, be consistent about what's work time..., Small Steps for Big Work at Home Success, Why do you WANT or NEED to work from home?, Do you work?, The best 5 reasons to telecommute, Time management for working people, Time management for working people, Go back to basic and Why Work from Home?*). Below are the examples of discussions under the Decision Making column: One of the participants who had just become a new member to the group posted her mail with a title "working at home" under the decision working topic asked some advised about working at home. She was interested in working at home but she does not know where or how to start doing business at home as she stated below:

> *"Hi, I have just join the site and very much interested to get myself started by working at home... but don't know where or how to get started.. I would appreciate if any of you would be kind and guide me about it. Thanks"*

Three participants had responded to the article who is one of them listed the related website about working from home while two participants stress on the important of self-discipline while working from home as one of them said below,

"I quit from my corporate job and now started a work from home business. Good support system and guidance from the company. All we need to do is work hard, be disciplined, attend the weekly meetings, seminars and managing the business on our own schedule. Nothing can stop us from achieving our goals if we put our mind and be positive. Avoid negative thoughts and be serious about earning income which can support us even when we are in our old age. A worthwhile business, please logon to my website: http:// aifong. sohoworkonline. com if you are serious to change your life rather than sit at home doing nothing."

Another participant also posted the similar question under the title "Is working at home is difficult?" and there were six participants who had responded to the issue. Majority (4 out of 6) of the participants talked about self disciplined was a very important key to success while working from home. Below is an example of response from the participant who actively involved in the discussion forum who suggested that self discipline is necessary for working people who either work in the office or work from home as he mentioned below:

"Well, anything you do, you must have self-discipline. Even though you work from home, you must be professional enough to separate the time for personal and work. Some people tend to have a very blur line between work and personal when they are at home - some very relax, when they are suppose to work, and some of them even work until late...leaving no room for family"

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He also added that self-motivation also needed to make him work according to schedule and overcome of any interference:

> " *The motivation to show up to work every day would be externally displaced thereby falling squarely on my shoulders to be self-motivating and disciplined. The temptation to let other distractions erode my work time would be a real concern.* "

The other two participants who responded to the article talked about the advantages and disadvantages of working from home, ready to face some risks, self confidence, stay committed and hard working to achieve successful in work and family as well.

Meanwhile the participant who first time posted article in this forum with title "The best decision we ever made", told her experience when the first time started working at home. She felt less confident to work from home because it may impact on her life but after three years involved with home-based business she started to love her job. She believes that working from home is the best decision she ever made. This is because she received full support from family and company as well. She was happy to help anyone who is interested to do business at home:

"I stopped working outside our home almost 3 years ago to stay home with our 2 children. At the time, we were concerned about how it would work financially and since I had been working for almost 15 years, how it would change my life. It took some adjusting, but now I believe it is the best decision we ever made. I started a home-based business, I work my business around my family. I work with an amazing team and company and get unlimited support.

I speak with people every day who are looking for a way to be home with their children and earn an income. I love that I am able to help people and really make a difference in their lives! I love my job!"

The participants who responded to this article also told the similar experience about her decision to work from home. At the initial stages, she almost wanted to return to full-time office work because of the financial problem but she is thankful to her husband and family that motivated and supported her to be persistent with her decision. After four years experienced working from home, now she had almost perfect balance between earning a living and being there for her family:

"I made the decision like you to stay home and earn my keep from my home four years ago.

At the initial stages, I almost wanted to return to full-time office work because we were getting financially drained.

Thankfully, my husband and our parents and siblings motivated and supported me in my quest for that almost perfect balance between earning a living and being there for my young children.

Like you, I too am now having the greatest time of my life - except for when I have to be away from the children for more than a week when duty calls. But the welcome back I get from them more than make up for the time away!"

Three participants who discussed regarding the article with the title "be consistent about what's work time…" mentioned that, the best part working from home is working from home is the flexibility of time which individual can have their own schedule of work. Effective time management is important while working from home. They suggested that individuals must be consistent with their working time and have certain rules to follow in order to discipline themselves to work. Below is an example of statements posted from the participant who had responded thirteen times (13) to the forum:

"You should be disciplined when you work from home. While working from home should be more flexible in terms of time as compared to working in the office, it doesn't mean that you should neglect your business/work and have a permanent and constant 'vacation'.

Meaning you just work whenever you feel like, in other words, hardly ever. This is the wrong approach. There should be a guideline as to when it's time to work and when it's time to relax. Just because you're working from home doesn't mean that you don't work at all, just because you ARE at home"

you should one that works for you. It doesn't have to be eight hours but you

should be consistent about what's work time and what's not. If you don't

make any rules, you'll be much more likely to blow off work whenever you

don't feel like doing it"

The characteristics of border such as flexibility and blending are being discussed under the Time Management column. The posted articles are *Time management for WAHM, How do you manage your time? and Go back to basic*. Most participants agreed that time management is the main issue while working from home. It is important to teleworkers to create their own schedule in order to achieve successful in work and family life as well

Referring to border flexibility, many of them have their own working time and start working in the morning session to reduced distraction from their family members especially children. For working at home dad share his experience how he managed his time for work activities. He had allocated specific time for work into two sections where in the morning he will call or meeting with clients and doing administration work such as preparing slides, report and proposals in the afternoon. This can minimize interruption from his children:

"not only WAHM but also WAHD or just anybody who operates their

business from home....

anyway, you have to observe the timing, do a little analysis. For instance, if

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i'm at home, i'll try to divide the time into 2 sections - morning and afternoon.

For my case, the morning will be quiet as my kids have gone to school, and in the afternoon, things will be 360 degree change - with the screaming, fighting, talking, laughing,.etc..

so, i make sure if i need to call my clients, i'll do it in morning. in the afternoon, will be paper / computer work - which is preparing slides, reports, and proposals.

so in this case, i may be able to call / market to few clients, say maybe 5 companies in the morning,...and then i prepare a simple proposal / writeup / email in the afternoon, and send it to them...

so,..this will minimize the disruptions, and also to avoid any inteferences to my works"

Another example is a home business worker told that she set a certain amount of time for   work   hours and use timer as reminder like one   way to   control working hours effectively as she stated below:

"I set aside specific times for my tasks. Like 30 minutes for blogging, 30 minutes for checking and reading email, 30 minutes for replying email, 30 minutes for updating my business websites and another 2 hours for marketing,   etc.

