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Navigating the blurred work-life boundary under the hybrid working context: how the appraisal of emotions prompts boundary management tactics

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Abstract

Hybrid working heightens work-life boundaries blurring. This can create the need for employees to constantly navigate evolving demands in their work-nonwork environment, often before formalized strategic, organisational, and managerial interventions are developed and/or implemented. Therefore, understanding why and how adapt to boundary blurs and manage their work-life balance is critical for effective hybrid working. Drawn on appraisal theories of emotion, we argue that employees' appraisals of boundary-blurring situations can elicit emotions, which prompt employees to navigate and adapt to their blurred boundaries in their work-life balance. We substantiate this with a longitudinal one-month dairy and post-interview study using a sample of 34 employees in the UK Higher Education (HE) sector, where hybrid working has been widely applied. Our finding unveils that both positive and negative emotions help the individual efficiently respond to boundary blurring, using prevention- and promotion-oriented tactics; the former associated with negative emotions focuses on the temporary work-life blurring, whereas the latter associated with positive emotions that attempts to leverage resources and opportunities for long term work-life balance. The findings make practical implications for employees and organisations on how to effectively manage hybrid working by understanding work-life boundaries.

Key words: Work-life balance, Boundary management tactics, Emotion, Hybrid working, Qualitative diary studies.

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Introduction

As the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated work flexibility, hybrid working, which entails a mix of office-based and remote working, has become a firmly established option for many organizations (Xu, 2023). With 66.9% of the global workforce preferring hybrid working (CISCO, 2022) and three-quarters of employers in the UK offering it (CIPD, 2022), employees seem to have more autonomy to manage their work and life. However, managing the constantly permeable, blurred, and overlapping work and non-work boundaries in hybrid working contexts can be effortful processes that impact employees' attention, emotion, and energy to and off work, as well as affect their team, colleagues, and families (Allen, Cho & Meier, 2014; Kossek, 2016; Xu, 2023). Emerging work-life boundary studies have looked at how employees manage boundaries in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, while homeworking was sudden and enforced, which disrupted the work-nonwork boundaries (e.g., Allen et al., 2021; Kossek et al., 2021; Adisa et al., 2022). The particular implications might not fully adapt to the post-pandemic era and there is still little understanding of how employees navigate and adapt to the different varieties of boundary blurring to continue working (Cai Rowley & Xu, 2022), and the contextual factors that allow them to do so in this new form of future work. Addressing these questions can have important implications for effective hybrid working as part of contemporary human resource management.

This study aims to enhance our comprehension of boundary management using the UK Higher Education (HE) sector as a case study, where purposeful hybrid working has been extensively implemented since 2021 (Advanced HE, 2021). Guided by appraisal theories of emotion (e.g., Lazarus, 1991) - a process theory that involves the appraisal of the situation based on various factors, such as its mis/matching with an individual's goals and expectations and its internal and external causes, we argue that employees' appraisals of boundary blurring can shape how they navigate and adapt to the situation. Specifically, we illuminate that employees can appraise (i.e., cognitively evaluate) boundary blurring, and these appraisals can evoke discrete emotions (e.g. frustration, satisfaction, and guilty) that shape employees' individual tactics for managing work-life boundaries. This, in turn, can influence work-related outcomes (e.g., wellbeing, performance) and have implications for the effective implementation of hybrid working.

Our research makes several important contributions to the literature. First, we expand upon the existing work-life boundary literature by incorporating task boundary blurring in addition to

temporal, spatial, and psychological blurring. Work-life boundary management is based on the work-family border (Clarke, 2000) and work-life boundary theories (Ashforth et al., 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996), which explain how individuals manage both work and non-work domains by delineating physical, temporal, behavioural and psychological boundaries (Clarke, 2000; Allen, et al., 2014). We found that as multi-tasking between work and non-work duties has become increasingly normalized under hybrid working, the boundaries between work and non-work domains regarding tasks have become highly permeable (e.g. multi-tasking in cooking and listening meetings). This enables us to consider task boundary blurring in addition to or combine other forms of boundary blurring to better understand the complexities of hybrid working.

Second, we emphasize on the crucial role of emotions and the appraisal process that prompts individuals to manage their work-life boundaries. While previous research has noted that blurred work-life boundaries can lead to feelings of conflict (Ashforth et al., 2000; Kossek et al., 2012) or enrichment (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006), little is known about why and how these occur as a result of boundary blurring. Drawing upon appraisal theories of emotion (e.g., Lazarus, 1991), we unpack two-stage emotion appraisals when employees face boundary blurring between work and nonwork: a) employees initially appraise whether the blurring mis/align their work-life priorities; b) employees then reflectively appraise the internal and external causes of boundary blurring to understand the degree of control one has over the situation (Kossek, Perrigino & Lautsch, 2022) and the potential outcomes of the situation (Moors, et al., 2013). Prior research indicates the attribution of individuals' boundary management tactics in a fragmented manner, for example, Kossek (2016) found individuals choose tactics consistent with their work-life priorities, and Kossek & Lautsch (2018) highlight the importance of the degree of boundary control respectively. We are able to integrate both factors and respond to the emerging research call (Allen et al., 2021; Kossek et al., 2022) for a nuanced understanding of how individuals experience and manage boundary blurring more holistically.

Meanwhile, we question that negative emotions are often characterized as being employees "dysfunctional" for adapting to change (Oreg et al., 2018) and argue that both positive and negative emotions may prompt employees to adapt to boundary blurring and navigate tactics. Negative emotions are associated with prevention-oriented tactics that narrow tasks to address boundary blurring, minimize obstacles, and/or prevent adverse work-life outcomes (e.g.,

decreasing multitasking, and ensuring their focus is on the current work-life priority); whereas positive emotions attempt to leverage resources and opportunities in the environment and solve the boundary blur in the long term (e.g., seeking out supports from colleagues and families), which is regarded as promotion-oriented tactics (Bindl et al., 2019). In contrast to previous boundary management studies that descriptively summarise four tactics (temporal, physical, behavioural, communicative) for both the work and life domains (Kreiner et al., 2009; Kossek, et al., 2012), the prevention-oriented and promotion-oriented tactics is more explanatory to the process of why and how individual use the tactics. This provides practical implications for organizations to understand employees' work-life experiences and offer work-life boundary management support.

In addition, this study employs a longitudinal diary interview design to investigate how employees navigate and adapt to work-life boundary blurring through two-stage appraisals. While there has been an increasing demand for dairy research in work-life studies, little data exists on the stability or dynamism of work-life balance over time (Casper Vaziri, Wayne DeHauw, & Greenhaus, 2018). The chosen methodological approach is motivated by the fact that work-life boundary blurring is a frequent and potentially fluctuating phenomenon in the hybrid working context, and diary studies provide a more accurate measurement of emotional states and their daily fluctuations (Bolger, Davis & Rafaeli, 2003). Moreover, diary studies provide a reliable measurement of employees' actual experiences, which is a significant strength in the investigation of work-life balance.

