An investigation in the opportunities and challenges brought by flexible working with modern mobile technology for managers and employees

Ho Ming Chan

Masters of Science in Management

National College of Ireland

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Abstract

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By Ho Ming Chan

The advanced modern mobile technology from mobile devices to incredibly fast mobile connection has continued to make flexible working more prevalent and more common to any employees at any levels in their career. This study is to research on how managers perceive the opportunities and challenges by enabling their employees to have flexible working. At the same time, the study also continued to look into the employee's side about their thoughts on flexible working which has been done by previous research that was either limited or to expand their findings previously. Thus, this research can show the different perspectives between the managers and the employees about flexible working. The data collected will be allowed the study to compare and contrast the different views among different managers and different employees.

This study continues the similar topic with previous research that have been done and in addition to gather other area that has been done independently in the past such as BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) to bring a better comprehensive view on the flexible working in nowadays. Qualitative research was used for this study and ten one-to-one interviews were conducted. Face-to-face interview allows the interviewer to ask pre-defined questions but it also allows flexibility for the interviewer to adjust the questions during the interview to probe the interviewees with their answers to gain better and deeper understandings. The result is an interesting finding which shows there are some differences as well as similar in perspectives between managers and employees regarding to flexible working. This research could contribute to manager on decisions that help to improve an organisation productivity and talent retention, by investigating what are the attitude of managers towards flexible working compares to the actual employee experience.

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Working away from an office is not something new in today's working environment. Topics on "telecommuting" or "telework" started to appear around late 1970s (Martino, 1979) and other words such as remote work options (Olson, 1983), virtual offices (Licker, 1983) soon followed on the same basis. In the world we are living in today technology has allowed us to work without a boundary of a specific workplace. We can conduct work at home, conduct personal business on the job or both in the same time (Shumate and Fulk, 2004). As today's world is getting more globalised, competitions around the globe has driven organisations to work around the clock and around the world (Friedman, 2005; Sirkin et al, 2008).

The amount of people that are able to work remotely has increased remarkably for the past 10 years and there is no sign of decrease in number but continue to grow. Managers need to adapt this changes to manage their employees: they need to identify the opportunities and challenges by allowing employees to perform their job that used to be in an office along with company's asset, to working outside the office and with their own technologies (smartphone, tablet or laptop). One result is the impact on employee's daily work-home interference – WHI (Derks and Bakker, 2014).

We are now living in a post personal computers, laptops and Blackberries era. The mobile technology has evolved into further of our daily digital life. Working remotely no longer mean ones just check their emails while on the move or working on their laptops at home. The power of smartphones and

tablets has greatly increased the speed and the ability of ones required to do their job anywhere and anytime. The cheap cost and power in today's mobile technology such as smartphones, tablets and laptops enable anyone to use their own personal devices to perform their job. Such fast rising trend was called "Bring Your Own Devices" or BYOD (Scarfo, 2012; Leavitt, 2013). BYOD is an I.T. policy that organisation encourages its employees to use their own personal mobile devices to connect corporate data performing their job, inside or outside a corporate environment but within the organisation I.T. infrastructure (Li, Peng, Huang & Zou, 2013).

With the age of global workforce is now mostly consisted of what many call Generation Y – the generation born between 1978 to 1990 (Tulgan, 2011). This generation has been regarded as motivated, educated and have expectations than any other generations ever before (Meier and Crocker, 2010). Thus, BYOD has allowed and facilitated this generation the "tool" that it needs to achieve in the ever competitive world.

As mentioned above, telecommuting, BYOD does have its opportunities and challenges in the management point of view. With a comprehensive, careful planning on implementing flexible working for its employees, managers can improve their employees' motivation and job satisfaction (Weeger, Wang & Gewald, 2015), thus increase productivities (Daipuria and Kakar, 2013) and competitive advantage (Michielsens, Bingham and Clarke, 2013) while the challenges are to maintain the employees work-life balance and the security threat to the organisation from flexible working. Over the past decades there have been many research on work-life balance (Devi and Rani, 2012),

telecommuting, mobile technology or BYOD but most of them are focus to the area independently or further research are required to evaluate their relationship (Olalere, Abdullah, Mahmod and Abdullah, 2015). This research is aimed to provide a comprehensive view on the opportunities and challenges managers should be considered when implementing flexible, mobile working environment to their employees.

The study involves ten interviews with both the managers and employees which a smaller number of samples differs from previous studies. The objective is to probe what are perspectives and opinions from managers regarding to flexible working for their employees. Then, the interviews with employees will probe into their actual experience and thoughts on flexible working. At the end, the study will compare and contrast the data collected from both sides of the interviews and discuss with the findings in order to achieve the purpose of this research: What are the opportunities and challenges for manager on flexible working in terms with mobile technology? To interpret this question in a more practical meaning, it is about to explore and assist in the manager's mind: "If I'd be given my employee the approval and the required equipment that enable them to have flexible working, am I actually improving their work life or in fact the opposite? Will they be happier with their job or not? Does it provide any improvement to the organisation? What are the areas that I have to be cautious with on flexible working?