It helps if you set a timer so you don't forget. When it beeps at the end of your

stipulated time, finish to the best you can and move on to the next task. You

can come back to it tomorrow. This keeps me disciplined and makes me value

the time

Regarding to physical border, one of the participant suggest that the need to separate working place by providing special space such as making a partition or special room for doing work. As a consultant he always works at the client's site and doing work preparation at his home office as he mentioned below:

"Some businesses really need a showroom, a proper office to sell or to gain

customer confidence. Some businesses do not really need that. For instance, I

am a consultant, where most of the time, I'll be at the client's premises,

hotels, etc. The home / office will be solely for my admin work. No client will

ever step into my SOHO. Make sure you have a full partition, or a properly

partitioned office space. To make the home less messy, try to have Wireless

connection for internet / computer and cordless phone"

Most of participants did not integrate their work with the family activities even though do the house chores. For example one participant scheduled her work and family activities by doing time block. She blocked her time from 1.30 to 3 hours either to do work activities or family activities as she mentioned below:

"Hi everyone,

for me, its allocating my days into blocks of 1.5 to three hours, and deciding

which things need to be done in those blocks of hours, eg. 6.30-9.00 for

children/breakfast/laundry/planning for the day, 9.00-11.30 for work related

stuff, 11.30-2.30 for cooking/lunch/laundry/children, 2.30-5.30 for work, and

so on. The planning for the day is the most important part for me, because I

can adjust my blocks of time and determine what and how much can be done

for the day.

I find it helps to block my time that way otherwise it's easy to stretch an

activity one or two hours and then I find that there are things that I could

have done the day that's still waiting to be done!"

One female participant gives suggestion how to allocate time for work while having

a baby at home. She told that working time can be set up after taking baby's routine

time:

I would like to share with mothers some of the tips I have discovered to help

manage your time while working at home with children in your midst.

If you have infants, they will never understand your needs for work. I can tell

you from first-hand experience that maintaining a deep level of concentration

while working at home for long periods of time is next to impossible. But

fortunately, babies do well under a schedule or routine. Instead of expecting

your child to work around your schedule, schedule your work around the

needs of your baby.

It is simple. Babies eat, sleep and poop. Sometimes they play. Fortunately,

babies sleep more than they do anything else.

Naptime offers the best advantage for getting your work done. Get your baby into a routine of eat, sleep and play, and you will experience unexpected levels of productivity.

Flexibility is a major key to managing your time and balancing your work at home priorities with your family's needs.

Most of the discussions are referred to managing work and family life such as choosing the right time to be working, provide a space to work, juggling work and family matters and getting help from other party to take care of children. It can be said that the issues that being discussed in the forum are similar to the thoughts and answers given by the respondents from the interview and online open ended survey.

4.6 Summary of the chapter

This chapter provided the findings of an in-depth case study of work-family balance of teleworkers using interpretive analysis. This chapter started with some information about the lifestyle of teleworkers such as their family and their workplaces while working from home. The data collections were gathered from many sources such as face to face interview, phone interview, chatting, electronic mail, online open ended survey and electronic forum. The second part of the chapter began with the findings relating to the factors that influence teleworkers in order to attain balance. Finding shows that the respondents have suggested that individuals must poses certain characteristics such as high self-discipline, good time

management, strong support from family, highly motivated, and patience can lead individual in balancing work and family life.

The last part of the chapter began with the findings relating to the managing border between work and family domain. The characteristic of border is in term of flexibility, permeability, blending and strength are being examined. The findings from each characteristic have been discussed in detail. Individuals who have more experiences working from home (5 years and above) tend to maintain the border between work and family activities compared to the individuals who have less experiences. In other word, for some peoples, work and family issues are kept separately but for others they are closely interwoven and sometimes quite difficult to distinguish. In general, most of the respondents attempts to fulfill their family's needs as well as focusing on their career in which they are desperately trying to balance work and family needs.

However, managing border between work and family can be separated or integrated depending on the individual's effort. Through this discovery practically every respondent having distinctive work procedures in ascertaining border to achieve work-family balance.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONTRIBUTIONS AND FUTURE WORKS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the results. It begins by presenting the discussion of the results based on the research questions of this study. Next is the discussion on the theoretical and practical contributions of the findings. The limitations of the study and suggestions for future research are also presented. The following section will discuss the research objectives being achieved in this study.

5.2 Factors identified that influence teleworker in managing border between work and family domain in balancing work and family life

The findings reveal that there were various factors that influence teleworkers in managing the border between work and home domain in the search to balance work and family life. Teleworkers in this study stated that in order to achieve a work-family balance, individuals must have certain characteristics, so that they were able to manage and control their work successfully. Teleworkers in this study indicated that the factors that influence them in managing work and home domain **are time management; self-discipline, support family, motivation and patience**.

5.2.1 Time management

In this study, respondents agreed that one of the benefits of working from home is the freedom in managing time for work and family. The flexibility in time management allows them to control and manage their time based on their needs. Managing time for work and family is very important to teleworkers, in order to ensure that they do not spend more time for house chores or otherwise. Teleworkers have the opportunity to organize their work time in order to avoid conflicts, and to be available for work and family, especially for those who have young children or elderly relatives to care for. They are able to construct spatial as well as temporal boundaries within their homes based on their specific circumstances. This finding is consistent with a study done by Kirk and Belovies (2006), who mentioned that telework programs had benefited teleworkers, primarily from the flexibility offered in the work schedules. Participants in their study had the autonomy to plan their work schedule so that they could work during hours where they are most productive. They stated that the teleworking program not only assisted employees in balancing their professional and personal lives, but increased the levels of productivity and satisfaction among them.

In this study, teleworkers draw up a plan and carry out daily activities according to the specified time, and use the time completely uninterrupted by other activities. They are able to divide and manage time by allocating a specific amount of time spent on specific activities such as working time, especially to increase efficiency or productivity. Working from home gives them the autonomy to plan their own work according to their tasks at any time they like. Most of them schedule their working

time in the morning because their spouses had gone to work or their children were at school. They would stop in the afternoon to be with family and continue working at night. They were able to adjust their working time if they had other important activities to resolve. They are always aware of the need to plan for rescheduling while working at home. Teleworkers in this study have their own system or practices in managing time in order to fulfill the work and family demands.

They are able to manage the border between work and family by having plans, such as making daily or weekly planning, creating a checklist that lists out all the activities carried out in one day, have a personal organizer to record all the activities, create scheduling for certain activities within a time slot, prioritize based on any important activities, and delegate or distribute routine work to others, such as taking care of children or entertaining visitors. Some of them create work schedules, either to fit their individual preferences and household constraints, or determined by the nature of the job.

One of the freelancers in this study said that his time management would change based on the demands of work, which means that he would draw up a schedule by setting up the deadlines of his project. Teleworkers are able to draw the line between work and family activities by allocating a specific amount of time for work without neglecting the family demands so that they manage to balance their work and family life. This finding supports a study done by Tietze & Musson (2003), who mentioned that teleworkers develop their own personal coping strategies and solutions in order to balance their work and family life. They found that all types of home-based

workers (married, single, with children, or without children) use clock-time for their work and also for the domestic tasks.

The findings reveal that while working from home, individuals have more freedom/flexibility in terms of time and space as compared to working in an office. However, the flexibility here does not mean that they should neglect their business/work or can just work whenever they feel like it. Most of the teleworkers agreed that there should be guidelines as to when it's time to work and when it's time for family, and it does not mean that they are not working at all just because they are at home. Teleworkers noted that they faced challenges and difficulties during the early years in managing work and family activities while working at home. They intended to spend more energy and time on job-related responsibilities, and sometimes were unable to accomplish their tasks, which may have an impact on their work and family as well. However, as they gained more experienced, they were able to overcome these problems and able to produce their own time management. They are also more mentally and physically prepared and learned to be more flexible. In general, the research suggests that employees who are good time management are successful compared to those who are lack of time management (Kotter, 1982; Mackenzie, 1990).