Work-life boundary blurring in the context of hybrid working

Work-family border theory (Clarke, 2000) and work-life boundary theory (Ashforth et al., 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996) are classic theories that seek to explain how individuals balance both work and non-work boundaries (Bulger et al., 2007). ‘Border’ and ‘boundary’ are used interchangeably to represent the demarcation between work and non-work domains. Clarke (2000) defines social borders or boundaries as the lines that separate work and personal life, indicating where domain-specific behaviour should start and end. These boundaries can be physical, temporal, and psychological and behavioural (Clark, 2000; Allen, et al., 2014). Physical boundaries describe where behaviour related to each domain occurs; temporal boundaries define when specific behaviours occur; psychological boundaries the contingency of cognitive content (thoughts and emotions) and current domain involvement (e.g., pondering work problems while spending time with family); behavioural boundaries are concerned with

the contingency of social behavioural patterns and current domain involvement (e.g., bringing professional identity into nonwork life).

Hybrid working presents challenges to maintaining clear boundaries between work and personal life in various ways. The ambiguity surrounding the location and timing of work can make it difficult for individuals to distinguish between work and non-work domains (Xu, 2023), resulting in individuals checking work emails, or completing work tasks during personal time or being distracted by personal obligations while working. Furthermore, the dependence on technology and mobile devices exacerbates digital presenteeism, the feeling of always being "on," and mental exhaustion, making it harder to switch off and further blurring the boundaries between work and personal life (Mutebi & Hobbs, 2022). Therefore, it is crucial to explore ways for employees to adapt to work-nonwork boundary blurs when managing extensive conflicts between work and nonwork roles (Kossek et al., 2021).

Managing work-life boundaries through individual tactics

Boundary management refers to both the strategies and tactics used to establish, maintain, and modify social boundaries between work and family (Nippert-Eng, 1996). Boundary management strategies may be viewed along a continuum between extreme integration and extreme segmentation of life domains (Ashforth et al., 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996). When personal and work domains are fully integrated, for example, for dual couples with young children during COVID-19 where no distinction is made between activities that belong to either home or work, or where and when activities should occur (Kristen, et al., 2021). By contrast, when the home and work domains are completely segmented, the boundary between the domains is clear and unchangeable. Segmenting work-life domains allows actors to focus exclusively on one domain at a time. However, recent research has challenged integration-segmentation continuum for twofold reasons. Hislop and Axtell (2011) argue that both strategies could be applied in different situations. For example, a segmentation strategy may be applied at home to prevent work interference, while an integration strategy may be applied at work to facilitate family interference and other social activities; Moen, Kelly & Huang (2008) argue that boundary management strategies may evolve over individuals' lives. Therefore, research suggests that individuals may vary practices depending on their ability and willingness to employ different tactics in different situations (Bulger et al., 2007; Kreiner et al., 2009). Our research echoes this suggestion focusing on boundary management tactics.

Boundary management tactics are self-determined decisions that are enacted to influence work-non-work boundaries; the initial typologies of tactics include temporal tactics that include controlling time and finding respite; physical tactics that manipulate physical space and artifacts between work and life domains; communicative tactics that set expectations and confront violators for other domain members; behavioural tactics that involve using other people or leveraging technologies (Kreiner et al., 2009; Siegert, & Löwstedt, 2019). Such tactics regulate micro-role transitions (Ashforth et al., 2000) in which actors appraise the transitions to minimize the cost or difficulty of role border crossing. However, these typologies are argued to be descriptive and do not reflect how and why an individual decides to enact in ways that influence their work—life boundaries. The following section will use appraisal theories of emotion to analyse how and why the individual reacts and navigates their boundary blurring, forming work-life boundary tactics.

Theoretical framework

Emotion Appraisals of Boundary Blurring

Work-life boundary blurring can create the need for employees to constantly navigate the evolving demands between their work and nonwork environment. We propose that emotions play an important explanatory role in revealing individuals' thoughts, motivation, and tacitics when individuals face permeable work-life boundaries (Lazarus, 1991; Moors, 2017; K. R. Scherer, Schorr, A., & Johnstone, T. (Eds.). 2001). Existing work-life research has examined the emotional crossover between individuals' work and life (i.e., feel stressed or enriched) (Westman et al., 2009), little is known about how emotions are elicited and drive individuals' adaptive behaviours in a given situation (Lambert, 1990). This is because, in existed research of work-life balance, emotions are viewed as state feelings rather than the functional orchestration of physiological processes (Moors, Ellsworth, Scherer, & Frijda, 2013). Nevertheless, emotions can capture the significant stimuli from the situation, which directs individuals' attention and mobilizes somatic responses that prepare the organism for action responding to those stimuli (Moors, 2017). This limitation motivates us to explore how emotions are associated with the work-life boundary blurring assessment and navigate coping tactics for boundary management.

Current research studying work-life boundaries remains understudied about the process of how and why individuals mold their scope of activities to manage their work and life boundaries

(Allen et al., 2021). Existing studies concerned factors that affect individuals' boundary management tactics, such as the individual's work-life priority at that time, the degree of control one has over the situation (Kossek et., 2022) and the potential outcomes of the situation (Moors, et al., 2013). However, these studies on explaining individuals' behavioral responses to boundary blur situations may be fragmented and limited because behavioral responses to the boundary violations are the result of the individual's perception of a given situation in a cognitive processing of the boundary blurring situation (Hunter et al., 2017). Different interpretations of the situation can produce different valanced feelings characterised by different motivation and behavioural tendencies; the process is viewed as a subjective appraisal (K. R. Scherer, Schorr, A., & Johnstone, T. (Eds.). 2001). The emotional appraisal is a process in which values are determined by a number of appraisal factors such as goal relevance, goal in/congruence, un/expectedness, control, and agency. These appraisals can then lead to behavioural responses (Moors, 2017). To comprehend this process, we adopt Lazarus's Appraisal theory of emotions (1991) as a comprehensive framework. Figure 1 provides a visual representation of our theoretical framework, elucidating how and why employees navigate and adapt to these blurred boundaries in their work-life contexts.

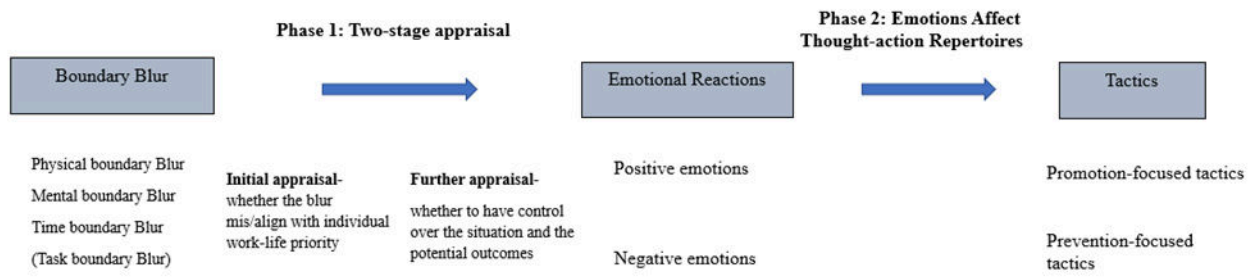


Figure 1 Theoretical framework:
How employees navigate and adapt to work-life boundary blurs via the appraisal of emotions

The emotional appraisal can be split into two phases: the first phase focuses on how stimuli in situations are processed in the appraisal and the second phase focuses on how emotional reactions, as a result of phase 1, direct their subsequent behaviours responding to the given situation. Specifically, in phase 1, emotions are only activated when the perception of the event/situation is relevant to one's goals; specific emotions are the outcomes arising from the individual's primary (goal in/congruence) and secondary appraisal (locus of attribution referring to internal or external causes and control potential referring to how many available options to solve goal incongruence (Frijda, 1986; Lazarus, 1991; Moors, 2017). As such,

thoughts are part of the emotional reactions arising from the appraisal process, associated with the implication of personal wellbeing (Parrott, 2004).

