

The Effect of Boundary Management on Psychological Well-Being: The Mediating Role of Work–Life Balance among Married Working Women in Rokan Hulu Regency, Indonesia

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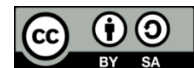
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ABSTRACT

In Indonesia, women who are married and employed still shoulder most domestic and care work, and the way they handle the line between job and home may shape how well they fare psychologically. Drawing on boundary theory and conservation of resources theory, this study tests whether boundary management (BM), measured as perceived boundary control, raises psychological well-being (PWB) both directly and by improving work–life balance (WLB). An online survey reached 300 married women employed in government, education, health, private firms, trade and services, or their own businesses in Rokan Hulu Regency, Riau, and the model was estimated with PLS-SEM in SmartPLS 4. BM was linked to higher WLB ($\beta = 0.615$) and higher PWB ($\beta = 0.303$), and WLB in turn predicted PWB ($\beta = 0.473$). The route through WLB was significant ($\beta = 0.291$; 95% CI 0.219–0.366) and made up close to half of the total effect, a pattern of partial mediation. Women who can decide how far work spills into family life report steadier roles and greater well-being. Predictable schedules and agreed limits on after-hours contact are practical ways for employers and local government to widen that control.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Paid employment has not freed most married Indonesian women from domestic duties. Working mothers are still expected to keep the household running while meeting the demands of their jobs, and research links this double load to stress and lower psychological well-being [1]. How these women keep both spheres manageable matters to employers who depend on their

labour, and it remains an open question for human resource management scholarship.

Riau Province offers a useful setting for this question. Its labour force participation rate was 64.68% in February 2025; agriculture and trade together absorbed more than half of all workers (32.37% and 20.15%), and informal jobs still predominate [2]. Within the province, Rokan Hulu has been identified as the regency where women take part in the labour market at the highest rate [3]. Married women there teach, nurse, serve in local

government, staff private firms, trade in markets, and run small enterprises, and the say they have over the start, end, and reach of their working day varies widely across these jobs.

Boundary theory provides a framework for these differences. It holds that people construct and guard the line separating paid work from the rest of their lives through repeated transitions between roles [4], [5]. Subsequent studies suggest that outcomes depend less on whether someone keeps the domains apart or lets them merge than on whether she can arrange that line as she wishes [6]. Swedish evidence showed that perceived control over boundaries predicted balance, and that women who lived with a partner and children and preferred separation often lacked such control [7]. Even so, results linking boundary management to well-being remain inconsistent, with both favourable and harmful associations reported [8].

Another body of research ties the balance between roles to psychological well-being. Positive links have been found among Indonesian bank staff [9], working mothers [10], [11], and female police officers [12]. Studies elsewhere interpret the link through conservation of resources theory: people whose time and energy are not constantly drained keep more resources for a fulfilling life [13], [14]. Suryani [9] also found that balance partly transmits the influence of self-esteem, a personal resource, to well-being.

The two streams have seldom been brought together. Indonesian evidence on boundary management and balance comes from a single study of 99 hotel staff in Medan [15]. The boundary control measure was built and validated with managers of large firms in the United States, and its developers asked for tests in other countries and among entrepreneurs and other occupations [6]. Indonesian research on working women, for its part, has examined balance and well-being without considering how women manage the boundary from which balance arises [10], [16]. To our knowledge, no prior study has examined boundary control, balance, and well-being within one model for married

women employed across sectors outside a metropolitan area.

Accordingly, this study asks whether boundary management improves the psychological well-being of married working women in Rokan Hulu, and whether part of that effect runs through work–life balance. The study adds to theory by positioning boundary control as the starting point of a resource-based path toward eudaimonic well-being. In practical terms, it gives employers and the regency government evidence for arranging work so that women can combine their jobs with family obligations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Boundary Management*

A boundary marks where one role ends and another begins, whether that role is employee, wife, or mother. Ashforth et al. [4] place people on a range that stretches from strict separation of roles to near-complete blending. Border theory adds that individuals bargain over these borders every day and that how permeable and flexible each border is affects their sense of balance [5]. People also hold different preferences for separation [17] and rely on different tactics, involving time, space, behaviour, and communication, to protect home from work [18]. Reviews of the field stress that boundaries shift with job demands, family circumstances, and workplace norms [19].