5.2.2 Self-Discipline

Past research has mentioned that those individuals who work at home must discipline themself in order to succeed in their work and in their life (Felstead and Jewson, 2000; Spoonley, 2002; Stevens, 2009). Most of the teleworkers in this study stressed that strong self-discipline is very important to an individual who works at home. One female respondent commented that individuals may experience difficulty in separating work and home activities while working. This is due to the distractions at home, and sometimes it is hard to handle, and the situation becomes stressful and problematic for them. Therefore, she claimed that individuals should know how to discipline themselves, and be able to manage time properly so that they did not find any difficulty in separating work and personal time while working.

Teleworkers in this study agreed that they cannot isolate themselves totally within the household. The challenges they face are to maintain the time and places of work while working at home. They must decide when to work and where to work, and they must establish and maintain the interface between these work routines and the life of the household in order to avoid negative impacts on their work and family life. For example, work overshadowing their family time or family negatively affecting a teleworker's working patterns. Therefore, self-discipline is necessary to ensure that work can be done as planned because without self-discipline, teleworkers cannot accomplish their job, even though they had made up a clear work schedule. Self-discipline is a key to success, because the nature of self-discipline itself is the

aptitude of not backing down regardless of a number of bad experiences and letdowns.

Teleworkers must have strong determination and commitment to perform a particular job or activity properly until completion or success. They are able to control themselves by choosing a target with a certain time limit, and plan everything in order to achieve the target within the time specified. In other words, they always set reasonable working hours and stick to them, so that by having self-discipline they can maintain the border between the work and family domain. One male respondent, who is known as Internet Millionaire man, suggested that an individual must be persistent in what they are doing, and be able to control themselves to work smart in order to achieve success in work and family as well.

Another thing that teleworkers should avoid is not to procrastinating their projects in order to maintain the border between work and family domain. Procrastination means to make it a matter for tomorrow, which will prevent them from achieving their objectives, and may cause another problem that would affect their work and their family as well. One of the teleworker emphasized that she never procrastinated on anything during her six years working from home. She believed that procrastination may have a negative impact on her work, as well as her family. Teleworkers must reinforce their determination and commitment to begin to learn discipline and make this into their habit and a way of life. Teleworkers in this study agreed that managing time and self-discipline should come together in order to achieve work-family balance. This study supports the study done by Spinks and

Wood (1996) and Christensen (1990) where they mentioned that an individual must be good in discipline himself and has a well-organised time management in order to become a successful teleworker.

5.2.3 Support from family

Another important factors identified is support from family members. As we know, the home is an environment of domestic labor, leisure, family, kinship, child-rearing and personal intimacy. Teleworkers in this study agreed that they cannot separate their work and family activities while working at home. They may be distracted by their family members and might have potential collision of values or roles. Thus, teleworkers need to manage the interface between the time and space for working and also to the rest of the household. This involves managing the relationships with other family members in order to avoid conflicts between them. Therefore, they and their families can mutually agree, however, that the family exchanges routinely will take place during times set for breaks so that teleworkers are not continually distracted from their jobs.

Teleworkers in this study informed their family about their time and space for working so that they were not being disturbed while working. Some of them prepared the working schedule or were always informed in advance or closed the door to indicate that they are working and not to be disturbed. For example, one male respondent always told in advance to his family that he has work to complete and it may take off their family time also. But then, he always rewards them by having a special family occasion after he completed his work. This means that mutual

agreement from the family is important for the teleworkers in order to get full cooperation from their family.

Teleworkers in this study reported that they are able to balance their work and family activities as well because they received full support from their family. Support from family may come in many ways. For example, husbands or wives help with the household chores and childcare. Sometimes others in the household did take part in helping teleworkers in the process of working such as acting as a technical support or motivator or consultant and also a source of ideas. This finding is similar to the study done by Baral & Bhargava (2011) which mentioned that family members are often contribute by lending their emotional support to help harvest more time and energy to complete any work or activities they have. Therefore, the teleworkers in this study stressed that support from family is very important because they can do work activities without any worries.

This study is consistent with a research done by Haines & Archambault (2002) who mentioned that family support is shown when the member of the family are able to tolerate with any type of work or challenge the teleworker is currently facing. Their study found out that family support is essential to make sure that the result from the work done to be satisfying and organized. Whereas Lapierre &Allen (2006) who did a research on strategies to avoid work–family conflict suggested and the use of problem-focused coping as well as support from teleworkers' family and supervisor helps them to avoid work or personal conflicts at once. This study confirmed that the

need support from family is very important to teleworkers whether in the research of work-family conflict or work-family balance.

5.2.4 Motivation

Teleworkers in this study agreed that motivation was needed to ensure that they will achieve their work and family balance while working from home. They must have strong commitment to maintain their work because they were working alone at home. Motivation is the ability to motivate oneself with the strength to do something without being influenced by other people. It is the psychological impulse to direct a person toward a goal without giving up. The most common names for the motivations are the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is the internal cravings to improve one's skill by performing a certain task while the extrinsic motivation is said to be the external cause that sometimes are unrelated to the task that one is performing.

The intrinsic motivation in this study is comprised of the job that they love or enjoy very much, intention to raise children on their own while working, intention to help family to improve the quality of life and the desire to work alone. While the extrinsic motivation in this study, include the desire for money and receive full support from family. Furthermore the ICT facilities also drive teleworkers in managing their work effectively as well as increase the family socio-economy so that they are well-balanced in managing their job and also the family needs. ICT enables them to work anytime and anywhere, with communications network facilities enabling them to expand business opportunities.

All of these factors have motivated teleworkers to better manage their work in terms of time, space and also psychology so that their work does not interfere with their family life and vice versa. Consistent with this, is the finding by Baruch and Nicholson (1997) who found that there were three qualities in order for homeworkers to be effective working at home, which were self motivation, the ability to work alone and tenacity. Another research that supported the findings was from Felstead et al. (2001) and Belanger (1999). Felstead and Jewson (2000) identified three specific sets of concerns that are related to self-management. One of the concerns stated is that certain personality traits, such as being organized and highly motivated are said to be very essentialin completing a particular task.

5.2.5 Patience

Teleworkers in this study, emphasized that the importance of patience for succeeding in balancing work and family life. They have the determination to endure under difficult circumstances, which can mean persevering not to act on annoyance or anger when under strain, especially when faced with distractions from their family. They sometimes have to juggle their work and at the same time have to focus on their family demand. Some of the distractions and interruptions of working at home are unavoidable. Teleworker's attitude is really important to face the obstacles by doing attitude adjustments and some careful planning. Teleworkers must try to adapt themselves to those as well. Having patience and kindness to each other will help them to face the challenges. Teleworkers make corrections themselves about the

causes of failure in managing their work and family needs and draw lessons from them in order to balance work and family life.