Chapter 2 – Literature review

2.1 Introduction

As aforementioned in the introduction, "Generation Y" is now the dominant workforce in developed and emerging economies and they are regarded as motivated, educated and have more expectations than any other generations ever before (Meier and Crocker, 2010). In fact, Meier and Crocker think technology is a second nature to them and they have an ambition and attitude of "whatever it takes" to make them successful. With this generation emerged a changing attitude towards working outside the office, a question that was first raised by Lynette Harris (2003) on working remotely – "an employer or employee-led initiative?" (Harris, 2003).

2.2 Technology

Recent literature such as Khan and Agha (2013) argue advance technology instead of helping and easing office employees' workload in organisations, technological changes have added to their ever increased burden on their work life as organisations are demanding more with the aid of modern technology in current working environment. However, the context to this with regards to technology and its role contributing to employee workload in any organisation is very broad and there are many positive examples by today's advancing technology that can be found.

The context of Project-Based Organising (PBO) is one example of opportunities for manager to promote flexible offices available to contemporary workers (Yeow, 2014). Yeow argues although there are literatures studies on PBO, the element mainly references an emphasis based on individual skills and needs of the project. ICT (Information and Communications Technologies) has increasingly enhanced the conveniences for individuals to work on multiple and often overlapped projects concurrently (Dixon and Panteli, 2008) and Yeow has further studied on how ICT facilitates PBO and overcomes issues and challenges, such as ICT enabled to bridge the boundaries between temporary and permanent form of PBO.

Another technology that flexible working can take advantage of is the fast speed in both wire and mobile broadband that has allowed better quality on video conferencing and has enabled the interaction between people becoming closer without being physically together. One of its benefits for an organisation is it lowers the employees need to travel for meetings between colleagues or clients, and for some employees, the necessity of commuting to work, which also results in the reduction of intangible costs such as stress (Agius and Angelides, 1997). However, Wang and Law (2007) concluded that wide application of ICT probably leads to not less but more travel. This came from Harvey and Taylor (2000) that they argued ICT enabled working at home but it does not diminish travel and instead, it simply changes its purpose.

2.3 Work-Life Balance and Well-being

Work life balance is one of the very topical areas in the modern working environment and a growing concern for all stakeholders which should be pursued conscientiously to find a mutual beneficial solution for both the organisations and employees in the long run (Khan and Agha, 2013). Khan and Agha (2013) indicated the present form of work-life balance first appeared in 1986 while they claimed Gambles et al. (2006) found that work/life programs first existed in as early as 1930s. There are also many different perspectives and definitions in regards to work-life balance such as Dex and Smith (2002) who referred to it as "flexible working".

Kirchmeyer (2000) described work-life balance is about being able to achieve an overall satisfaction in all life domains and it requires energy, time and personal commitment to be well distributed across the domains. The blurring between work and leisure often leads to the topic work-life balance. Lewis (2010) defines "work" as "obligated time, whether paid or unpaid" while "leisure" is activities that is freely chosen and although there are also many attentions in study of literature in boundary relationship between home and work (Nippert-Eng, 1996; Kakihara, 2003; Maruyama et al., 2009; Duxbury et al., 2014), it is still unclear if the increased of boundary permeability has a positive or negative on work-life balance. But because of the nature of different roles, general theory suggests that the boundary permeability for relationship between home and work leads to negative outcomes (Yeow, 2014). In contrast, other reported home-based working

has led to greater productivity, reduced costs such as travel and accommodation, improved customer services and lower employee absenteeism (Jackson and Van Der Wielen, 1998; Daipuria and Kakar, 2013). One reason for these contrary results can be found by a major research study in 2002 by University of Cambridge that family-friendly policies implemented by employers play an important role to have a positive effect on work-life balance in . Cole et al. (2014) also concluded that work-life balance is largely depending on the flexibility of boundaries between the domains of home and work, and the way and extent that an employee can successfully manage it. This may approve previous literature that role between work and family has an important correlation between them that one role can directly or indirectly has a positive effect to another role, or both.

Anand et al., 2015 drew up a role theory on their research to further investigate work-family domain. They claim existing research is mainly focused on "Work Interference with Family (WIF)" and there are only a small number of studies on the other side of perspective, that is, "Family Interference with Work" (FIW). Thus, they studied further on "family Interference with work" of a large number of employees based on their job satisfaction and results of their research deduced that is it does contribute to stress which reduced employee's job and life satisfaction, but only to those that are low on agreeableness and those with high agreeableness are able to cope with the conflicting demands of the work-family domains. Their research implicates the incorrect assumptions from many previous

literatures that that the correlation between domain conflicts are constant, but in fact, depending on individual differences. In their research it does acknowledge the scope of limitations on their findings. This research is to explore if there are similar or opposite findings using different methodology, i.e., qualitative research instead of quantitative research used by Anand et al., (2015).