Kossek et al. [6] described boundary management through three features: how often one role interrupts another, how central work and family are to a person's identity, and how much control she perceives over her boundaries. Perceived boundary control concerns a person's belief that she, rather than her job or

circumstances, decides how far work and private life are kept apart or combined. The idea grew from evidence that control over the time, place, and manner of work predicted conflict between work and family more strongly than formal use of flexible arrangements did [20]. Since this study focuses on how women *manage* the line rather than on which style they prefer, boundary management (BM) is measured here as perceived boundary control.

2.2 Work-Life Balance

Greenhaus et al. [21] view balance as roughly equal engagement in, and satisfaction with, work and family roles, spread across time, involvement, and satisfaction. Kalliath and Brough [22] put more weight on perception, describing balance as the sense that paid work and other activities fit together and support growth in line with present priorities. Hayman [23] measured the construct with three components: work intruding into personal life, personal life intruding into work, and the two spheres enriching each other. Work-life balance (WLB) in this study follows that perceptual and multidimensional reading.

2.3 Psychological Well-Being

Psychological well-being (PWB) belongs to the eudaimonic tradition, which defines being well as functioning fully rather than merely feeling good. Ryff [24] outlined six components, covering acceptance of oneself, warm ties with others, independence, mastery of one's surroundings, a sense of direction, and continued growth. Ryff and Keyes [25] later supported this six-part structure

in a national sample. For married women who hold jobs, components such as mastery and independence are tested daily as they move between the demands of work and household.

2.4 Hypothesis Development

Boundary theory treats the line between job and home as something each person builds and defends [4]. For married women, that line is breached from both sides: tasks follow them home, and family matters reach into the working day. Kossek et al. [6] reported that feeling in charge of the line mattered more than separating or merging roles, and that boundary control went with having enough time and with schedules that suited family needs in both of their samples. Mellner et al. [7] found that control over boundaries predicted balance, and Shu and Edward [15] observed a similar link among hotel employees in North Sumatra. Wepfer et al. [8] approached the mechanism from the opposite side: employees who let work spill heavily into private time recovered less and reported poorer balance.

H1: Women with stronger BM report higher WLB.

According to conservation of resources theory, repeated losses of resources wear down well-being, whereas resources that are kept can be invested in valued goals [13]. A woman whose roles are in balance is not constantly losing time and energy, which leaves room for the mastery, purpose, and growth that make up PWB [24]. Atan and Obeng [14], applying this theory to hospital staff, found that balance and well-being rose together. Comparable links appear among

Indonesian bank staff [9] and married working mothers [10].

H2: Higher WLB is associated with higher PWB.

Control over one's boundaries may also matter for well-being apart from any gain in balance. In both samples studied by Kossek et al. [6], stronger boundary control went with lower psychological distress. Deciding for oneself when work may intrude on family time also resembles autonomy, one component of PWB [24].

H3: BM is directly and positively related to PWB.

Suryani [9] showed that balance carries part of the influence of a personal resource onto well-being. By the same reasoning, control over boundaries should raise PWB largely because it helps women keep their roles in balance. Figure 1 shows the model.

H4: WLB transmits part of the effect of BM on PWB.