In the context of boundary blur, individuals undergo a cognitive appraisal process to determine whether blurring the boundary will hinder or facilitate their work-life priorities (goal in/congruence). If they perceive that the blurring would conflict with their work-life priorities, they would engage in secondary appraisal to assess their control potential (Frijda, 1986). This involves in evaluating the extent to which they can control the goal incongruence and identify the locus of attribution (Tavris, 1989). Accordingly, individuals experience emotional reactions that correspond to their perceptions of boundary blurring. Positive emotions arise when individuals encounter pleasant situations that align with their work-life priorities, while negative emotions are evoked in response to the aversive situations that hinder their work-life priority (mismatch, Lazarus, 1991). Notably, the distinct emotions such as fear, sadness, and frustration may be experienced when individuals perceive a lower level of boundary control (Frijda, 1986; K. R. Scherer, 1984). Additionally, external factors of attribution tend to trigger anger, whereas anxiety is associated with internal factors of attribution (Ferris, Yan, Lim, Chen, & Fatimah, 2015; Zomeren, 2021). Therefore, different emotions are associated with distinct patterns of cognitive appraisal that integrate both the work-life priority and the level of control they possess.

Emotional reaction prompts boundary management tactics

Emotions are central to explaining how and why employees adapt to work-related changes (Weiss, Suckow, & Cropanzano, 1999) including those resulting from boundary blurring. As discussed, emotions capture the subjective meaning of the relationship between an individual and the current situation (Lazarus, 1991). This emotional experience then drives the individual to act on a particular behavioural tendency responding to the given situation to achieve desired outcomes (Merchán-Clavellino, Alameda-Bailén, Zayas García, & Guil, 2019). This assumption forms the foundation of the appraisal theory of emotions, which seeks to explain how and why emotions can influence and direct individuals' behaviours. Notably, experiencing certain emotions does not guarantee particular behaviour but rather indicates a likelihood of individuals shaping their behaviour within a particular scope, called tendencies. Nevertheless, if individuals experience heightened emotional arousal as a result of the appraisal process, the allure of obtaining benefits through specific actions becomes increasingly attractive.

Consequently, this emotional state strengthens the intention to engage in behaviours associated with those emotions (Shoss, Jundt, Kobler, & Reynolds, 2016; Slaski, 2002). Such emotional experience is believed to serve the purpose of assisting individuals in navigating the situation.

Research has put forth an argument challenging the applicability of behavioural tendencies described in the appraisal theory of emotions to positive emotions. It suggests that these tendencies primarily pertain to negative emotions, as they serve as a short-term motivational compass, compelling individuals to act urgently in response to threatening situations (Zomeren, 2021). This brings an issue whether positive emotions have specific functions that guide particular courses of action (Zomeren, 2021).

Broaden-and-build theory then emerged (Frederickson, 2000), as a supplement to appraisal theory of emotions to explain how positive and negative emotions affect fundamental motivations and responses, expanding beyond the traditional focus on negative emotions (Danilowski, 2015). Positive and negative emotions serve different functions to initiate behavioural tendencies (Fredrickson, 2001). Negative emotions arising from an aversive situation narrow an individual's momentary thought–action repertoire, prompting quick and decisive responses to obtain immediate adaptive benefits (Frederickson, 2000). The underlying motivation in such cases is to avoid negative outcomes, necessitating swift action for survival in a threatening situation (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). By contrast, positive emotions stemming from pleasant situations broaden an individual's momentary thought–action repertoire, thereby directing their attention and energy towards building enduring personal resources to acquire long-term adaptive benefits (Frederickson, 2000). The fundamental motivation in this context is to increase access to rewards and opportunities (Fritz & Sonnentag, 2007; Keltner et al., 2003). Therefore, there is a clear distinction in the function of negative and positive emotions on the motivation, cognitive process and subsequent behavioural tendencies.

Similar conceptual developments with substantial evidence in related fields support the distinction between the two motivational systems, known as the behavioural activation system and the behavioural inhibition system (Corr, 2004), or approach-avoidance motivation distinction (Elliot, 2006). These theories differ on whether avoidance motivation leads to withdrawal behaviours (i.e., inactivity, such as a behavioural inhibition system) or prevention behaviour (i.e., proactivity but with a prevention focus). However, a common idea is that positive emotions, by broadening attentions' the scope of opportunities, often prompt urges to

approach behaviours aimed at building personal resources for the long-term adaption. In contrast, negative emotions, by narrowing attention's scope to current threats, alert individuals to display risk-avoidant behaviours to prevent negative outcomes (Barclay, Kiefer, & El Mansouri, 2022; Maner, Gailliot, Menzel, & Kunstman, 2012). Empirical research has also established connections between positive affect and approach behaviours as well as negative affect and avoidance behaviours. (e.g., Barclay & Kiefer, 2014; Barclay et al., 2022).

In the context of boundary blurring, we propose that negative emotions arising from negative perceptions of boundary blurring led individuals to focus on resolving critical issues (i.e., current threats) using prevention-focused tactics driven by avoidance motivation. This helps individuals detach from the aversive situation, avoiding persistent negative emotions (undesired outcomes) and/or preventing the reoccurrence of work problems (Frese & Fay, 2001). For example, employees prioritize urgent tasks while leaving some for later. In contrast, a positive emotions resulting from positive perception of boundary blurring enable individuals to focus on building enduring resources and promoting employees' sense of control over boundary management using promotion-focused tactics. For example, employees may take productive microbreaks to replenish their energy. Both types of boundary management tactics can facilitate adaptation in boundary blurring situations but with different approaches to achieving desired goals (Bindl et al., 2019). Contrary to previous views that negative emotions are dysfunctional for decision-making and well-being (Spector & Fox, 2005), our study offers a functionalist account for negative emotions. We suggest that both positive and negative emotional experiences help individuals to inform employees' behaviours, help them navigate the situation, and cope effectively. Nevertheless, because of risk avoidance, prevention-focused behaviours rely on using existing resources rather than exploring or building new ones (Barclay et al., 2022; Bindl, Unsworth, Gibson, & Stride, 2019), which may result in long-term resource loss (Barclay et al., 2022; Ji, Chen, & Cangiano, 2021).