Teleworkers in this study created a discourse of "patience as a virtue", which most of them are self-employed and also a breadwinner so that a high level of patience needed for them to deal with the challenges in their business and also from their families. In another word, working from home presented a greater opportunity to be patient and persevering to the teleworkers in order to find a balance in managing work and family life.

5.3 The discussion on how teleworkers manage the border between work and family domain in balancing work and family life

Border theory are explained when one's character takes place within the lines of demarcation that may be physical, temporal, or psychological (Clark, 2000). This study reveals that the respondents are able to manage and negotiate the border according to the characteristics of the border between work and the family domain to find the right balance in their work and home life. There are four characteristics of border as identified by Clark (2000), which are permeablity, flexibility, blending and strength. Each of the characteristics of the border is discussed below in relation to the physical, temporal and psychological

5.3.1 Permeability

Permeability in this study refers to respondents who do the opposite thing in terms of physical, temporal and psychological while working from home or doing work

matters while handling family affairs or activities. Past research stated that permeations are always perceived as interruptions or distractions. The permeability of border is comprised of three aspects that are physical, temporal and psychological. The respondents acknowledged that they cannot isolate themselves totally within the household and does agree that they cannot avoid interruptions but, they are able to adapt those situations by careful scheduling their work and choose the appropriate workplace and also informing the other households and friends when they are available.

They are physically and mentally prepared to face the challenges and obstacles for having the workplace and home environment in one place. The respondents especially the females in this study gave the main reason for working from home is the need to be together with the family. In some cases, not all the distractions lead to a negative impact on the respondents, where sometimes distractions are useful for them, to take a break and relax, reduce stress, gather their energy, and keep up their mental strength, as well as to drag respondents away from their computers for a while. Because of the nature of their work, sometimes they feel lonely and need to communicate with somebody sometimes.

This study shows that, all the three aspects (physical, temporal and psychological) of permeability of border do exist in both domains of work and family in order to obtain work-family balance. There is no clear line in maintaining the permeability of border between the work and family domains. The respondents are able to negotiate the border by creating several ways to face the interruptions. In this study, the first

aspect is the permeability of physical border which occurs when their workplace is permeable.

Respondents in this study would allow their children and other household members to enter into their workplace to discuss anything not related to their work while they are working. However, most of the respondents start doing work while their children and other family members are not present so that they can concentrate only on their work. Some of the respondents who have young children will stop working for a while to deal with their children because it can be handled quickly (e.g. make some drinks or bring the children to the toilet). They would answer to all the calls and make it short if it is not an important matter to their work and family. The respondents may perform multiple roles at the same time (e.g. daughter, mother, wife, husband) while handling the interruptions.

In terms of physical appearance while working, this finding is contrast from the research done by Kowalski & Swanson (2005) where they stated that teleworkers prefer to wear formal dress while working in order to create the border between work and family. However, in this study, all the respondents do not make the distinction between the work and home domain. They are more comfortable wearing informal clothes such as T-shirts and jeans or even sometimes pajamas while working. They feel more energetic and free to do their work because they are not bounded by the office obligations. They will wear a formal dress if needed to meet their clients or for other occasions outside their home.

The second aspect is the permeability of temporal border, which occurs when the respondents allow time for work to be interrupted with unrelated work, or vice versa. The temporal permeability of border in this study occurs when the respondents take time to serve family or their children's needs, or answer the phone call and discuss the family matters, or do some house chores or entertain unexpected guests or relatives or friends while working. Whereas, examples for temporal permeability of border in the family domain is doing the work matters during family hour such as answering phone call to discuss about work or meeting clients at home.

To find the right balance between work and home life, all the respondents make their working schedule after taking account of their family needs. Even though, the respondents have their own working schedule and use different ways to tell their family that they are working and are not to be disturbed, in some circumstances they have to coordinate the unrelated work issues to be considered. As example, entertaining guests, serving the children's needs, and receiving a personal phone call. Most of the respondents agreed that they would postpone their work, temporarily, to deal with such issues.

However, they are able to adjust their working time to other times available, because one of the advantages of working from home is the flexibility in terms of time. In contrast, some of the respondents, especially those who stay with their family, are able to ignore the interruptions by asking other family members to deal with the situations, such asking their partner to manage the demands of their children, stay quietly in the room, not answering phone calls, etc.

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The third aspect is the permeability of the psychological border, which is concerned with the individuals who are physically located in one domain (e.g. work) but psychologically is in another domain (e.g. family). This study shows that the psychological permeability of the border occurs when the respondents cannot distinguish their mind and behavior in both work and family. The psychological distractions may come from thinking about family obligations, or their desire to play computer games, or becoming interested in watching a favorite TV program, or thinking about unrelated work matters while working. However, the respondents are able to continue their work, because the work must be done at that time (the responsibility to their work).

Another psychological permeability occurs when some of the respondents in this study applied a working technique in their family life. For example, one of the female respondents created her own family filing system to organize all her family's activities, in order to manage her family profile and financial statement. Another respondent applied teamwork skills based on their job experience to his family members, so that they were able to work together while doing family activities. Sometimes they applied the family technique to solve their work problem. For example, a female respondent worked as a home baker and adopted her family cooking techniques to improve her baking skills.

This study supports Clark's theory (2000), and Hetch & Allen (2009) mentioned that boundaries at home and at work are *asymmetrically permeable*. In this study the

work and family border are permeable, and the respondents were able to create certain rules to negotiate this border in order to balance their work life and family life. However, the study shows that the border for the work domain is more permeable, compared to the border for the family domain. This means that the more powerful domain in this study is the family domain, because according to Clark (2000) and Hetch & Allen (2009) argued that the powerful domain is refer to the stronger boundary which lead to work-family balance. The finding of this study found out that some the respondents in this study prioritize their family's business other than their work. This shows that the stronger border is family domain.

However this finding is in contrast to the study done by Hetch & Allen (2009), which stated that work tended to permeate into an individual's nonwork lives more than their nonwork lives permeated their work. Hetch and Allen (2009), in North America, discovered that the power of work is more acceptable to intrude on home life than vice versa. Family life is of utmost importance and holds a strong place when it comes to Malaysian society. Malaysian society believes that the family is the foundation of peace and prosperity for the country. This is in alignment with the Malaysian Government's intention to create a caring society by providing various programs to increase general awareness of the importance of family (http://www.pmo.gov.my/?menu=page&page=1898).

5.3.2 Flexibility

The flexibility in this study is about when, where and how individuals organize his or her work in balancing between work and family needs. The flexibility of the

border in this study is composed of three aspects, which are physical, temporal, and psychological. The study reveals that the flexibility of border exists in terms of physical, temporal, and psychological elements in both domains of work and family life. Working from home gives respondents the opportunities to self-manage working times and workplace in order to balance work and family life.

There are two groups of respondents using different ways of managing the flexibility of the border in physical, temporal and psychological terms. Looking at the flexibility of the physical border, the first group of respondents made a clear line onthe physical flexibility of the border between work and family. This group was able to establish a separate place for work by specifying a specific room as their office. Many of the respondents in this group, regardless of the type of job,had experience working from home for more than four years, especially those respondents involved in more than one job at a time, such as being a consultant, a trainer, and having an online business.

