



From Boundary Management to Work-Life Balance: Exploring the Role of Functional Competencies and Personal Attributes of Teachers in Public High Schools

Jasmin M. Dimauanahan¹ and Eden C. Callo²

¹Recto Memorial National High School, Tiaong, Quezon, Philippines

²Laguna State Polytechnic University - San Pablo City, Laguna, Philippines

Abstract— This study examined the relationship between boundary management and work-life balance among public high school teachers in the Division of Quezon and investigated whether functional competency moderates this relationship. Grounded in Boundary Theory, Work-Family Border Theory, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model, and Conservation of Resources (COR) Theory, the research employed a quantitative descriptive-correlational design with moderation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 1). A random sample of 458 public high school teachers participated. Results revealed that teachers demonstrated generally high levels of boundary management, with temporal and communicative tactics receiving the strongest ratings. Work-life balance was characterized by moderate work-family conflict and high work-family enrichment. Functional competency was rated extremely effective across all domains. Pearson correlation analysis showed that the integration strategy had the strongest positive relationship with work-family conflict ($r = .463, p < .001$), whereas the temporal and communicative tactics had moderate positive relationships with work-family enrichment. Moderation analysis confirmed that functional competency significantly strengthened the positive relationship between boundary management and work-life balance ($B = 0.150, p = .040$), indicating that teachers with higher professional competence derive greater work-life benefits from effective boundary management. The findings underscore the importance of integrating professional skill development with boundary management practices to enhance teacher well-being.

Keywords— boundary management, work-life balance, functional competency, work-family conflict, work-family enrichment, moderation analysis.

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers occupy a critical role in national development, yet the complex demands of their profession — spanning lesson planning, classroom management, grading, co-curricular activities, and administrative reporting — consistently blur the boundaries between professional and personal life.

Boundary management, the strategies individuals use to create, maintain, or negotiate the separation between work and personal roles, has emerged as a significant determinant of teacher well-being and job satisfaction (Ashforth et al., 2000; Clark, 2000). Effective boundary management reduces work-related stress, prevents burnout, and preserves personal resources — outcomes that are especially critical for sustaining teacher quality and retention in public schools.



Work-life balance, conceptualized through two dimensions — work-family conflict and work-family enrichment — reflects the degree to which teachers successfully manage professional demands alongside personal commitments (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Greenhaus & Powell, 2006). Teachers with unmanaged work-family conflict experience diminished engagement, lower instructional quality, and increased turnover intentions, while those who experience strong work-family enrichment report greater job satisfaction and professional resilience (Hakanen et al., 2006; Smith et al., 2020).

A key but underexplored factor in the boundary management–work-life balance relationship is functional competency — the professional knowledge, pedagogical skill, and instructional capability that enable teachers to perform their roles effectively and efficiently (Darishah et al., 2017).

Drawing on the JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001), functional competency functions as a professional resource that may amplify the protective effects of boundary management: teachers with stronger competencies can complete tasks more efficiently within official hours, reducing spillover into personal time. This study examines how boundary management relates to work-life balance among public high school teachers in the Division of Quezon, and whether functional competency moderates the strength of this relationship.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

A quantitative descriptive-correlational design with moderation analysis was employed. The descriptive component characterized teachers' profiles, boundary management levels, work-life balance, and functional competency. The correlational component assessed associations among these variables. Moderation analysis using Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 1) in SPSS tested whether functional competency moderates the relationship between boundary management (independent variable) and work-life balance (dependent variable).

B. Participants

The sample consisted of 458 public high school teachers from the Division of Quezon, selected through random sampling to ensure representativeness across congressional districts, career stages, and demographic profiles. A power analysis using G-Power determined the sample size to ensure sufficient statistical power for moderation testing. Inclusion criteria required full-time employment in public secondary schools and active engagement in classroom instruction and professional development.