Other study found that flexible work schedules are most sought to improve work-life balance especially for employees that are working parents (Daipuria and Kakar, 2013). Second to that is work from home option or compressed work week. Managers of an organisation should utilise the available mobile technology to facilitate such demands from employees for the sake of benefits to both the organisation and its workforce – better job satisfaction, improved productivity from employees and less employee turnover leads to lower costs, while gaining other indirect benefits for the organisation such as better corporate image e.g. the way organisation value their employees and the perception of the organisation moving forward with technology. Work-life balance initiative and programmes are also commonly used nowadays by large number of organisations in order to attract and retain talents at workplace (Khan and Agha, 2013).

Duxbury et al. (2014) studied further on a multi-national pharmaceutical company to understand why mobile technology (in this case Blackberry was the technology the study referring to) has positive effects on some and why negative for others in the same company in regarding to work-family boundary. The finding for those who benefited, 'self-discipline' and 'self-

control' are the keys in order to take the advantage of working outside the office, while addiction and infatuation would lead to negative effects. Ironically, those who have negative effects from the Blackberry cannot praise enough on how great the device is, this could have explained the consequences of the addiction and the inability to disengaging not because of the pressures from work but the discomfort from their psychologically feelings. One "negatively affected" respondent from the study believed it is the company's responsibility to introduce a company policy to control and constrain its workers for using their Blackberry responsibly.

The study also finds mobile technology is more favourable to the work domain than the family domain i.e. the benefits provided by mobile technology in work domain can be anywhere and anytime but as for family point of view benefits may only occur intermittently e.g. during an event or emergency in personal business (Duxbury et al., 2014). This may not be true if in the context of working from home is scheduled to agree a fixed, permanent time between the manager and employee e.g. allowing employee to work from home every Wednesday. It is going to be explored in this research.

Stress being a mass phenomenon in the modern workplace (Ninaus et al., 2015) with the World Health Organisation declaring it is as one of the major health threats in this century (Adli, 2011). From the same literature by Ninaus et al. (2015), their research findings conclusion is that ICT has affected employee well-being with a major negative impact, emphasis in stress levels, either because of the constant availability, connectivity

pressure that led to self-obligation for availability or the increased of workload that ICT has brought. Although the literature did also conclude that there are benefits with ICT, those benefits are solely and entirely about the increased productivity of an organisation. There are limitations on their research as the study was purposely limited to research in the two countries which are notorious for its long working hours, extensive high competition in the labour market. Therefore, a different labour culture could have a different impact in regards to stress level. This research could further investigate and provide additional findings if there are positive effect to employee well-being.

2.4 Organisation work culture and its effects

Along with work-life balance, Duxbury et al. (2014) also believe work culture has a significant contribution on employees' perceptions when given a smartphone for their job. For instance, one work culture within an organisation can have an expectation or habit for many employees to check their emails at night with their smartphones. Those who don't would feel the pressures coming from their peers especially for the ones who want to progress with their career in the company, they perceive that in order to get into the promotion path they will have to give up their personal time to work. On the other hand, there are more and more companies such as PWC, Volkswagen who now try to advocate an opposite culture and advise their employees to avoid after-hours emails, although the habit of checking after-

hours emails is no doubt hard to break (Kang, 2012). It reiterates that the impact on employees work-life balance is strongly related to management decisions, to define the culture within the organisation, a business unit, a department or solely a team.

Another culture that is changing is in traditional work environment, the nature of "workspace" is now extended to a wide range of possibilities that is from home to many "hot-spots" in the public realm, such as cafés and hotels (Cole et al., 2014). Office based workers are now fulfilling their tasks and responsibilities "through multiple physical and social settings and boundaries." Although this may not be something new to the topic with many literature exists. Their research implication is that the employers and particularly facilities managers may need to shape the facilities management in area such as health and safety in the future to support those that are no longer working in the traditional office space e.g., an employee's home.

2.5 Mobile technology towards company strategy

Work-life balance of employees will soon be part of a company critical strategy in order to achieve better employee satisfaction and lower the cost of employee turnover (Michielsens, Bingham and Clarke, 2013; Daipuria and Kakar, 2013), this statement has the merit to recognise that the current mobile technology has already enabled and allowed many office workers to

work outside the office such as checking their work emails using their own personal smartphone and this phenomenon is getting increasingly common. Michielsens, Bingham and Clarke (2013) studied four high profile companies operating in the UK service industry and revealed that the companies implemented flexible working mostly to recruit and retain talent by offering them increased level of control on where and when to undertake work thus to gain better work-life balance. One common view on most literature on mobile technology is that additional smartphone would improve efficiency and communication between work colleagues and customers (Duxbury et al., 2014). It is up to the organisations to have a comprehensive overview of the pros and cons for allowing their employees to do so with such as the fast-pace trend of BYOD.