Methods

Research design

A qualitative diary interview method was used to collect data for this study, enabling an in-depth investigation of dynamic work-life boundary situations (Kreiner et al., 2009; Nippert-Eng, 1996). By employing a multiple qualitative approach, we combined various data collection methods to obtain detailed accounts of participants' lived experiences (Saunders,

Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). To achieve this, we conducted a longitudinal study that involved data collection from one-month written diaries and post-diary interviews.

For the diary, we used an event-contingent semi-structured diary template (see Appendix 1) (Eckenrode & Blolger, 1995) to record the preestablished events (i.e. perceived work-life boundary blurring) as they occurred in real-time. This approach allowed us to capture participants' dynamic work-life experiences and document their strategies for managing their boundaries. Subsequently, post-diary interviews were conducted to cross-check the diary data, gather additional details, and seek clarification. These interviews also provided participants with an opportunity for reflection (Radcliffe, 2013). Our longitudinal design enabled a deeper exploration of the lived reality of work-life boundary management in the context of hybrid work, minimizing reliance on retrospective accounts and facilitating within-person analysis over time (e.g., Spencer, Radcliffe, Spence & King 2021; Radcliffe, 2013).

Data collection and Sample

Participants were recruited using multiple channels, including open invitations to social media platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter, and through the researchers' networks in the higher education sector. The data collection period spanned from September to December 2022 for the one-month diary journal ling and followed by post-interviews conducted from November 2022 to February 2023. The selection of this timeframe was purposeful, aiming to analyse work-life boundary management in the context of hybrid working.

Before the commencement of the study, a digital diary template was developed and pilot tested with five potential participants, which resulted in minor modifications to the template. During the journalling period, participants were asked to submit their diaries via email at the end of weeks two and four. A total of 34 participants' diary data were collected, and subsequent virtual and individual post-interviews were conducted. Among the participants, 55% were academics, 45% were professionals, 67% were women, and 50% were married and 62% were on dependent care responsibility (e.g., child, elderly, pet care). All participants were engaged in hybrid work, with the option to work remotely for at least two days per week. Table 1 provides an overview of the sample characteristics for this study.

Table 1 Participants demographic information

Demographic characteristics	**Demographic subcategory**	**N/%**
Job role	Academics Professionals	19 (56%) 15 (44%)
Gender	Female Male	23 (67%) 11(33%)
Age range	21-30 31-40 41-50 51-60	10 (29%) 16 (47%) 4 (12%) 4 (12%)
Living alone?	Solo-living Half of time alone Living with families Living with flatmate	7 (21%) 1 (3%) 25(74%) 1 (3%)
Relationship status	Single In relationship Married Divorced	7 (21%) 8 (24%) 17 (50%) 2 (5%)
Dependent responsibility	No Childcare Elderly care Pet care	13 (38%) 14 (41%) 4 (12%) 3 (9%)
Hybrid working compositions	Fully flexible – almost depends on employees Semi-flexible - depends on multiple factors Fixed – e.g. -2 days at office, 3 days home	13 (38%) 15 (41%) 6 (18%)

Data analysis and procedure

We utilized a thematic data analysis approach that conducted the iterative process of initial coding both independently and collectively to search, review, and define themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis began with open coding, where the data were broken down into discrete parts and comparing them for similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This was followed by axial coding to uncover the relationships among the categories and assemble them into higher-order themes. Subsequently, microanalysis, involving both open and axial coding was conducted using a sentence-by-sentence approach. The data structure was developed from the aggregate dimensions of (a) work-life boundary blurring in the hybrid working context, (b) how employees experience work-life boundary blurring through appraising their work-life priorities and degree of control (c) how emotions shape employees' boundary tactics. To enrich our analysis, we iteratively connected the literature and the data to

elaborate concepts, abstract them at a higher level, and trace relationships (Catino & Patriotta, 2013). In addition, to visualise the process of how an individual reacts and appraises the boundary blurring emotionally, hence prompting work-life boundary tactics, we employed narrative analysis (Saunders, et al., 2012) to capture temporal and within-person dynamics. It provides a more nuanced understanding of how themes and patterns change over time in qualitative data, which can be difficult to capture using traditional qualitative analysis methods. It allows us to examine the process of emotional appraisal and behaviour tendencies by identifying micro personal events (e.g., boundary blurs) that may be overlooked by other methods. We will show our analysis in tables and figures along with some discussions in next section.

Findings

Work-life boundary blurring

Despite the previous experience that many academic and professional staff have of flexible working and feeling satisfactory WLB (Currie & Eveline, 2011; Kelliher & De Menezes, 2019), our findings demonstrate how hybrid working accelerates the permeability of physical, temporal, psychological, and task boundaries between work and life domains, leading to mixed emotional reactions and perceptions on WLB for our participants.

In a hybrid work setup, the physical separation between work and personal space becomes less and less distinct, making it harder to create or separate boundaries and ends up working everywhere in the kitchen/living room, especially if there is nonworking space available; as long as they have mobile devices and internet connections (Siegert & Löwstedt, 2019). This physical boundary blurring comes along with constant psychological boundary blurring between work and personal life. The ability to physically leave the workplace and mentally disconnect from work can be compromised, making it difficult to switch off work-related thoughts. As a result, employees can find themselves working and pondering work outside of their regular work hours, extending their workday, or feeling pressured to be available at all times (Adisa et al., 2022). Given that hybrid working relies heavily on technology for communication and collaboration, the constant influx of work-related notifications and the expectation of quick responses can blur the boundaries between work and personal time, as employees can feel compelled to be "always on" (Park, Fritz, & Jex, 2011), even if when they

are on leave. Several participants like RH even told us that they developed a greater tendency to check emails and prolong their working hours than ever before. This is identified as a paradox in the broader category of flexible working by previous work (Chung, 2022; Mazmanian et al., 2013), most notably how more autonomy is assumed to result in employees working longer and harder, which in some formulations amounts to self-exploitation.

What even stands out in the hybrid working context is the blurring of the task boundary, which could integrate physical, psychological, and temporal blurring together that employees proactively or passively permeate the work-related demands and personal activities. As our indicative quotations notes below, no dedicated workspace ('I can watch Home Under the hammer although while I am working which is something'), childcare responsibility ('I brought my son to the conference...keeping an eye on him while networking with attendees'), digital convenience ('open my email app while having breakfast'), and urgencies ('An urgent last-minute meeting came up, and I ended up taking part in a team call while walking from my house, the school'), all of which shows multitasking. The demands of constant and extensive juggling were evident among the participants, with one individual expressing in the post-interviews, 'I found the diary quite difficult to do because when I wrote the diary, I found that my work-life boundaries have basically disappeared.' Nevertheless, most participants did not view the continuous blending of boundaries in such a light manner. Instead, they experienced a range of mixed emotional responses, which subsequently led them to employ various reactions and strategies, as illustrated by the following two phases.