C. Instruments

A structured survey questionnaire with four sections assessed: (1) personal attributes; (2) Boundary Management — tactics (temporal, physical, behavioral, communicative) and strategies (segmentation, integration) using a 5-point Likert scale from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree; (3) Work-Life Balance — work-family conflict and work-family enrichment (7 items each); and (4) Functional Competency — teaching methodology, pedagogical formation strategies, effective communication, and fostering student engagement (7 items each).

All subscales underwent expert validation and pilot testing. Cronbach's alpha values ranged from 0.702 to 0.983, confirming acceptable to excellent internal consistency.

D. Statistical Treatment

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequency distributions) characterized all variables. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation tested bivariate associations among boundary management dimensions, work-family conflict, and work-family enrichment.

Moderation analysis via PROCESS Macro Model 1 tested the interaction effect of functional competency on the boundary management-work-life balance relationship. Significance was set at $\alpha = 0.05$.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Personal Attributes of Respondents

The respondents were predominantly female (71.8%, n = 329) and married (65.7%, n = 301). The largest age bracket was 26–30 years (21.6%), reflecting a predominantly early- to mid-career workforce. Most respondents had 6–10 years of service (34.9%), and the majority held Teacher III positions (31.2%).

In terms of educational attainment, 31.7% held master's degrees and 22.9% had a bachelor's degree with master's units, indicating a professionally advancing workforce within the division.

B. Boundary Management: Tactics

Table 1. Boundary Management Tactics — Temporal

Indicators	Mean	SD	VI
I set specific times when I focus on work-related tasks.	4.49	0.614	Observed
I refrain from mixing unfinished work with my personal hours.	4.08	0.755	Observed
I arrange my personal commitments to fit around my work schedule.	4.42	0.660	Observed
I allocate clear time blocks for both teaching and family responsibilities.	4.33	0.721	Observed
I set priority so that work tasks do not interfere with family time.	4.37	0.672	Observed
Overall	4.34	0.546	Observed

Legend: 1.0–1.49 Not Observed; 1.50–2.49 Less Observed; 2.50–3.49 Moderately Observed; 3.50–4.49 Observed; 4.50–5.0 Highly Observed

Temporal tactics recorded the highest mean among all boundary management dimensions (M = 4.34, SD = 0.546), interpreted as Observed.

Teachers demonstrate strong intentional scheduling, with the highest score for setting specific work-focused times (M = 4.49).

However, the lower score for refraining from unfinished work entering personal hours (M = 4.08) reflects structural pressures beyond individual boundary intentions — a finding consistent with DepEd Order No. 005, s. 2024, which acknowledges the workload rationalization challenge in Philippine public schools.

Table 2. Boundary Management Tactics — Physical

Indicators	Mean	SD	VI
I maintain clear boundaries between work tasks and personal life, even when a separate workspace is not available.	4.22	0.682	Observed
I avoid bringing work materials into areas meant for relaxation.	4.03	0.871	Observed
I separate myself from work when spending time with my family.	4.20	0.812	Observed
I keep clear boundaries between school-related activities and my personal home environment.	4.19	0.767	Observed
I try to keep my teaching responsibilities within the school or designated workspace.	4.19	0.817	Observed
Overall	4.17	0.666	Observed

Legend: 1.0–1.49 Not Observed; 1.50–2.49 Less Observed; 2.50–3.49 Moderately Observed; 3.50–4.49 Observed; 4.50–5.0 Highly Observed

Physical tactics were also observed overall ($M = 4.17$, $SD = 0.666$). Teachers demonstrate adaptive spatial boundary control even without dedicated workspaces ($M = 4.22$), though avoiding work materials in relaxation areas is more challenging ($M = 4.03$) — reflecting both household space constraints and the digitization of educational work, where smartphones and laptops as portable workspaces that undermine physical separation (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007).