They had their own room to keep all their working tools, and some of them even made renovations to their home to suit their work purposes. The idea is the need to create a conducive working environment to focus more on their work, eventhough they are working from home. They are able to separate their work area from the family area, and preferred not to share their workplace with others while they are working because the room is full of their valuable working equipment.

The second group of respondents made the flexibility of the physical border negotiated between the work and family. This occurs when the respondents chose to work at any location, such as in the kitchen, dining room, bedroom, hall, or in the car, as long as they got their jobs done. In fact, one male respondent reported that he shared the same room (e.g., hall) to work in while his family did other activities, such as watching tv, chatting, etc. Both groups of respondents claimed that work and family can be balanced, either by having a specific place to work, or to work anyplace, as long as they have a mutual understanding with their family, and always keep good relations with them.

Regarding the flexibility of the temporal border, most of the respondents stressed that they need to have sufficient time for work to ensure that their work can be implemented successfully without creating any problems for their family. The temporal flexibility of border occurs in this study when some of the respondents chose to work at anytime they like without separating time for work and time for family. In this situation, the respondents liked doing multitask activities regardless of the domain they are in.

They stated that they can work and do family activities at the same time, such as downloading files while cooking, answering phone calls from clients while feeding the baby and do online chatting while blogging, etc. They claimed that their work could be done because they fully utilised ICT facilities such as a notebook, mobile phone, iPad, etc. One of the respondents doing an on-line business and also working

as a business consultant mentioned that he did not mind which domain he was in because he always ready for work and family 24/7.

However, most of the respondents in this study preferred to separate time for work and time for family to ensure that they could focus on work without interfering with family time, or vice versa. The respondents in this study provided a specific time, after taking into consideration their family demands. For example, a mother with young children, her work schedule was organised to accomodate her children's needs. The flexibility of the border gave them opportunities to make working time based on their needs.

They know when they should be working, and also when they should not be working, so that they have enough time for work and for family. Some of them provided for working time by creating a working schedule, whether daily or weekly, based on the work tasks. Besides this, some of the respondents made working arrangements time by allocating a certain amount of time, and not working continuously, where they would cut the working time into two or more chunks atdifferent times in a day. They are then able to change to a more flexible twenty-four-hour day, seven days a week, of interspersed work and leisure.

Most of the respondents, either single or married, chose to work in the morning because their children or other family members were not at home. Some of the respondents, especially the men, would start working at 9 am until 4 pm or 5 pm, including a lunch break, but for some female respondents they would stop working

at noon to prepare lunch and to fulfill their family needs, because their children would be coming home from school in the afternoon, and would need their attention. Most of the female respondents who have children started their family time in the afternoon until night-time when their children are asleep. Some of them, either male or female respondents, may continue working into the night if they have to settle any important work.

Moreover, the respondents try to avoid working on the weekend or holiday in order to give full attention to their family activities.   However, if they have to continue working on weekends or holidays, they always informed their family earlier. Actually, the respondents in this study mentioned that, in some circumstances, they also do the personal errands and family activities during working hours such as to take care of sick children or other family members, to accomplish the household tasks such as preparing dinner, doing laundry, visiting sick person in the hospital etc.

This study shows that 77% of the respondents spend less than 50 hours a week for work which is slightly similar to the number of hours for the workers who work in the normal office. The Malaysian Employment Act defines the work week as 48 hours, with a maximum of 8 working hours per day and 6 working days per week (http://www.justlanded.com/english/Malaysia/Malaysia-Guide/Jobs/Working-in-Malaysia). The difference between teleworkers and normal workers is that teleworkers are free to make working time arrangements in order to suit their work and family life. This study shows that the flexibility of a temporal border can be

managed and in this study negotiated based upon the individual's characteristics, individual's principle and the nature of job.

Since all respondents in this study are self-employed, they are more independent and more flexible in managing their work and family life. The finding of this study is in line with the study done by Tietze and Musson (2003) who reported that nearly all telecommuters in the study tended to manage their work days using clock-time approach, rather than a task based one. In fact they found that clock-time was often adhered to more strongly in the household situation than the traditional office of 9 especially in the morning and end up until about 3 p.m. in the afternoon). They added that the clock-time approach seems to be most useful in providing clear demarcations and overcoming tension concerning role conflicts and availability.

The flexibility of the psychological border occurs in this study when the respondents keep thinking of family obligations while working or thinking of work matters while having family activities. In this study most of the respondents ran personal errands during the workday, and would often multi-task when they were working from home so that they always thought about their personal and family life during working hours, but the detailed nature of their jobs encouraged these thoughts to be short in duration. However, to some respondents they get the idea about their business during family gathering activities. At the same time they are able to control their mind not to think about unrelated matters while working in order to give full attention to their work. The ability of respondents to negotiate the flexibility of the border will lead to enhanced work-family balance.

This study support the study done by Hill et al. (2001) and Clark (2001) who mentioned that individuals with perceived work flexibility have more favorable work-family balance. The border between work and family is less rigid (can be negotiated) under certain circumstances such as extending work hours to finish a job or attending important family events, etc. These finding shows that the temporal border is more flexible in the work domain compared to the family domain. It can be said that most of the respondents in this study emphasizes more on their family needs which is working from home which gave them the opportunities to spend more time with their family. Furthermore, the use of ICT has enabled respondents to work at anytime and anywhere so that the border becomes very flexible either in the work or home domain.

5.3.3 Blending

According to Clark (2000), blending occurs when high levels of permeability and flexibility exist within borders. The findings show that blending does exist where the border is physical, temporal and psychological permeable (refer 5.3.2.1) and physical, temporal and psychological flexible (refer 5.3.2.2). This study reveals that the respondents use two different ways in managing the border for work and family domain. They managed the border either by segmenting work and family life or by integrating work into family life or family life into the work life. The integration in this study refers to the physical, temporal and psychological border which is permeable and flexible. The respondents make no distinction between the domains of the work and family life where they juggle work and family activities at the same

place and the same time. These respondents were able to take care of their work and personal matters minus the trouble of balancing all of the acts at once. The participants mentioned that they preferred to juggle their work and family responsibilities and prioritize their family needs in the first place.

The segmentation is when the respondents prefer to work separately from the family activities and vice versa. The study shows that the physical and temporal border is less permeable and less flexible. However, the psychological blending occurs when the respondents use their family experiences in their work life or use their work experiences in their family life. They are able to maintain a clear physical and temporal border between the work and family domain by working at specific place or room, working when the children went to school or and other family members were not present, scheduling their work, and keeping their thoughts by focusing on work. To what extent the separation between work and family can be is depending on their experiences and way of life.

This study shows that both the male and female respondents who choose the segmentation approach is the individual who had been working from home for more than 4 years regardless of the kind of job. This is because they had already trained their family members about their work conditions and have learned from their experiences on how to negotiate both the work and family domains while working from home. In addition, this may be due to their good attitude and obtaining full support from the family which lead them to be able to balance their work and family life. This study is also aligned with the study done by Schein (1984) who stated that

one's obligation to his family does not inescapably struggle with the need of a strong commitment to work and career only if the family themselves agreed to the idea of a strong work ethic.