Table 2 work-life boundary blurings

Theoretical codes	**Second order aggregated codes**	**First order open codes**	**Indicative quotations**
Boundary Blurring	Physical boundary	Working everywhere	Most of my working lives are integrated, my desk is in the living room and sometimes in the kitchen. (GG)
			I have the outlook connected to my personal mobile phone, so whenever I got e-mail, I was checking then I would never stop checking. (NL)
	Psychological boundary	Constant permeability	On the bank holiday, I received a number of emails from colleagues in the US… I

			was thinking about them while playing tennis with my family and then spent time replying to them as soon as we got home (NP)
		Detachment from work	It's difficult to keep a clear/firm boundary once I notice there is an unread email. (JY).
	Time boundary	"Always on"	I have developed more compulsive tendencies (in a hybrid context) to complete work in general and working long hours in the evening (RH).
		Leavism	I didn't feel guilty about using my holiday/free time as I had no personal plans and it would also save me the time in the week when I would likely be busy, and it would probably help with stress levels. (CA)
	Task boundary	Multi-tasking within work and between work and life.	I sit in the lounge (you can see the back of the sofa and the tv) and use the dining table…I can watch Home Under the hammer although while I am working which is something. (GD) I stayed on my emails while putting tea on and talking to the children. (VR) I brought my son to the conference since there was not enough time to send him home and come back to the conference...keeping an eye on him while networking with attendees. (LR) I usually open my e-mail app while having breakfast (PPB) An urgent last-minute meeting came up, and I ended up taking part in a team call while walking from my house, the school (NP)

Phrase 1 – different Valanced Emotions And Work-Life Priority

Individuals are likely to emotionally react to boundary blurring situations that either hinder or fulfil their work-life priorities. According to appraisal theory, people are motivated to respond to situations that they perceive as relevant to their goal. Specifically, negative emotions arise when individuals perceive a situation as hindering their work-life priority, whereas positive emotions emerge when they perceive a situation as fulfilling their work-life priority. Notably, our results show that existence of both temporary and long-term work-life

priorities, with negative emotions being more closely associated with temporary work-life priorities, while positive emotions are more closely associated with long-term work-life priorities. These themes and indicative quotations are provided in Table 3.

Negative emotions such as annoyed, frustrated, anxious were frequently experienced by participants when they perceive the boundary blurring situations as hindering their temporary work-life priorities. This is because the fact that such situations often arise from unforeseen demands temporarily, thus conflicting work-life role priority at that time and leaving employees struggling to maintain their regular routines. Notably, our finding highlights the fluidity of individuals' work-life priority (Kossek, et. 2016) that is subject to alteration based on specific times or situations. For instance, work obligations take precedence over personal considerations during work hours and workdays, although there may be instances when personal life needs to be prioritized, such as in the case of caring for sick children.

The blurring of boundaries is not necessarily a “bad thing” when it benefits to individual’s long-term work-life priorities. In particular, participants who prioritize career progression found that be it temporal boundary blurring as evidenced by participants CB and AW or physical boundary blurring as experienced by participants KT and CL, see Table 3 are their proactive enabling behaviours. The additional time and energy invested into work are perceived as improved performance and stimulated innovation. Moreover, participants who value work and life integration expressed that even when personal time is encroached upon for work-related engagements (e.g., attending a webinar or meeting outside working hours), they perceive it as a positive contribution to their personal life or overall wellbeing. These situations of blurred boundaries have the potential to evoke positive emotions among individuals who recognize significant impact on their long-term personal and professional development. However, debates have emerged on whether this would help or hindrance to well-being as the consequences of job creeping despite the passion and orientation towards work can be overwork and burnout (Kossek, 2016; Chung, 2022; Mazmanian et al., 2013).

Table 3 Different Valanced Emotions And Work-Life Priority

Theoretical codes	**Second order aggregated codes**	**First order open codes**	**Indicative Quotations**
Negative emotions - Hinderance to temporary work-life priority	Role incompatibility	Unexpected event in work/life	"I had pain and illness in the night, I have just tested positive for covid. I spent the morning calling school, entertaining my daughter, and emailing to re-arrange meetings and work, all whilst feeling terrible." –KMD
		Disruptions	"My dog around and she will occasionally appear in meetings, which can be a disruption." –JB
		Urgencies	"I see the tag "high priority" and because the journal seems to have set a deadline that is urgent, I go up to my desk to analyse the instructions and weigh my alternatives." –GG
	Routine violation	extended working hours	"I wanted to go to a gym class today but had to cancel it as I had to work extra…I am disappointed." –EB
		unfavorable work schedule	"the postponement of this (work) discussion had already caused me a great deal of anxiety and stress, along with other inconveniences such as not being able to book dog-care, or appointments and meetings due to not knowing my timetable…I did feel annoyed and a bit sad" –KLL
Positive emotions-long-term work-life priority	Prioritize career advancement	Performance enhancement	"With music at the café, it seems that my work efficiency is higher. The café has food to eat so I will not worry about my lunch. Everything is perfect and I am quite relaxed and happy!" –CL
		Career investment	"I would spend most of my weekend, day and night, reviewing the next week's teaching contents. It is the price to pay for excellent teaching." –NL
	Work and life are closely connected	'get outside perspective"	"Had a discussion with my husband over dinner about an issue I am facing at work... this helped me get some outside perspective." –CB
		Learn from work	"I can take part in such webinars and it's not necessarily a bad thing they are outside working hours…help me develop my personal life (as I do this out of curiosity and the need to learn/know more)." –AW
		Work makes happy life	"I completed a mission task today morning, so I was happy the entire morning…It seems that my life is closely connected with my mood at work." –CL

Phase 2— dynamic interaction among emotions, control potential and boundary management tactics

Negative emotions, Low control potential, and prevention-focused tactics

Employees who have low control potential in managing their work and life boundary would evoke more negative emotions. Most participants attribute the low control to unpredictable

workload. As echoed by the majority of participants (see Table 4), workload cannot always be planned in advance or executed promptly, but rather requires sustained concentration and constant commitments to respond and follow up on ongoing tasks. The strain can be further exacerbated when facing pressing deadlines and with no scope for adjustment, participants felt overwhelmed to navigate their work-life boundary. These are imposed intensification where employers increase the employee's workload and challenge employees' boundary control while introducing flexible work (Kelliher & Anderson, 2009). Moreover, enabled intensification is also observed in our data, where being flexible enable participants work harder by doing additional and unpaid work and higher expectations, strong negative emotions even flooded to the participants.

For some, their low control potentials were also attributed to the organisational culture and team-level peer pressure. As seen in Table 4, participants emphasized how "pushing harder" and "always working" destroy their work-life boundary. Such culture seems too normalised to push back so that participants helplessly accept it as a matter of fact. Moreover, some participants feel oppressive as the peer pressure implicitly pushes them to break their work-life boundary, leaving little room to navigate the hindrance to their work-life priority. Consequently, participants reported frequently resorting to extending their work hours to complete tasks, often accompanied by intensive feelings of frustration, anxiety, exhaustion and even anger. That is, if individuals perceived that they have limited resources to change the situation, they would feel more intensive negative emotions (Brans & Verduyn, 2014)

Table 4 Factors contributing to low control potential and negative emotions.