Table 3. Boundary Management Tactics — Behavioral

Indicators	Mean	SD	VI
I never answer work-related messages during personal or family time.	3.29	1.061	Moderately Observed
If needed, I limit the dedicated work time after office hours.	3.78	0.895	Observed
I switch off intentionally work-related notifications during personal time.	3.38	1.052	Moderately Observed
I make a conscious effort to stop thinking about work when at home.	3.63	0.932	Observed
I maintain habits that clearly separate my roles as a teacher and as a family member.	3.87	0.861	Observed
Overall	3.59	0.821	Observed

Legend: 1.0–1.49 Not Observed; 1.50–2.49 Less Observed; 2.50–3.49 Moderately Observed; 3.50–4.49 Observed; 4.50–5.0 Highly Observed

Behavioral tactics recorded the lowest mean among all tactic dimensions ($M = 3.59$, $SD = 0.821$), though still observed. Limiting after-hours messaging was the most challenging indicator ($M = 3.29$, Moderately Observed), reflecting the pervasive role of group messaging platforms in Philippine school communication culture.

This finding is consistent with research documenting that constant digital connectivity intensifies work-family conflict and reduces psychological detachment (Derks et al., 2021; Kim & Asbury, 2023).

Table 4. Boundary Management Tactics — Communicative

Indicators	Mean	SD	VI
I inform colleagues when I am unavailable due to family responsibilities.	4.36	0.733	Observed
I communicate clearly my schedule to both colleagues and family members.	4.32	0.719	Observed
I set expectations about when I can respond to anyone's concerns.	4.07	0.771	Observed
I explain to my family when my work requires extra time and effort.	4.39	0.717	Observed
I negotiate boundaries both with work and family to balance responsibilities.	4.24	0.709	Observed
Overall	4.28	0.601	Observed

Legend: 1.0–1.49 Not Observed; 1.50–2.49 Less Observed; 2.50–3.49 Moderately Observed; 3.50–4.49 Observed; 4.50–5.0 Highly Observed

Communicative tactics registered a strong overall mean of 4.28 (SD = 0.601). Teachers most readily explain extra workload demands to family members (M = 4.39), while setting professional response-time expectations is slightly more challenging (M = 4.07), likely reflecting the institutional cultures of Philippine public schools where accessibility and cooperation are highly valued (Clark, 2000; Kreiner et al., 2009).

Table 5. Summary — Boundary Management Tactics

Variable	Mean	SD	VI
Temporal Tactics	4.34	0.55	Observed
Physical Tactics	4.17	0.67	Observed
Behavioral Tactics	3.59	0.82	Observed
Communicative Tactics	4.28	0.60	Observed
Overall	4.10	0.66	Observed

Legend: 1.0–1.49 Not Observed; 1.50–2.49 Less Observed; 2.50–3.49 Moderately Observed; 3.50–4.49 Observed; 4.50–5.0 Highly Observed

Collectively, boundary management tactics registered an overall mean of 4.10 (SD = 0.66). Temporal tactics were strongest, followed by communicative and physical tactics. Behavioral tactics, while still observed, reflect the greatest challenge — indicating that self-regulatory behaviors require more deliberate institutional support than structural approaches such as time scheduling and spatial organization.

Table 6. Boundary Management Strategies

Variable	Mean	SD	VI
Segmentation	4.09	0.67	Observed
Integration	3.98	0.61	Observed
Overall	4.04	0.64	Observed

Legend: 1.0–1.49 Not Observed; 1.50–2.49 Less Observed; 2.50–3.49 Moderately Observed; 3.50–4.49 Observed; 4.50–5.0 Highly Observed



Both segmentation (M = 4.09) and integration (M = 3.98) were Observed, with segmentation marginally higher — reflecting a slight preference for role separation but also practical flexibility when work demands overlap with personal time. This dual strategy pattern aligns with Kossek et al. (2006) and Caringal-Go et al. (2021), who found that Filipino employees employ both strategies adaptively depending on workload and family demands.