This finding is similar to the research done by Nippert-Eng (1996) who has described that differences between two domains on a continuum are dealt with incorporation at one end subdivision to another. This study support the Clark's (2000) theory of border where the interaction between work and family environment may be different to each individual so that the respondents must negotiate the border according to their situation in order to maintain the balance. Most notably, this study shows that the respondents favor to integrate their family obligations into their work domain more than integrate work to their family domain. This study supports the research done by Ammons (2008) who mentioned that individuals tend to integrate personal life/family into workday but keeping the work strongly segmented. This happen because individuals cannot isolate themselves with the home environment and must adapt the situation to make both of worlds equally balanced.

5.3.4 Strength

The strength of border is depending on the three characteristics of border that are permeability, flexibility and blending (Clark, 2000). This study shows that there exists a weak border and a strong border where both will facilitate work-family balance. In this study, the weak border occurs when the border is permeable, flexible and blending. The strong border occurs when the border is impermeable and inflexible and do not allow blending. The respondents who represent the weak

border agree that they are able to achieve work-family balance by integrating their work into the family domain. In other words, they can work at anytime and anywhere they like and at the same time attempt to meet the family needs.

Those respondents who agreed that the strong border will facilitate work-family balance prefers to work with a specific place, specific time and is able to segment their work and family activities. This study finds that the choice to the weak or strong border is based on the individual's attitudes and working experience rather than the gender and the nature of work. The respondent must be prepared to adapt to those environment in order to succeed in both worlds of work and family. This study supports Clark's (2000) proposition about the weak and strong borders to obtain work-family balance.

This study goes further to identify the type of border strength as identified by Hecht & Allen, (2009), who had divided border strength into two parts namely border strength at work and border strength at home. The border strength at work refers to the ability of respondents to separate their family obligations while working such as typically working only in the home office, scheduled hours, and do not think about, or do family obligations. Whereas border strength at home is when an individual is not doing work matters while having a family activity such as typically dealing with family issues and do not think about, or take care of work.

The study found that most of respondents with experience more than four years working from home tend to favor to practice border strength at work. This is because

the respondents have a responsibility to maintain the stability of their work and learn from the experience of working from home. The respondents who favor to practice border strength at home are females whose family is their main priority. This finding is consistent with Allen and Hetch (2009) who stated that individuals who have stronger boundaries at home are those who were highly involved with their personal or family lives.The respondents in this study seemed to have structured their work, as well as their family lives. They become generally better organized. They plan more carefully, are able to make better adjustments and adapt to new environments in both worlds of work and family.   The evident was that they all had different rules and practices to ensure that that they are able to negotiate and manage the borders between both domains so that work-family could be balanced.

5.4 The Practices of working from home for the self-employed teleworkers

Based on the discussion of the objective one (section 5.2) and two (section 5.3), the study shows that the practices of working from home were depended on the factors that influence them and the way they manage the characteristics of border between work and family domain. Figure 5.1 shows the final conceptual framework of the study.
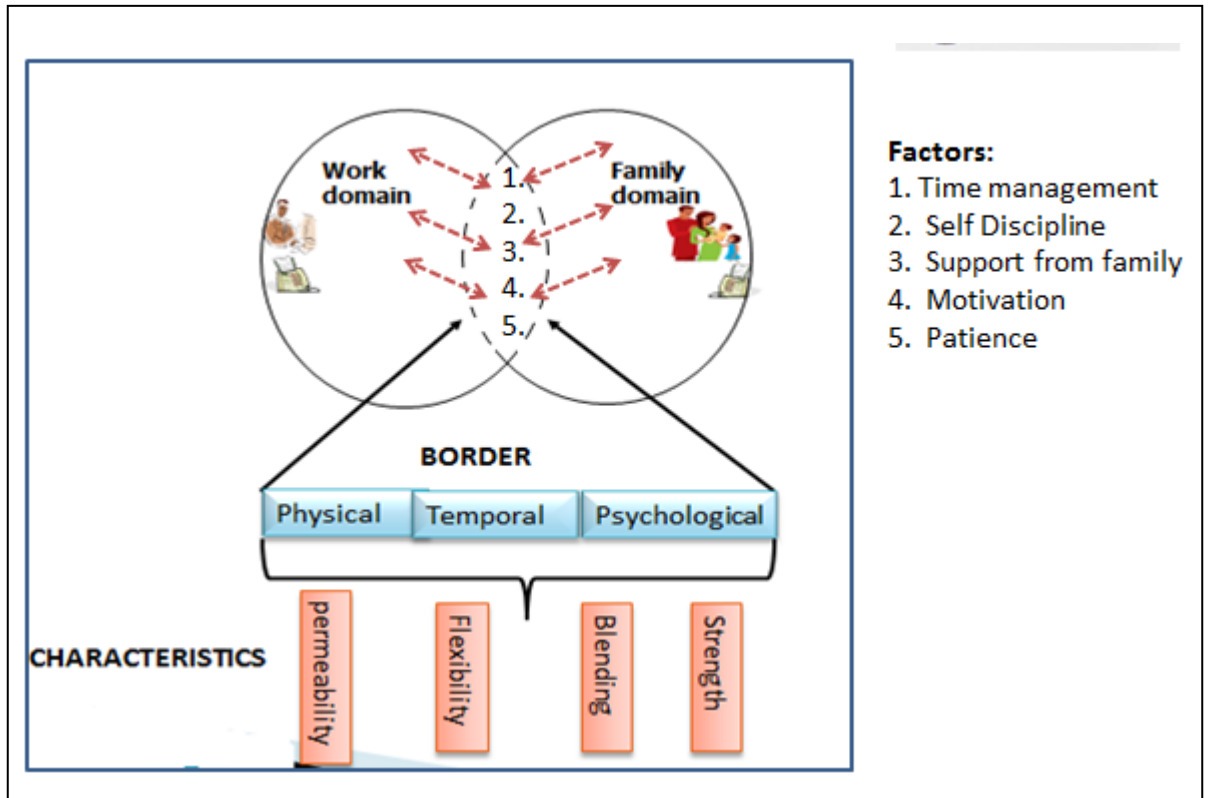
Figure 5.1 the final conceptual framework of the study

From this framework, the researcher has identified the practices of working and the factors that influence the self-employed teleworkers in managing border between work and family in order to attain work-family balance. Below are the practices of working that being applied by the self-employed teleworkers:

1. Creates working schedule and proper planning in terms of time, and space. Working from home will give the teleworker herself the freedom to choose her working hours. However, it is still important for her to prepare a working schedule to prevent confusion in arranging time between completing her tasks and being with her family. The family members still have to be informed in advance about the working schedule so that they are aware of her

responsibilities for her work and family. For those who have a baby in the house, they would have to prepare for any setbacks because managing a career with a baby at the same time is no easy task. It is also crucial for the teleworker to be flexible in their own time because sometimes the due dates for completing the tasks can be changed without a warning.