Another area that mobile technology has enabled company to have is the option of "hot-desking". Michielsens, Bingham and Clarke (2013) has reported that the combination of remote working policy and hot-desking makes an impact on the working environment where employees from different teams and departments are mixed together and they feel that the office had become more energised.

2.6 BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)

With the growing spread of smartphones and tablets today, internet computing has been replaced by mobile computing, with the result workers use their own personal mobile devices for enterprise work (Olalere, Abdullah, Mahmod and Abdullah, 2015). Although it believes BYOD began at around 2003 but the trend has only taken off in 2011 (Leavitt, 2013). Swanepoel (2015) illustrates if an organisation is adapting BYOD in the company, there are four opportunities and benefits that the organisation can gain from it: cost savings, employee satisfaction, increase in productivity and information sharing. However, Olalere et al. (2015) found that there is very little has been done by organisation to tackle security challenges that BYOD has brought, and yet the literature founding of the most significant challenges facing BYOD are security-related challenges, which broken down into three main areas: data security, malware and BYOD network security as the main security challenges.

Olalere et al. (2015) propose further understanding on both the theoretical and security challenges facing BYOD are needed by academic researchers and information security professional so the concerns about security challenges of BYOD policy both from the employers and employees can be addressed.

Cisco (2012) has carried a survey that concludes BYOD is a global phenomenon. And in today's business the growing demand pressures from workers to use their personal mobile device to perform their daily work

means some form of BYOD policy will have to in place and cannot be ignored (Millard, 2013).

A major benefit of BYOD is employees are able to use devices that they feel most comfortable and familiar with. As well as enabling workers to be more mobile, using their own device should also increase their productivity since they are more experienced with the functions of their device, with the assumption of this will enhance their motivation and satisfaction (Weeger, Wang & Gewald, 2015) working within or away from the office environment. Costs on training users to use corporate assigned mobile equipment along with the purchasing costs of mobile assets are also eliminated (Mahesh & Hooter, 2013).

The enabling of working outside the office using mobile technology also comes with the challenge on security awareness for managers. Even managers that do not have any profound level of I.T. background and knowledge need to understand the risks on encouraging flexible and remote working practices, especially with the emerging trend of BYOD. With BYOD this has become a huge challenge for an organisation I.T. department to manage employees own devices. Many common unregulated market solutions that are available to the employees because of the conveniences they can provide solutions quickly and efficiently, have a cost of compromising security (Facey, 2011). Other challenges include data leakage, data theft and regulatory compliance these can contribute a great threat to an organisation if the appropriate steps are not taken seriously on BYOD policy (Morrow, 2012). The result of loss and theft of employees'

mobile device as well as the end of their employment cannot be neglected either (Thielens, 2013). Thielens (2013) emphasis that although security is the main challenge on BYOD, the real security challenge is on the controlling of access to the device and not about the device itself – For example, rather than emphasising a BYOD employee to look after their smartphone it is more important say in response to the case of the theft or loss of the smartphone, that the necessary steps are taken by the I.T. department of the organisation to ensure that the corporate data is contained and not able to accessed by an unknown person. A survey by Forrester (2012) with 202 respondents has testified that security would be the main concern and challenge for an organisation to implement BYOD programs.

Chapter 3 – Research Questions

3.1 Main objective

The main objective is to investigate and find out what are the opportunities and challenges for managers and employees brought by today's modern mobile technology. The way to approach this objective in this research is to find out, if there are any, the different perceptions and awareness on flexible working with modern mobile technology between managers and employees. Sub-objectives are divided into different topical areas: perceptions of flexible working by managers and employees that adapted flexible working, work life balance, well-being and BYOD (Bring Your Own Device). Within the sub-objectives this research raises questions for both the managers and employees side to explore if there are any commons and/or differences in the view of the objectives focus in this study.

3.2 Sub-objectives

3.2.1 The effects of flexible working for employees and its challenges to the managers

Modern mobile technology includes both the advanced devices hardware and the speed of wireless communication technology, as well as the decreasing costs of using them have enabled more and more organisations the ability to allow flexible working for their employees. Such ability has raised the opportunities that not being able to do before but also new

challenges that face to both the organisation and its employees e.g., previous literature has found areas such as work life balance and well-being are affected to employees which will be further investigate in this research differently by combining the findings from both the managers and employees. The rapid rate of technology advancing in nowadays is also worth to revisit such topical area. The area of this study is to find out if managers are aware of these issues and also to explore if there are any other new challenges that they perceive at presence and the near future. Ultimately, what is the most concerning factor for managers on flexible working.