C. Work-Life Balance

Table 7. Work-Life Balance

Variable	Mean	SD	VI
Work-Family Conflict	3.77	0.76	Good
Work-Family Enrichment	4.42	0.52	Good
Overall	4.10	0.64	Good

Legend: 1.0–1.49 Very Poor; 1.50–2.49 Poor; 2.50–3.49 Average; 3.50–4.49 Good; 4.50–5.0 Excellent

Work-family conflict recorded a mean of 3.77 (SD = 0.76), rated Good, while work-family enrichment was substantially higher (M = 4.42, SD = 0.52), also rated Good. The overall work-life balance mean of 4.10 (SD = 0.64) indicates that teachers experience a generally favorable balance — though noticeable role strain persists. The coexistence of moderate conflict and high enrichment supports the dual-process model of work-family interaction, wherein these dimensions operate independently rather than as polar opposites (Greenhaus & Powell, 2006; ten Brummelhuis & Bakker, 2012). The strongest enrichment indicator was family experiences inspiring greater teaching effectiveness (M = 4.51, Excellent), reflecting the collectivist values and strong family-centered resources characteristic of Filipino educators.

D. Functional Competency

Table 8. Functional Competency Summary

Variable	Mean	SD	VI
Teaching Methodology	4.50	0.50	Extremely Effective
Pedagogical Formation Strategies	4.45	0.51	Very Effective
Effective Communication with Students	4.57	0.49	Extremely Effective
Fostering Student Engagement	4.61	0.48	Extremely Effective
Overall	4.53	0.49	Extremely Effective

Legend: 1.0–1.49 Not at All; 1.50–2.49 Slightly Effective; 2.50–3.49 Moderately Effective; 3.50–4.49 Very Effective; 4.50–5.0 Extremely Effective

Teachers reported overall functional competency at an Extremely Effective level (M = 4.53, SD = 0.49). Fostering student engagement registered the highest mean (M = 4.61), followed by effective communication (M = 4.57) and teaching methodology (M = 4.50). Pedagogical formation strategies, though still Very Effective (M = 4.45), scored slightly lower — likely reflecting the additional preparation demands of differentiated instruction and technology-



integrated lesson design, especially in heterogeneous Philippine public school classrooms (Omar et al., 2019; Ventista & Brown, 2023).

E. Correlation: Boundary Management and Work-Life Balance

Table 9. Pearson Correlation — Boundary Management and Work-Life Balance

Boundary Management	Work-Family Conflict	Work-Family Enrichment
Temporal Tactic	0.068	0.437***
Physical Tactic	0.092	0.390***
Behavioral Tactic	0.309***	0.224***
Communicative Tactic	0.152**	0.426***
Segmentation	0.167***	0.420***
Integration	0.463***	0.399***

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). ***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Temporal and physical tactics showed moderate positive relationships with work-family enrichment ($r = .437$ and $r = .390$, respectively, $p < .001$), confirming that structuring time and space effectively translates into positive cross-domain experiences. Behavioral tactics demonstrated a moderate positive relationship with work-family conflict ($r = .309$, $p < .001$) — reflecting that adaptive role-blending behaviors, while sometimes necessary, increase the risk of role interference. Communicative tactics showed a weak but significant relationship with conflict ($r = .152$, $p < .01$) and a moderate positive relationship with enrichment ($r = .426$, $p < .001$), affirming that open role negotiation with both family and colleagues reduces misunderstandings and fosters supportive environments (Clark, 2000; Kossek et al., 2006).

Integration strategy had the strongest positive association with work-family conflict ($r = .463$, $p < .001$), confirming that domain blending — though sometimes necessary — significantly increases role interference when demands are high (Allen et al., 2014; Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Segmentation showed a weaker conflict relationship ($r = .167$, $p < .001$) but a moderate positive enrichment relationship ($r = .420$, $p < .001$), suggesting that even partial role separation yields meaningful positive spillover benefits.