Theoretical codes	**Second order aggregated codes**	**First order open codes**	**Indicative Quotations**
Work intensification	Imposed intensification	Unpredictable workload	"The big load of work is not something that I can conduct all in advance or plan precisely but requires concentration and timely responses and follow up all the time…stressful." –JY
		'pressing deadlines'	"it's quite difficult to balance (all these work demands), and you end up working overtime due to pressing deadlines." –AW
	Enabled intensification	Additional unpaid work	"a role I have been spending a lot of time doing isn't going to form part of my academic work plan, so effectively I've been doing that work for 'free'. I'm feeling unvalued and deenergised and work is so stressful." –KMD
		'quite acceptance'	"You just can't stop because you are taking more and more on yourself or you are expected to do more because you showed that you can do

			this…this is something that you know is like quiet acceptance. –AW
Organisational culture	long working norm	'always working'	"because I am on hybrid/flexible working, so I'd always working 24/7" - KMD I'll do work at unusual or later other days, including weekends." –GG
	Harder culture	'pushing harder and harder'	"This is typical for an academic: glued and in flow. No help was sought until the job was done…They actively create a culture of pushing harder and harder – but for what? For progress? No. absolutely not. For metrics yes" –MD
	Oppressive atmosphere	Peer pressure	"Some colleagues have sent emails since 7:30am. So early! There is a pressure on me and I have to respond asap" –CL "I received five emails in a row, which caused me great stress. It's like your colleague is always working, but you're not, and it's quite oppressive" –LW

Negative emotional states guide individuals' attention and motivation towards addressing the immediate obstacles that impede work-life priority. Our study revealed that participants experiencing negative emotions were more inclined to utilise prevention-focused tactics, which facilitate adaptation to the current boundary blurring and alleviate the negative affect. These tactics typically emphasise the efficient use of existing resources and cognitive conditioning to resolve immediate tensions and further adverse outcomes. This approach includes time management strategies such as prioritisation, time compensation, mental trade-offs, and self-exploitation (refer to table 5). This is evidence of participants adaptive ability of necessitating swift action for 'survival' in threatening situation, corroborating earlier research (e.g., Keltner et al., 2003, Lazarus, 1991). Nevertheless, our study also indicated that self-exploitation – exemplified by participants willingly extending their work hours and committing additional effort even at the cost of personal time – could significantly drain their current resources, including time and energy (Chung, 2022; Mazmanian et al., 2013). Such depletion could potentially diminish the individuals' ability to control their environment, thereby exacerbating negative emotions. Consequently, this tactic could ensnare individuals in a detrimental cyclical pattern, as one participant articulated, "you may continue to spend more time on work as if it is standard practice".

Table 5 Prevention-focused tactics

Theoretical codes	Second order aggregated codes	First order open codes	Quotation indication
Prevention-focused tactics: Using current resources	Time management	Prioritisation	"I managed the boundary change by prioritizing what work needed to be done urgently and then leaving some bits for later." -CB
	Time compensation	Compensate more work hours due to lack of concentration	"I feel like I cannot concentrate on things, and I wish I could be there for my sick child and husband.so I kept working to try and mitigate for my lack of focus." - CB
		Compensate more time for energy restore	"I decided to 'make up' for this time by sleeping in on Monday and Tuesday. I've been feeling very tired from work, so thought that this was a good trade off. "-KN
	Mental trade off	'just doing the job'	"There is limited space to ease the situation other than me doing the job properly. So I am just doing the job." -YYQ
		Self-acceptance	"I stopped getting stressed about having piles of work. It's always gonna be there as long as you deliver the core things like we. It just doesn't worth damaging your mental health if you worried about every little thing you weren't doing." -LW
	Self-exploitation	Invest more effort for missing time	"missing one hour will "put two hours and double effort in, even though no one count the hours. Phycological contract works here, feel obliged to work hard." –RL
		'conditioned myself'	"To some extent I have conditioned myself to deal with emails immediately even if this impinges on personal time and this has probably become an expectation among some of my colleagues." –NP

Positive emotions, higher control potential, and proactive-focused tactics

Positive emotions can enhance control potential via the mechanism that such emotions steer individuals' focus towards cultivating new resources for their long-term objectives. Positive emotions tend to link to an individual's long-term work-life priority, which consequently motivates individuals to invest cognitive effort in resource creation rather than merely deploying existing resources to mitigate their boundary blurring. Therefore, participants employed several promotion-focused tactics, as enumerated in Table 6. Crucially, participants are not merely reliant on their existing resources but actively build new physical (e.g., resetting workstations and utilizing tools) and/or mental resources (e.g., resetting

expectations and establishing buffers), thereby augmenting their control potential. This indicates that positive emotions could exert a favorable influence on control potential by employing promotion-focused tactics (i.e., building new resources for individuals) and contributing to effective work-life boundary management in the long run.

Table 6 Promotion-focused tactics

Theoretical codes	**Second order aggregated codes**	**First order open codes**	**Indicative Quotations**
Promotion-focused tactics - Building new resources	Reset workstation	Designated workstation	"our smallest bedroom in the house is our office space. So we have a proper desk set up…are able to kind of shut the door. So shut away the rest of the house and we're very lucky" -KMD
		Convenient workstation	"My boundary changed quite easily as I was working in the living room and simply moved my laptop to the side so I could exercise. I set my laptop back up again and could continue working. " - KN
	Reset the expectations	Negotiating	"I had a personal appointment…can't drop things simply because someone else cannot manage their own time appropriately...I also intend to raise this in my next 1-2-1 with my line manager and hope that it extends not just to my meetings but to any meetings they have with other colleagues also, as it really isn't fair to insist on a reschedule, then insist again later in the day simply because they've 1) double booked and 2) overrun with little regard for the other person involved." - NM
	Set buffers	Micro-breaks	"I get rather restless sitting down for long periods of time, especially when writing, so getting up and doing chores helped release that pent up energy. I'm also keen to get my steps in when I work from home, so having these productive microbreaks helps fulfil that." - KN
		Walk-in nature	"I left my phone at home, took the material with me and went for a walk-in nature. I sat down and read two chapters in the open air and that gave me a great boost of the day." - NS
		Fake commute	"I do like a kind of fake commute, like I just go for a walk outside and since getting the dog last year. That really does enforce the fact that I have to do that. I just go out for half an hour, walk in the morning, and sometimes in the evening as well." -JB
		Work-out	"I typically work out in the late afternoon when the living room is free (my partner also WFHs). I was feeling very sleepy beforehand and zoning out of work today,

			the exercise helped to wake up me so I could wrap up my work today." - KN
	Use tools	Use technology	"the Microsoft Viva tool helps me a lot. I can use the tool to set my office hour and refuse any interruption during the appointed timeslot. "- CL
		Use diary	"quite old fashioned technologies over a paper diary to plan my work and other activities and a clock that that shows me you know here is the time and you now need to be accelerating so that you can finish to spend time with the family." – KMD