3.2.2 Work Life Balance: The Pros and Cons with technology

As mentioned in the literature review above Yeow (2014) believes that the boundary permeability for relationship between home and work leads to negative outcomes while others, in contrast, have found being able to work at home has led to greater productivity among other benefits such as reduced travelling costs, lower employee absenteeism which in turn, increase job satisfaction (Jackson and Van Der Wielen, 1998; Daipuria and Kakar, 2013). Daipuria and Kakar's study (2013) also found that seeking for flexible working schedules in the aim of improving work life balance are the most sought for employees especially those that are working parents.

Thus this area of the research is 1) to explore the manager's perception about employees on flexible working with regards to their work life balance

and 2) to study the employee's values on flexible working in regards to their work-life balance. In this study it is aimed to bring both the manager's and employee's side of their tale together as a whole for the exploration, to further enhance and clarify with the existing literature with regards to work life balance by the effect of present mobile technology.

3.2.3 Well-being – positive and negative effects with technology

Another topical area brought by mobile technology to flexible working is its effect on employee's well-being. Ninaus et al., 2015 concluded from their research that ICT has affected employee well-being with a major negative impact in the stress level with various reasons as aforementioned in the literature review chapter. This research is going to probe into the well-being area of an employee, while also, the perceived perception of it by the managers if their employees are allowed on flexible working. The finding will give valuable insights to managers and let them to take appropriate actions where necessary, in order to overcome the challenges and capture if there are any opportunities.

3.2.4 To investigate the managers and employees current understanding of BYOD

As aforementioned in literature review chapter, although Bring Your Own Device believed to begin at around 2003 but the trend has only starting to

take off in 2011. To many organisations this is still a relatively new trend to them to introduce into their organisational culture. Recent literature has identified the benefits of BYOD such as employees can use devices that they are more comfortable with to perform their job and this in turn can increase their productivity and job satisfaction. As an employer BYOD can result in reduce the costs of I.T. equipment and training. But beneath these benefits there are also many concerns that have been identified by current literature. Olalere et al. (2015) has proposed further studies are needed to understand on both the theoretical and security challenges facing BYOD.

The sub-objective of this research is to investigate since the beginning of the BYOD trend took off in 2011 has it become a global phenomenon as it has claimed by Cisco in 2012. This research is about to find out if managers and employees have any profound knowledge about it at presence time.

Chapter 4 – Methodology

Both quantitative research and qualitative research have been carefully examined and considered by the author for this research. Quantitative research involves numerical analysis between variables and their relationships while qualitative research involves verbal description of real-life situation (Silverman, 2014). In general, quantitative research begins with hypotheses, uses numbers and generates data that allow numerical analysis while qualitative research induces hypotheses from data, uses words and describes phenomena in context (Justesen and Mik-Meyer, 2012).

Phenomenology approach using qualitative research methodology was employed for this research. Qualitative research has been chosen over quantitative research due to this research objective was to explore and understand in-depth subjective experience of the samples e.g., "How does work-life balance being affected by flexible working?", or the different perceptions that can come up with by the participated managers e.g., "How do you think flexible working effects your employees?". Qualitative research emphasis on the "how" in order to explore the phenomenon and to find the understanding of it. Thus, the hypotheses and variables cannot be pre-defined which would be the requirements for a quantitative research. That being said, it does not mean that some variables cannot be identified within this research, such as the level of stress and the variety of options that can affect work-life balance. But the author could not justify enough variables and more incline to probe the primary research objective to identify areas

that may not been mentioned from previous studies since one of the main influence in this research was about mobile technology and this area changes at a rapid pace in modern time. Also, the author deemed phenomenology approach which involves "through an assumption of interconnectedness and processes of intuition, exploration and thematic analysis" (Grbich, 2013, p. 296) is more appropriate for this study. Therefore, although the benefit of quantitative research enables to gather a large number of results compares to qualitative results, generalisation of the findings was not the aim of this study. The research objective requires a deeper and inductive probing to seek if there are any interesting findings from the participating samples. The author also followed previous studies on the similar literature that finds qualitative research is more appropriate for the research objective (Duxbury et al., 2014; Yeow, 2014; Ninaus et al., 2015).