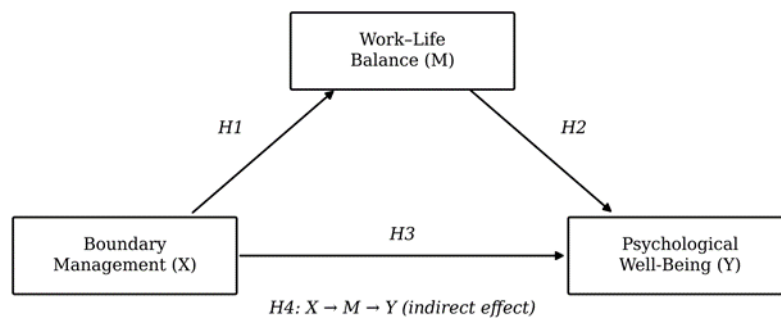


Figure 1. Research model

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design, Location, and Time

The study followed a cross-sectional survey design built around a mediation model, with BM as the predictor (X), WLB as the mediator (M), and PWB as the outcome (Y). Fieldwork took place in Rokan Hulu Regency, Riau Province, Indonesia, in October 2026.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population was married women who held a job or ran a business in Rokan Hulu. No list of all working women in the regency exists, so respondents were selected purposively, with quotas by sector. To take part, a woman had to be married at the time, to have spent at least a year in her present job or business, and to work within the regency. Separate quotas were set for

government, education, health, private companies, trade and services, and self-employment to keep any one sector from dominating.

After screening, 300 usable responses remained. Fritz and MacKinnon [26] show that bootstrap tests of mediation need far fewer cases when both paths are of medium size, so this number is adequate. Because selection was not random, the results apply to the participating women and should not be generalised to every working woman in Rokan Hulu.

3.3 Research instruments

Each construct was captured with a published scale (Table 1). BM was assessed with the three-item boundary control scale developed by Kossek et al. [6], whose reliability reached .88 in both of their samples. WLB was assessed with Hayman's [23] 15-

item scale, an adaptation of the Fisher-McAuley instrument covering the three components described above. PWB was assessed with the 18-item short form of Ryff's scale [25], which uses three items for each of the six components [24]. Respondents rated every item from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), and the original response formats were converted to this five-point

format. Ten interference items in the WLB scale and nine items in the PWB scale are worded negatively; these were recoded (6 minus the raw score) so that a higher score always means more control, better balance, or greater well-being. Item PWB9 appeared in negative wording in the online form and was recoded in the same way.

Table 1. Constructs, indicators, and scale sources

Variable	Dimension / items	Indicator content	Source
Boundary Management (X)	Boundary control (3 items)	Perceived control over keeping job and private life apart, over setting clear limits between them, and over combining activities from both during the day	Kossek et al. [6]
Work-Life Balance (M)	Work interference with personal life Personal life interference with work Work/personal life enhancement (15 items in total)	Intrusion of the job into private life and of private life into the job (recoded), and the extent to which each sphere enriches the other	Hayman [23]
Psychological Well-Being (Y)	Self-acceptance Positive relations with others Autonomy Environmental mastery Purpose in life Personal growth (3 items each, 18 items)	How a woman judges herself and her past, her ties with others, her independence, her handling of daily demands, her sense of direction, and her ongoing development	Ryff [24]; Ryff and Keyes [25]

Source: Compiled by the Authors from the Cited Scales (2026)

3.4 Data Collection

Responses were gathered through a commercial online survey panel. Three screening questions on marriage, job tenure, and workplace location came first, and only women who satisfied all three and agreed to take part went on to the main questions. The opening page described the study, promised anonymity, and made clear that taking part was optional. As procedural safeguards against method bias, predictor and outcome items were placed in separate sections, wording was kept neutral, and respondents were told that no answer was right or wrong [27]. Background questions asked about age, schooling, sector, tenure, weekly hours,

number of children, and the subdistrict where the woman worked.

3.5 Data Analysis

Analysis relied on partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) run in SmartPLS 4 [28]. This technique fits latent-variable models that aim to explain and predict, mediation models among them [29]. For the outer model, the criteria were loadings of .708 or more, alpha and composite reliability of .70 or more, AVE of .50 or more, and HTMT ratios under .85 [29], [30].

For the inner model, collinearity (inner VIF), explained variance (R^2), effect size (f^2), out-of-sample relevance (Q^2 , from

blindfolding), and SRMR were inspected [29]. Direct and indirect paths were tested by percentile bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples, and a path was judged significant when its 95% interval excluded zero. To check for method bias, Harman's single-factor test [27] was complemented by full collinearity VIFs, which should stay at or below 3.3 [31].