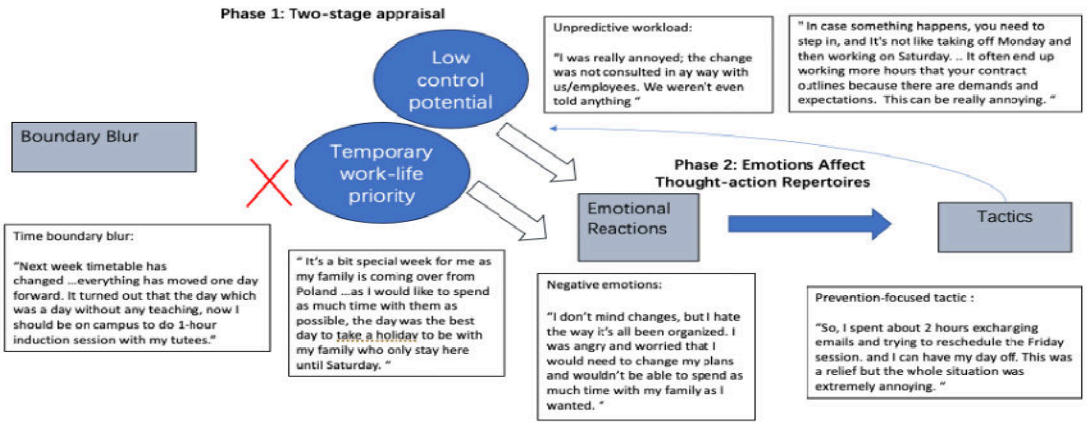
Bridging phrases: how the appraisal of emotions prompts boundary management tactics

We analysed narrative case study of in-person dynamic of work-life boundary management to elucidate the intricate dynamics among negative and positive emotions, control potential, and prevention-focused and proactive-focused tactics. Figure 2 shows a reciprocal interaction between a participant's negative emotions and low degree of control in a continuous boundary management process. The process is set in motion when the participant discerns the blurring boundaries of her work-life interface: The boundary blurring resulted from a timetable change. Intriguingly, it was not the temporal blurring itself that triggered the participant's negative emotions, but rather the incongruity between the change and her temporary work-life priority. The participant articulated her frustration and concern over the disruption to her temporary work-life priority. She specifically stated her vexation with the intrusion on a week that was of special importance to her, as she was anticipating a family visit. During this period, personal considerations were given primacy over professional obligations. In addition, allured to earlier we proposed, the assessment of diminished control amplifies negative emotions. She felt really annoyed, when she sensed a lack of control stemming from the lack of employee consultation regarding the schedule modification, a step she believed was essential.

Such negative emotions stimulate the adoption of prevention-focused tactics to tackle the work-life interfere and obtain immediate adaption. The participant, in particular, utilized a behavioural tactic by adjusting her schedule and trading shifts with a colleague to secure her day off. This adaptation, however, required her to expend working hours. Post resolution, the participant's reflective analysis (refer to the upper right section of Figure 2) suggests that the issue at hand was not simply a matter of time flexibility in the hybrid context, but more of an issue with how such flexibility often paves the way for self-exploitation due to inherent work

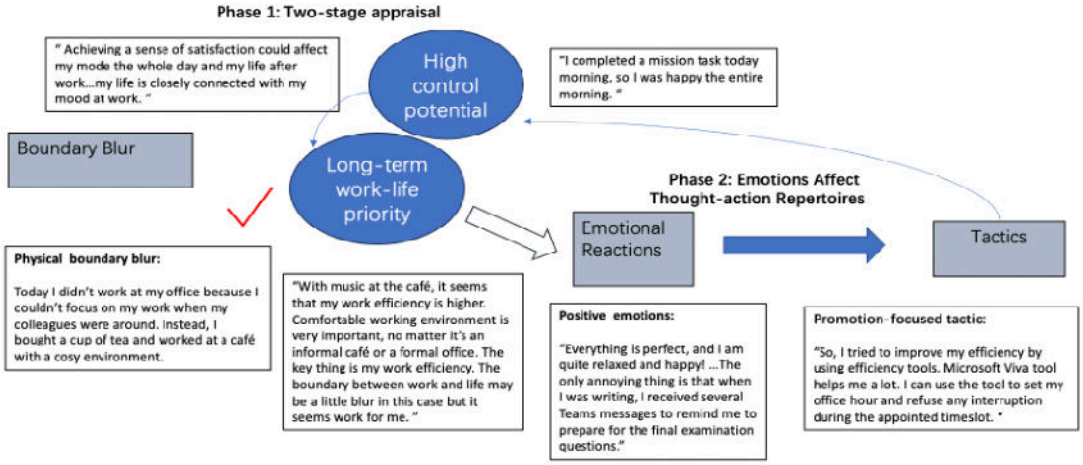
demands and expectations, further aggravating her frustration. This arises from the fact that devoting additional time and energy to work only serves to further diminish boundary control, thereby perpetuating a vicious cycle of deteriorating conditions in the long term.

Figure 2 a narrative example on the role of negative emotions in boundary management process



Similarly, Figure 3 shows a dynamic cycle between our participant's long-term work-life priority, positive emotions, high control potential and promotion-focused tactics within an ongoing process of boundary management. The physical boundary blurring is consciously enacted by participants (i.e., opting to work from locations outside the traditional office setting). The comfortable work environment amplifies their work efficiency, subsequently cultivating feelings of happiness and relaxation. Such positive emotions prompt the formation of promotion-focused tactics to navigate the work-life boundary in the long term. In particular, using tools to help their focus and improve work efficiency. This is a manifestation of active involvement in resource building, as the tool usage requires a proactive exertion of cognitive effort, such as deciding on the suitable tool and the manner of its usage. As a result, she was not only capable of exerting enhanced control over the timely completion of her tasks, but also contributed to her long-term control potential (e.g., work-life boundary management and productivity improvement). This scenario contributes to a cycle of positive emotions, as it aligns with her long-term work-life priority, further leading to a sense of satisfaction as highlighted in the top left corner of Figure 3.

Figure 3 a narrative example on the role of positive emotions in boundary management process



Discussions

Guided by appraisal theories of emotion (e.g., Lazarus, 1991), our findings demonstrate the permeability of physical, temporal, psychological, and task boundaries between work and life domains in the context of hybrid working, leading to negative and positive emotional reactions through two main phases thus shaping employees' individual prevention and promotion tactics for managing work-life boundaries. Our study makes the following theoretical and practical contributions.

Theoretical implications

Our study contributes to the scholarly literature in several ways. First, we expand upon the existing work-life boundary literature by incorporating task boundary blurring. Existing research has descriptively summarised individual physical, temporal, psychological, and behavioural boundaries (Clark, 2000; Allen et al., 2014). We found that all forms of boundaries of individuals become highly permeable and even are seen as vanished. Furthermore, different types of boundaries can blur at the same time with multitasking and constantly juggling across all forms of boundaries. This enables us to raise a new addition - task boundary blurring that combines other forms of boundary blurring to better understand the dynamics and complexity of boundaries. This evidence the clear fluidity of roles between domains manifest itself in various forms and ways in post-pandemic periods (Rofcanin & Anand, 2020). Some

individuals proactively opt for the task boundary for convenience and even develop as a manageable habit and intuition; the other had to accommodate competing tasks by multitasking. Overall individuals have more enactment to prioritise and adjust their work and non-work demands and activities synchronously. It is worth noting the implications of such a short fix: mental exhaustion and 'always on' tendency. Individuals feel overwhelmed, overtaxed, and exhausted due to expectations of constant availability (Derks, Duin, Tims, & Bakker, 2015). This is identified as a paradox in the broader category of flexible working by previous work (Chung, 2022; Mazmanian et al., 2013), most notably how more autonomy is assumed to result in employees working longer and harder, which in some formulations amounts to self-exploitation.