2. Provide a specific workplace in the house to keep all the works and the ICT facilities. Teleworker is advised to prepare a specific room in their house solely for her to keep all the files and the computer. In another word, she needs to have an office in the house. This is very important because teleworkers tend to print a lot of documents and if she has a specific room to keep them in place, she does not have to worry about losing them. If the teleworker's house is not that spacious, she can still buy storage to keep all the files and do her tasks in places like the bedroom and the kitchen. The family members will just have to 'cut her some slack' and not disrupt her in her working hours.

3. Family members have to be informed in advance when a teleworker is planning to work from home. Negotiate and discuss among the family members regarding work and family activities. Help them understand about the needs of a teleworker to prevent misunderstanding in the future. Their cooperation and support means the most in order to maintain the harmonious family life. Hence, the teleworker can perform the tasks she has without any disruptions.

4. Develop skill in managing business, ICT and family. Teleworker obviously have to be someone with acceptable skill in managing business while using ICT at the same time. There is no doubt that if the teleworker managed to have both of the skills, they will work wonders in the future

5. Open to any risk, accepting and tolerating with family and friends. Teleworkers must be opened to any suggestions from the family members. For example, she can still help with the chores at her house even if she has tasks to be completed because it is still the right thing to do. If she failed to do so, she can consider hiring a help to do that for her family. That way, she gets to finish her works and chores will be done in a perfect amount of time.

Summary of the practices of working from home and the factors that influence self-employed teleworkers in managing border between work and family domain is illustrated in Figure 5.2.
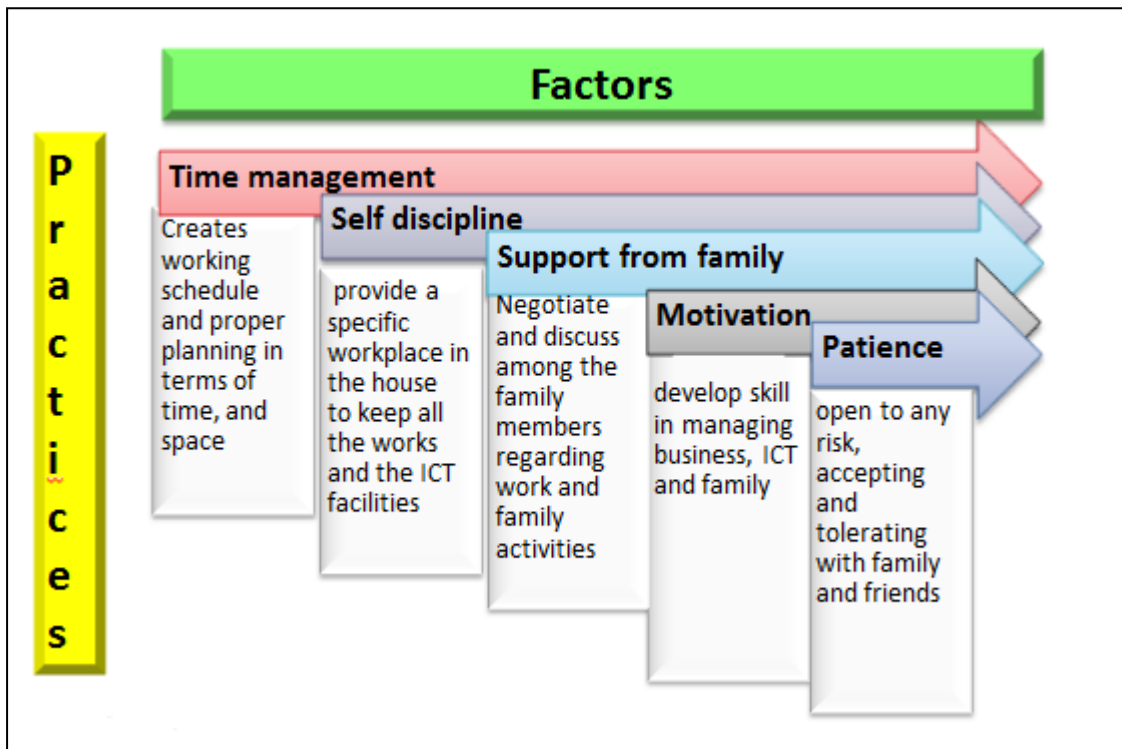
Figure 5.2 the practices of working from home and the factors that influence self-employed teleworkers in managing border between work and family domain

Working from home automatically integrates home and work domains. Thus, individuals have to manage the borders between both domains by identifying the ways to conduct their works and family activities. Regarding the characteristics of borders, this study shows that the respondents have created their own boundaries around their work and their family. They are free to provide their own strategies to meet with their work and family demand. They must physically and mentally prepare to face the challenges that come from both worlds of work and family so that they can handle them wisely. In a nutshell, it is crucial to say that a teleworker must be able to juggle all that responsibility in her working environment as well as her family life.

5.5 Theoretical Contributions

This study makes theoretical contribution to the research on the teleworkers' experiences in managing border between work and family in towards work-family balance. Results from the current study demonstrate that work-family border theory is viable and is an important theoretical framework that can be used to examine the work and family life of teleworkers towards the work-family balance. Previous study has been focused on the construct of work-family conflict by identifying the problems of work-home interface.

However, this study identifies the work-family balance by focusing on the construction of nature of border and it's characteristics between work and home domain based on Clark's Theory (2000). This theory posits that the outcomes driven by the characteristics of the border between the domains of work and family in determining work-family balance. If an individual is able to negotiate and manage the characteristics of the border between work and family, he or she will successfully achieve work-family balance while working at home. This study provides knowledge that the nature of border and its characteristics can be managed by examining how individuals can adapt to and shape their work and home activities.

This proved that the border is tangible that can be divide time, place and psychological as mentioned by Nippert-Ng (1996) Ashforth (2000), Kossek at al. (2006) and Matthew (2007) Through this study, the researcher has focused on understanding how far individuals are able to negotiate the border between work and

home in determining balance. This was done by exploring their characteristics while moving to and from work and family domain while working at home.

The finding of the present study confirmed by the literature, which points out that personality characteristics have an important influence on the selection of worker needed for teleworking implementation (Spinks and Woods, 1996; Belanger, 1999; Spoonley, 2002). However, this finding has added another characteristic that did not highlighted in the previous research that is patience. This study allows the researcher to study the problem areas and examine the work-home interface of the life teleworkers in searching balance between work and home domain.

5.6 Practical Contributions

This study makes several important implications. First, is to provide the practices of teleworkers in managing border between work and family in order to attain work-family balance. It will help the individuals or interested parties to make a choice on the teleworking concept without having difficulties of integrating their life. In addition, individuals can make plans to develop their skills in managing border between work and family life. Moreover, the findings from this study will contribute to the development of individuals 'skills in managing the border between the work and family domain. This study may also contribute in creating lessons learnt from the work experiences from individuals who telework and would provide insight to those who like to opted for this style of working environment.