4.1 Research instruments

The data collection method for this research is by conducting semi-structured interviews. The length of the interviews conducted in this research were between 20-30 minutes. Semi-structured interview was chosen as a more appropriate interview structure as it allows a more open-end questions and answers, thus the interviewer can adjust or explain the questions to the interviewee in order to gain more detail of an answer if necessary (Silverman, 2014). Also semi-structured interview is more

relaxed in rapport with the interviewee as well as has more flexibility where structured interview is more formal and required neutrality, no prompting and improvisation to the questions in order to ensure consistency (Noaks and Wincup, 2004) which the author deemed this is unnecessary for this research. But because there is no boundary with open-ended question, one point that needs to be cautious with while using semi-structure is to make sure the focus on the objective of the research does not deviate away too much from the question or if there is any misunderstanding in interpreting the question by the interviewee.

4.2 Interview Questions

The author derived two sets of questions which one set that is use for the interview with managers and the other set for the employees. A total number of 13 questions were in each set and within each set of questions they are grouped by 4 different sections/themes. The interview questions were derived on focusing the aim of the objectives as outlined in chapter 3 and they tend to be as open-ended questions as possible to allow the interviewees to talk freely on the subject of the question. Both sets are starting with question about the interviewee's biography, then on the manager's side of questions they are divided into themes about manager's perceptions on flexible working using mobile technology, the understanding of BYOD and the perception and awareness of it, perceptions on future working culture of an organisation and the final thought on the most

concerning factor on enabling flexible working in the context of mobile technology. On the employee's side of questions, they followed similar questions that were used in previous studies with the additional topic on regarding to BYOD. The themes of the questions were employee satisfaction and work-life balance with flexible working, the understanding of BYOD and the perception and awareness of it, and suggestion of areas for improvement on flexible working.

4.3 Samples

A total number of ten participants were interviewed for this research. All ten participants are working full time in six different organisations located in Dublin. Six participants are coming from the senior managerial position that were interviewed with questions based on the manager side of the objectives in this research while the other four participants were interviewed from the perspectives of an employee that adapted flexible working.

The six participants that were chosen based on the fact that they are the decision maker within their organisation or else has strong influence in making decisions that related to this research i.e. the samples are either a managing director of an organisation, head of department in an organisation or vice president of a sector in the organisation. Other four participants were chosen based on the author's knowledge of their common characteristics that they have adapted flexible working for at least over a year in their organisation and can potentially share valuable experience and insight with

regards to it for this research, hence, purposive sampling method was used for choosing the samples by the critical analysis from the author (Silverman, 2014) and theoretical sampling approach was not used as the samples required for this research cannot be theoretically defined. Other sampling method such as convenience sampling although can save time, money and effort, it is often resulting in poor quality of data thus lack of credibility (Marshall, 1996) therefore it was not considered by the author.

Because of the limited time constraint, the participants were chosen from the facts that the author knew them in person through either personal or work relationship while their job would help to give an insight and contribute to this research. Thus, the samples are non-random and probability sampling was not considered. Another reason random sample method was not used in qualitative research is because while studying a random sample can give a better indication to generalise the results to a population, it is not the most effective way to develop an understanding of complex issues relating to human behaviour (Marshall, 1996).

The ten participants are age from 34 to 65 and consisted of five males and five females. Home situation was asked to the four participants on the employee aspect of the research with two are married with children, one is single parent with one child and one lives with her partner with no children.

4.4 Pilot study

A pilot interview for each of both on the manager side and employee side were originally planned but this did not materialise due to the limited samples that the author was able to obtain. Instead, after the first interview of both side the author asked for their feedback and opinion on the questions that were asked in the interview. Both participants believe the questions are adequate while one suggested the author can elaborate more about the meaning of flexible working in the context of this research as the participant has misinterpreted as flexible working means any work outside the office such as visiting clients' site or working abroad, until it was clarified by the interviewer during the interview and the interviewee corrected his views. The feedback was welcomed by the author and further interviews the author clarifies the meaning of flexible working with mobile technology to the interviewees prior commencing the interview.

4.5 Data collect procedure

Prior to the interview the author has specifically explained to them that the objective of the research he is conducting and asked them individually in person if they are willing to participate for the research. The author explained to them that a set of questions will be asked and during the interview the conversation will be recorded solely for the purpose of transcription to assist with data analysis for this research only. All

participants agreed and a NDA (non-disclosure agreement) was signed at the interview before it commence.

The interviews were conducted in the month of July and August 2016. Nine interviews were conducted in non-standardised, one-to-one, face-to-face basis (Saunders et al., 2012) with one interview on the employee aspect was conducted through video conferencing software Skype. All interviews including the one that was using Skype, both the interviewer and interviewee were at either a private room or company meeting room, where it is quiet and no other person presence in the room during the entire interview. Conversation of the interviews were recorded using a Philips digital dictaphone where the interviewee can see clearly in front of them on the desk and the interviewer made it clear to them that they can request to stop the recording at any time during the interview, no such requests were made from all interviews conducted.