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Respondent Profile

Table 2 describes the 300 women in the sample. Education and government each

supplied 60 respondents, health and private firms 50 each, and trade and services and self-employment the rest. Holders of a bachelor's degree formed the largest group (44.3%), and two thirds of the women had at least two children. Respondents came from five named subdistricts plus a group of others, and none of these accounted for more than a fifth of the total. About six in ten worked no more than 40 hours a week, while roughly one in ten worked longer than 48 hours.

Table 2. Profile of the 300 respondents

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Sector	Education	60	20.0
	Government	60	20.0
	Health	50	16.7
	Private employee	50	16.7
	Trade and services	41	13.7
	Self-employed/MSME	39	13.0
Age (years)	≤ 30	86	28.7
	31–40	72	24.0
	41–50	79	26.3
	> 50	63	21.0
Education	Senior high school	98	32.7
	Diploma	45	15.0
	Bachelor's degree	133	44.3
	Master's/doctoral degree	24	8.0
Number of children	0	40	13.3
	1	62	20.7
	2	99	33.0
	≥ 3	99	33.0
Weekly working hours	≤ 40	183	61.0
	41–48	90	30.0
	> 48	27	9.0
Subdistrict of workplace	Rambah Samo	59	19.7
	Ujung Batu	54	18.0
	Tambusai	52	17.3
	Rambah	49	16.3
	Kepenuhan	45	15.0
	Other subdistricts	41	13.7

Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

4.2 Measurement Model

Every loading passed the .708 cut-off, at .834–.853 for BM, .710–.793 for WLB, and .745–.821 for PWB (Table 3). Alpha and composite reliability reached at least .79 for all three constructs, and every AVE lay above .50, which supports internal consistency and

convergent validity [29]. The constructs were also empirically distinct. HTMT ratios fell between .674 and .705, under the .85 limit [30], and each construct's square-rooted AVE (.842, .761, .790) exceeded its correlations with the other two (.594–.659).

Table 3. Outer model: loadings, reliability, and AVE

Construct	Loading range	Cronbach's α	qc	AVE
Boundary management (3 items)	.834–.853	.794	.879	.708
Work–life balance (15 items)	.710–.793	.948	.954	.579
Psychological well-being (18 items)	.745–.821	.965	.968	.625

Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

Table 4. HTMT ratios between constructs

Construct	BM	WLB	PWB
Boundary management (BM)			
Work–life balance (WLB)	.705		
Psychological well-being (PWB)	.674	.685	

Source: Processed Primary Data (2026)

Since one self-report questionnaire supplied every variable, two checks for method bias were run. In Harman's test, the first unrotated factor accounted for 48.8% of the variance, just under the 50% mark [27]. Full collinearity VIFs ranged from 1.79 to 2.05, comfortably below 3.3 [31]. Method bias therefore seems an unlikely explanation for the results, though the Harman figure leaves little margin.

4.3 Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

With an inner VIF of 1.608, the two predictors of PWB were not collinear. BM accounted for 37.8% of the variation in WLB ($R^2 = .378$), and BM and WLB jointly accounted for 49.1% of the variation in PWB ($R^2 = .491$). Blindfolding gave Q^2 values of .214 for WLB and .303 for PWB, both above zero, so the model predicts each outcome better than chance. SRMR stood at .037, under the customary ceiling of .08 [29].