Second, we contribute to the boundary management literature by emphasizing the crucial role of emotions and the two phases of the appraisal process that prompt individuals to manage their work-life boundaries. In the first phase, individuals are likely to emotionally react to boundary blurring situations that hinder or fulfil their work-life priorities. Negative emotions arise when individuals perceive a situation as hindering their work-life priority, whereas positive emotions emerge when they perceive a situation as fulfilling their work-life priority. In the second phase, individuals assess the level of their control over managing their work-life boundary, and resulting emotions prompting boundary management tactics. Negative emotions are associated with prevention-oriented tactics that narrow tasks to address boundary blurring, minimize immediate obstacles, and/or prevent impeding work-life priority. Positive emotions can enhance control potential via the mechanism that such emotions steer individuals' focus towards cultivating new resources for their long-term objectives. This enables us to question that negative emotions are often characterized as 'dysfunctional' by employees to adapt to change (Oreg et al., 2018) and strengthen that positive and negative emotions serve distinct functions and, importantly, can coexist in consistent with existing research (e.g., Barclay & Kiefer, 2014). Furthermore, the resulting tactics in the form of prevention- and promotion-oriented tactics contribute to the explanatory mechanism of the process of why and how individuals use the tactics. These two tactics can involve multiple and mixed temporal, physical, behavioural, and communicative approaches to managing work-life boundaries rather than one tactic at a time (e.g. walking out office (physical) and picking up a phone (temporal) that is related to a child's illness). This also addresses the emerging criticism that current taxonomy of tactics might be decontextualized

and descriptive focusing on an individual's boundary management the four tactics (temporal, physical, behavioural, communicative) (Kreiner et al., 2009; Kossek, et al., 2012).

Third, employing a qualitative diary method enables new and important contributions to existent work-life literature. We conducted this method to respond to the call for dairy research in work-life studies to unpack the dynamism of work-life balance over time (Casper et al., 2018), especially, capturing accurate measurement of emotional states and fluctuations at the time of event occurrence, which can be lost or diluted using retrospective techniques (Radcliffe, 2013; Bolger et al., 2003). The episodic and longitudinal nature of this qualitative diary research method, in our study, allows us to explain why and how employees navigate and adapt to work-life boundary blurring in the process. The use of episodic data produced in the diaries demonstrates how decisions of managing boundaries were not made by individuals in isolation but after the complicated and dynamic appraisals entangled with different emotions and resources in the fluid hybrid working context.

Practical implications

Given that both positive and negative emotions serve distinct functions, individuals can be encouraged to employ a combination of tactics (prevention-focused and promotion-focused tactics) to address their immediate work-life interference and long-term work-life priority. While adopting a long-term-oriented approach to resource creation, individuals should be aware that excessive consumption of their current time and energy (i.e. self-exploitation) may diminish their long-term control potential. In particular, with hybrid working heightening boundary blurring, it is important for organizations and managers to recognize that boundary management is not solely an individual responsibility (e.g., Kossek, 2016) as the control potential is evaluated by resource availability. Organizations could establish clear policies and expectations regarding hybrid working arrangements to help employees understand what is expected of them and create a sense of clarity. This includes defining expectations around working days/hours, response time, and availability, and the right to disconnect. The key role, leaders and managers should be role models by how they manage heathy boundaries themselves; actively promote and model a culture that respects employees' boundaries and manage the diversity of others (Kossek, 2016). This involves encouraging employees to disconnect from work during non-working hours, respecting their personal time and space, encouraging breaks and time, and refraining from sending non-urgent work-related communications outside of working hours.

Limitation and future research

Our study was limited to certain professions (academics and professionals) within HE institution settings given the nature of the case study. Different natures of work would be key factors that affect the process of how individuals emotionally appraise their boundary-blurring situations to prompt tactics. For example, work-life boundary blurring may have a larger impact on those individuals whose works need to put concentration and a constant commitment to respond and follow up on ongoing tasks, eliciting emotions of sufficient strength to motivate action. Future research could explore other professions/contexts and further validate the process of how individuals emotionally appraise their boundary blurring situations to prompt tactics. Moreover, we do not have enough data that reflect the life work interference apart from people who have childcare and pet care responsibilities. While people evoke strong emotions on how work blurs life boundaries, we do appreciate emotions could be elicited due to boundary-blurring cross different domains and wider non-work domains including leisure, community role, and within extended family's needs consideration. Future research should capture boundaries blurring in wider settings that reflect the broader and nuisance understandings of the work-non work dynamic to make theoretical and practical implications to work-life inclusion.

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Appendix

Diary recording template

Work-life boundary management in the hybrid working context:

A case study of the Higher Education

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC SECTION

Your role in your institution?

Your age or age group? (e.g., between 21-30; 31-40; 41-50; 51-60; 61 plus)

Your gender?

Do you live alone?

Your relationship status?

Dependent responsibility?

DIARY SECTION

Date and time		**What happened?** Tell us: • What were you doing when your work-life boundaries blur, shift, change? • In what way the boundary changed? • How did you feel at that moment, and how did perceive this event? • How do you feel and perceive it now?	**How did you manage?** Tell us: • Did you attempt to manage the boundary change? why or why not? • If so, how? • Did you attempt to seek out support and help, from whom? • How did that work out?	**Any organisational responses and initiatives?** Tell us: • Does your organisation have any support to support your work-life boundary management in such situation you described? • If so, in what way? • What other organisational supports do you think would be effective?	**Line managers responses and initiatives?** Tell us: • Does your line manager support your boundary management in such situation you described? • If so, in what way? • What other managerial supports do you think would be effective?	**Other comments**
Event date and time	**Journaling** date and time					
Here is an example for your information:						
27.07.22 2pm	27.07.22 5pm	On Sunday, I noticed I got a work email when playing with my kid. I opened it while still playing with my kid. This email is about a work meeting next week where I need to prepare a lot of things. Since then, I couldn't help but consider these. I found it difficult to focus on the games we	Yes, in order to tackle my work with a sense of relief, I requested my husband to play with my child. I got support from my husband, which is very helpful.	N/A	I think yes, because I believe my supervisor considers me when making decisions and because I believe I can contribute my ideas to the project rather than merely implement them. That's why I am happy to take some time and do some ahead planning.	On the following day, I try to find useful tool to work efficiently and then I can

		played together. In fact, I didn't feel any bad about it until my kid asked me to put the phone down and concentrate on playing with her. At that moment, I was feeling so sorry for my kid and realising that I would have a lot of work next week that should plan ahead. This was a time when I felt a strong sense of conflict and anxiety.				have more time for my family.