4.6 Data Analysis

At the end of each interview the author immediately transcribed the recording to a Microsoft Word document format within a day or two of the interview conducted to ensure the quality of the transcriptions.

The author went through the transcripts thoroughly a number of times in order to capture the useful and meaningful data that were said during the interview. Computer software programme NVivo was used to assist the analysis of the data collected. The software uses "nodes" to classify and

organise the collected data. Node is a collection of references about a specific theme, case or relationship, e.g., BYOD would be one of the node used in the analysis, further fine tuning is possible with the node such as addition sub-nodes can be created, linked or merged for better results in patterns that may be discovered from all the data gathered. Then by grouping the data into a more thematic way that was set in the research questions chapter. A more meaningful and similarities start to emerge.

Due to the author new to the usage of the software NVivo, the programme was only been used with a few functions within the applications that the author feels useful. The author did not want to entirely rely only on NVivo for data analysis either due to there are also limitations on using computer software such as many of them were created originally by individual's need therefore are idiosyncratic in nature, as well as they can decontextualise data (Grbich, 2013). The author gathered all the final data and summarised them into two different tables in two excel spreadsheets, one for managers and another for employees.

4.7 Ethical considerations

One requirement for any research is to ensure the ethic of the research is not just "ticking another box" but needs to be carefully examined (Silverman, 2014). Silverman (2014) illustrated some ethical pitfalls that every research is needed to consider in particular: exploitation, deception, researching

vulnerable people, revealing people's identities which they do not desire and participating in dubious bargains.

This research did not exploit any of the above matters and followed number of ethical safeguards suggested by Silverman (2014): ensuring interviewees participate voluntarily and the data collected from the interviews are treated confidentially. Also the questions conducted in the interview did not contain any sensitive data to both the organisations that the interviewees are working in and the interviewees themselves. At the end of each interview the author thanked sincerely to the interviewees for taking part and assist with this research and they do not receive any incentives as a return.

As aforementioned, a non-disclosure agreement form stating the data collected will solely for the purpose of this research and anonymous identity will be used i.e. the participants will be identified by letters, the form was agreed and signed by the participant prior the start of the interview. For the case of the interview that was conducted by Skype, digital format of the NDA form was sent through the app and the interviewee verbally agreed with the it prior the start of the interview.

Chapter 5 – Findings

This chapter summarise the data from the ten interviews that conducted for this study.

Because of the characteristics of this research involves two different groups of employee level i.e., manager and employee. The author established the findings by first divided between the two groups. Then within each group the data collected with be identified and categorised focus in summary of the four themes as shown in the research objectives chapter. The logical reason behind this is to first get a clear view of the data gathered for both side in the finding chapter, then author can compare and contrast the findings in the discussion chapter.

5.1 Findings on interviews with managers

At the early stage of the interview a question was asked if the manager work remotely. All managers from the interview do have flexible working and work remotely themselves. The reason behind this question is to identify if they would have the experience and understanding on what flexible working feels like. But because of all participated managers have the experience on flexible working themselves, this also has limited the research findings on the managers' perspectives for those that do not have flexible working themselves but their employees do, thus, further studies can adapt similar approach in this research with the particular sample.

5.1.1 Challenges of flexible working to an employee

One of the main objectives of this research is to investigate the challenges of flexible working with mobile technology to an employee perceived by the managers.

Manager A found due the nature of his business, co-ordination is vital for the company, co-ordination in the context of meetings in the office is needed between different engineers in the company. Therefore, he finds remote working is very limited for this reason. Three other managers (D, E and F) also have a similar view on this challenge that they believe communications between colleagues are faster and more efficient when employee is in the office instead of working remotely. Manager E elaborated by putting an example that if a colleague of his has a query, the query sent by an email would not be as efficient as a phone call, which if the query cannot be explained verbally then a phone call would not be efficient as "*popping over to someone's desk and ask them directly and draw a picture if necessary*".

Face-to-face meeting with clients, were considered even more crucial and challenge than interacting with colleagues in person for the manager if employee works remotely, as mentioned by three of the four managers above (A, D and E). Manager A explained not only clients would prefer to meet face-to-face to understand the vendor they are working with, if everyone in his company has adapted flexible working then when clients come to his office will only see an empty office, which does not reflect well and give a good impression. Manager D and E also reveal clients usually

come into the office in short notice therefore if the employee is working remotely then he or she will not be able to attend. Manager E emphasise although there are many video conferencing systems available, he thinks the technology with them is still not up to his standard, along with their costs.

Another challenge perceive by four managers is the difficulty on monitoring employee's productivity. One manager even used the word "control" as she believes she is unable to control the employees if they not visible in the office and does not know what they would be doing during working hours.

Manager F thinks costs of equipment to enable flexible working for employee would be a challenge for her company. Although she also implies this could in turn saves cost for office space.