Table 5. Bootstrapped path estimates

Path	β	SD	t	p	95% CI	f^2	Decision
H1: BM $\rightarrow$ WLB	.615	.036	16.859	< .001	[.541, .686]	.608	Supported
H2: WLB $\rightarrow$ PWB	.473	.057	8.355	< .001	[.356, .581]	.273	Supported
H3: BM $\rightarrow$ PWB	.303	.058	5.182	< .001	[.191, .420]	.112	Supported
H4: BM $\rightarrow$ WLB $\rightarrow$ PWB	.291	.037	7.855	< .001	[.219, .366]	–	Supported
Total effect BM $\rightarrow$ PWB	.594	.040	14.818	< .001	[.513, .670]	–	–

Note: BM = boundary management; WLB = work–life balance; PWB = psychological well-being; CI = percentile bootstrap confidence interval. Source: processed primary data (2026)

Table 5 shows support for all four hypotheses. BM was strongly related to WLB ($\beta = .615$, $t = 16.859$), and the size of this effect

was large ($f^2 = .608$). WLB predicted PWB ($\beta = .473$, $t = 8.355$; $f^2 = .273$), and BM was also tied to PWB directly ($\beta = .303$, $t = 5.182$; $f^2 = .112$).

The route from BM to PWB through WLB was significant ($\beta = .291$, 95% CI [.219, .366]). Because the direct route stayed significant as well, the mediation is partial, and the indirect route makes up about 49% of the total effect (.291 of .594).

4.4 Discussion

Of all paths in the model, the one from BM to WLB is the strongest. Women who believe they decide when work may enter family time, and when it may not, report clearly better balance. This matches Kossek et al. [6], for whom perceived control outweighed the choice between separating and merging roles, and Mellner et al. [7], who found that boundary control predicted balance. The result also carries the Indonesian evidence beyond hotel staff in Medan [15] to married women in six sectors of a non-metropolitan regency. Its size deserves attention. Mellner et al. [7] found that women living with a partner and children were among those with the least boundary control; in our sample, in which every woman is married and most are mothers, differences in that control still account for over a third of the differences in balance.

The positive link from WLB to PWB fits conservation of resources theory [13]. Women who are not drained over and over by competing demands retain the time and energy that self-acceptance, mastery, and purpose require [24]. The result agrees with Atan and Obeng [14], who used the same theory with hospital staff, and with Indonesian findings for bank employees [9] and married working mothers [10]. Sari and Nugroho [16], however, treated well-being as a cause of balance rather than its result. Our cross-sectional data cannot exclude influence in both directions, so the ordering tested here rests on theory, not on timing.

BM also showed a smaller direct link with PWB. This agrees with Kossek et al. [6], who found that people with more boundary control reported less distress, and it makes sense given how closely a sense of command over one's roles resembles the autonomy and mastery components of PWB [24]. The partial mediation mirrors what Suryani [9] found for

self-esteem: balance carries some, but not all, of the influence of a personal resource. Wepfer et al. [8] traced the costs of blurred boundaries partly to lost recovery; our results suggest that the gains from controlled boundaries come partly through balance and partly through a more immediate sense of command over daily life.

For practitioners, the findings mark boundary control as something workplaces can shape. Government offices, schools, and clinics in Rokan Hulu could make schedules more predictable, agree on when staff may be contacted after hours, and let women choose when and where some tasks are done. Self-employed women and traders, whose work and home often share time and space, may gain from training in planning and in setting limits with customers and relatives. As the indirect path explains about half of the total effect, measures that improve balance directly, for example flexible arrangements and childcare support, would add to efforts aimed at control itself.

The study has limitations. A single cross-sectional survey cannot establish causality, and the ordering of variables comes from theory. All measures were self-reports collected online, and with the Harman result close to 50%, method bias cannot be ruled out entirely. Recruitment through an online panel relied on self-reported eligibility and may have favoured women with internet access and more schooling, so the sample does not represent all working women in the regency. Later studies could use time-lagged or multi-source data, add employer support and spousal involvement as antecedents, and compare sectors that differ in schedule control.

5. CONCLUSION

Married working women in Rokan Hulu who feel in charge of the line between their jobs and their families report better balance and greater psychological well-being. Boundary control operates both directly and through balance, which carries about half of its total effect. These results extend boundary theory and conservation of resources theory

to a non-metropolitan Indonesian setting and identify boundary control as a workable lever for human resource policy. Employers and the regency government should consider predictable schedules, explicit norms on after-hours contact, and flexible arrangements that let women organise their roles themselves, and future research should follow these

relationships over time using more than one data source.

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