F. Moderating Effect of Functional Competency

Table 10. Moderation Analysis — Functional Competency as Moderator

Predictor	B	SE	95% CI Lower	95% CI Upper	Z	p
Boundary Management	0.361	0.038	0.286	0.436	9.40	< .001
Functional Competency	0.291	0.043	0.208	0.375	6.81	< .001
Boundary Management × Functional Competency	0.150	0.073	0.007	0.292	2.05	.040
Simple Slope — Average	0.238	0.0389	0.251	0.404	8.41	< .001



Simple Slope — Low (-1SD)	0.258	0.0516	0.156	0.359	4.99	< .001
Simple Slope — High (+1SD)	0.398	0.0516	0.296	0.499	7.70	< .001

Note: *B* = unstandardized regression coefficient; *SE* = standard error; *CI* = confidence interval. The interaction term represents the moderating effect of functional competency on the relationship between boundary management and work-life balance.

Boundary management significantly predicted work-life balance ($B = 0.361, p < .001$), and functional competency independently predicted work-life balance ($B = 0.291, p < .001$). Critically, the interaction term was statistically significant ($B = 0.150, p = .040$), confirming that functional competency moderates the boundary management–work-life balance relationship. Simple slope analysis revealed that the relationship is stronger at high functional competency levels ($B = 0.398, p < .001$) than at low levels ($B = 0.258, p < .001$), supporting the study's proposition that professional skill amplifies the effectiveness of boundary management as a regulatory mechanism.

This finding is theoretically consistent with the JD-R model (Demerouti et al., 2001), wherein professional competencies function as resources that enable more efficient task management — reducing after-hours spillover and strengthening boundary control. A teacher with high competency in lesson planning and digital tools, for example, completes preparation more efficiently within designated hours, making it easier to maintain established boundaries. In contrast, teachers with lower functional competency may need extended time to complete teaching tasks, causing boundary attempts to fall short even when intentionally set. This aligns with Person-Environment Fit theory, which posits that employees with capability-role alignment experience less strain and manage demands more effectively (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that boundary management significantly predicts work-life balance among public high school teachers in the Division of Quezon, rejecting the null hypothesis of no significant relationship. Teachers rely most heavily on temporal and communicative tactics, while behavioral self-regulation — particularly limiting after-hours digital communication — presents the greatest challenge.

Work-family enrichment substantially exceeds work-family conflict, reflecting the meaningful positive spillover between teaching and family life that characterizes Filipino educators' experience.

However, the integration strategy's strong positive relationship with conflict underscores the risks of involuntary role blending under high workload conditions.

Functional competency significantly moderates the boundary management–work-life balance relationship, with the protective effect of boundary management amplified at higher competency levels.

This finding extends existing boundary management theory by establishing functional competency as a key resource that determines how effectively boundary practices translate into work-life outcomes.



V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Educational authorities should continue strengthening workload rationalization policies — particularly DepEd Orders No. 002 and No. 005, s. 2024 — to reduce the administrative and non-instructional demands that drive involuntary role integration and undermine boundary management efforts among teachers.

School administrators and division officials should integrate structured boundary management training into LAC sessions, covering digital communication protocols, time-blocking strategies, and role negotiation skills. Special emphasis should be placed on behavioral boundary tactics — the most challenging dimension — to build teachers' self-regulatory capacity in managing after-hours connectivity.

Professional development programs that enhance functional competency — particularly in pedagogical formation, differentiated instruction, and digital tools — should be prioritized for early- and mid-career teachers, who constitute the majority of the workforce. Strengthening competency directly amplifies the work-life benefits of boundary management.

Future researchers should adopt longitudinal and mixed-methods designs to examine the causal mechanisms linking boundary management, functional competency, and work-life balance over time. Qualitative inquiry into teachers' lived experiences of boundary negotiation in culturally specific Philippine school contexts would also enrich understanding of these dynamics beyond quantitative patterns.

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