To improve one's business achievement while balancing the task for work and family, effective ways in managing the boundaries between the two spheres would be a big help to them. Improved work-family balance can also contribute towards retaining good or skilled employees and also making more companies a more attractive workplace for prospective candidates. Positive influence on the development comes from a positive work-life environment. This can be done by enhancing individuals' participation in economic accomplishments. For instance, studies have revealed that through teleworking, organizations can arrange their operations to minimize the costs while maximizing the resources and improving the productivity (Gibson et al., 2002; Harpaz, 2002; Crandal & Gao, 2005; Butler et al., 2007).

Second, this research can contribute to the collection of experiences of developing the skills and managing the border between the work and home domains in the search of a work-family balance. This study contribute to the teleworking concept by highlights the practices of the self-employed teleworkers in managing border between work and family domain to achieve work-family balance. This is important since in Asia Pacific as far as the researcher knows, there are little or no significant information about teleworking in major countries like China and India (SKMM, 2010). Teleworking is somewhat quite a new concept compared to other advanced countries according to the perspective of our own country, Malaysia. SKMM (2010) found that many Malaysian companies are not equipped with a telework program or practice.

Although many of the employees perform work outside their office, the term "telework" is not indicated specifically in the employment policy manual. Hence, some employers are advised to change their old fashioned opinion that all employees have to be physically present at their workplace. To achieve both aims for workplace and work-family life, a solid support from the sources of management and active changes in workgroup are needed.

Third, understanding the common characteristics of individuals could provide insight into the type of teleworkers who should participate in teleworking environment. The current study involved seeking to understand the factors that influence teleworkers in managing border in order to attain work-family balance. This study provides practical knowledge that the individuals characteristics should be taken into consideration before choose to telework. It is suggests that patience is another important characteristic should be included in the selection of worker for teleworking implementation in Malaysia.

Fourth, the implementation of teleworking in planning any programs to help families to easily balance their work and family life can be done by implementing the working and parenting engagements to make the policy judgments. The findings of the study can be a preliminary point of reference for establishing the rules and regulation in the teleworking setting. The findings can be a guideline for the individuals who choose to telework and at the same time will teleworking environment which is teleworking could be an alternative work option in Malaysia, especially women, people who are disabled, unemployed and retired workers, remote

workers, and entrepreneurs in generating income without creating any family and/or personal problems (Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development, 2004).

Furthermore, teleworking could be considered for the younger generation of employees, called Generation Y. They are "media savvy", have a strong work ethic, entrepreneural spirit, a sense of responsibility, and are comfortable with change (Tulgan and Martin, 2001). It has been said that most of the new generation prefers using the technology to communicate rather than having a face to face contact with each other (Davis, et al. 2006). This generation live to be competent while facing the challenge from a number of new opportunities ahead of them (Trunk, 2007). Moreover, Spiro (2006) reported that work-life balance is one of top priorities of this generation.

Fifth, with the advancement of ICT such as cloud computing, internet broadband, popular gadgets, smart phones, and also green technology, based on these findings, teleworking can be a workable solution for the workplace. These findings can be used as a guideline in promoting the teleworking concept to the rural community to make them actively participate in the economy to improve their quality of life. Walsham et al. (2007) suggested that there is a need to focus on particular marginalized groups by providing the potential of ICT to support them so that they can access different technologies and use them effectively. This can be achieved through the Malaysian Government (National Broadband Initiative) in providing broadband penetration throughout the country, where the target broadband

subscription rate by household could reach up to75 percent by the year 2015, and by the year 2020 Malaysia will become a knowledge society heading toward a high-income economy (Zulhisham, 2011).

Sixth, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on Information Management practices in the application of information technology in the way of life. Teleworking is one of the products created from the information technology revolution.

5.7 Limitation

This study does have several limitations. First, this study is concerned with an analysis of a group of individuals from one particular organization, and in this sense, the researcher did not intend to generalize the findings to workers in other industries or other countries. However, while qualitative studies (typically) involve a small sample, which reduces the ability to generalize (Miles & Huberman, 1994), they do provide us with an insight into the issues to be addressed in the life of teleworkers, but its findings reinforce the need to develop our understanding of the complex interactions between work and family life when work is implemented in the home environment.

Second, the respondents of the study were members of eHomemakers and were self-employed, so the perspectives and opinions could be biased because they have autonomy and flexibility in controlling their work and family life. Though, this could be used as a starting point in introducing the need of strategy for managing

work and family in seeking the balancing of work and family life in teleworking environments in Malaysia. Since the early 1990s, many research projects were carried out in collaboration with international agencies to promote teleworking as an attractive model of employment but there have not been any further studies that found this work arrangement being publicly implemented.

Third, the researcher's cultural background is different from the predominant cultural background of the respondents in the study, and that may have introduced cultural biases during the data analysis phase. Since the study used an interpretative approach, the interpretations inevitably rely on the respondents' understanding of different phenomenon and the understanding is shaped by the respondents' understanding, thus, some unintentional biases may have crept in during analysis.

5.8 Suggestions for Future Research

The study limits its scope to understanding of the personality characteristics of teleworkers and the practices in managing the border between work and family in order to attain balance. However, there are several limitations to the study that need further investigation. First, the present study focused the empirical investigation on a single case study that involved only one type of employment, that is, self-employed teleworkers. It is important to bear in mind that other types of employees may have different influences and practices in managing the border between work and family towards a work-family balance. Therefore, the findings can be interpreted in relation to the specific population only. Future research should study different settings of

potential employment to ensure that designing this mode of working arrangement will be beneficial and suitable for individuals who choose to telework.

Second, findings showed that the teleworkers are successful individuals who have balanced life and work to be working as well as supporting their family. Future research should also explore the role of family members in supporting the teleworker in managing the domains and borders in the search of the work-family balance. The questions that should be addressed are what kind of support could they provide, what strategies should be considered, as well as behavior patterns while they are together at home so that it will provide a win-win situation for both career and family life.

Third, future research should look into how other groups, like those that are using Telecenter to promote their businesses. Telecenter is a form of satellite office that supports teleworking. Questions should be addressed as to what kind of support they need from government agencies in terms of policies or tax rebates to possibly help single mothers and other underserved communities. This is in line with the Government's actions to achieve Vision 2020, to be a knowledge society and high-income economy. The question is how to develop policies and support to help others who do not know how to be independent. Another question should be addressed is how can the government design policies to encourage more individuals who telework to benefit from current telecenters in the country.

5.9 Summary

This chapter provided the summary of the findings together with the discussions of the theoretical and practical implications of the study. This study provides information about the teleworker's characteristics and their experiences in managing border in balancing work and family life. Managing the border in terms of physical, temporal, and psychological factors between work and family domain was a challenging task for the respondents. They had to physically and mentally prepare in order to find balance between the working environments in the home without many distractions.

As for the one of the information society components, teleworking should be promotes to the entire community in Malaysia so that they can adapt to current life style. In line with the Government's aspiration in moving towards a knowledge-based economy, the government needs to leverage the advantage of a networked environment together to utilize the use of ICT services as new sources of growth and wealth creation. Therein lies a way to look into Malaysia's competitive advantage towards deriving a highly skilled and productive workforce of the future. With high speed broadband on track, teleworking could be another alternative working mode, and could be accepted as an option for employers and employees in Malaysia.

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