5.1.2 Manager's perceptions on the effects of flexible working to employee

All managers mentioned flexible working would affect employee's work-life balance either positively or negatively. Three managers believe flexible working has a positive impact on employee's work-life balance and two managers believe flexible working has a negative impact to it, one manager believes it has both the positive and negative impact on employee's work-life balance and this depends if he or she can control on "self-discipline". Managers who believe positive impact on work-life balance perceive those that has children in the family would benefit by flexible working significantly while managers on the negative side perceive flexible working would "eats"

into the employee's private life whether he or she has children or not. Manager B believes the "nine to five" working hour exists in so many years is because employee needs a break from its working day but she also admitted that it is very hard now with the presence of laptops, smartphones and tablets.

5.1.3 Productivities – positives and negatives

All six managers believe flexible working can have positives on productivity and one does not think there are any negatives while the other five managers also perceive there can be negatives on productivity with flexible working and this is depending on the type of each individual employee, their surrounding situation and working environment, such as an example given by manager A, if there are noisy kids in the house he cannot think the employee can be productive compares to working in an structured office environment, but on the other hand the manager agrees if the place is quiet the employee can be more concentrated and thus be more productive.

All other five managers also unanimously told in the interview productivity can be increased once the environment that the employee is working remotely in does not have any distractions that usually occur in the office. Contrary, three managers also believe there could be less on productivity of the employee working remotely since the lack of peer pressure in an office working environment, especially if the employee is working from home, as manager E describes:

"…when you are together in a working environment in office and everybody is busy away, it kinds of give the employees mentally give them some pressure to be more efficient, to work faster."

Manager D reiterates this is depending a lot on the person if he or she is discipline while working away from the office.

Three managers comment slower communications results in decreased productivity. Two managers think productivity can be increased for the employee that is living long distance to the office, commuting time to work can be saved by flexible working.

5.1.4 BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) – opinions and issues

Four managers have heard of the term BYOD with different levels of the understanding of it. Other two managers have never heard of it thus the author very briefly explained what it stands for during the interview without going too much into detail of it so the two managers can continue to give their opinions in regarding to this theme of the research.

Five out of the six managers are not favourable to introduce BYOD in their organisation. All five managers' main concern lies in the security area that raises potential threats to the organisation while one manager thinks it is acceptable to use personal devices for work related tasks as long as it does not involve with the core business, such non-core business activities such as photo editing, working on LinkedIn or Tweeter account profile. Two

managers also aware and concern intellectual property issues with BYOD, e.g., one manager's employees required to take many work related photos outside the office and often they use their own smartphones for convenience purpose. The other manager concerns if the employees use their own devices and when they leave the job, it would be very difficult to retain and control company assets that are on the devices.

Manager C has the same concern of security on BYOD as the above five managers but because of the nature of his job, he has a better understanding of BYOD and was the only manager favourable to BYOD in this study but only if the organisation has a system in place and able to manage the employees' personal devices. He also told he is less favourable to BYOD only because he believes it adds extra administrative tasks to the I.T. department.

Three managers consider employee would not be happy with BYOD that involves costs to employee own expense and of the two managers they believe organisation should be the one to provide the tools for an employee to perform their job. Manager D further explained there are employees not understand fully with their own devices functionalities and it should be the company to maintain standard and consistency on the equipment.

Three managers think one of the benefits of BYOD is increased employee's satisfaction. This is down to because of the employee is not "forced" to use one platform of the device over another, or they might have a better, faster device that the company can afford to get for them.

5.1.5 Perceptions on the future of flexible working

All six managers perceive and admit that going forward in time mobile technology will advance even further at a faster pace, organisations should embrace more with technology and there should be more availability on flexible working to employees and people will be getting more and more use it. Manager D elaborate further that he thinks this is due to the demographic change that more females are in the work force, flexible working will become more common. However, manager A stresses that flexible working would still be based on individual case.

Manager C and E also perceive the nature of current working environment will become even more blur in regards to work and private time as well as the traditional working hours, as more and more people will be working while looking after their family at the same time.

5.1.6 Most concerning factors on flexible working

Five out of the six managers directly and indirectly express their most concerning aspect on flexible working is employee's productivity. Trust was one of the element and manager A directly told with the follows:

"I suppose you have to have trust with the person that you are allowing to do flexible working and that is probably very important. You have to have trust that they will be productive in flexible working situation. That to me would be important."

Manager C and F also think being unable to keep track and monitor the employee, productivity would be affected:

"…obviously making sure that they are able to do their 7 hours or 7 and a half hours. How would you manage that?" – Manager C.

"Keeping track of employees as in if you are in work like you are the manager you can see them, you can go over and check, you can talk to them or whatever. If it's flexible, it could be like I don't know where they are, I don't know what they are doing or if they are working." – Manager F.

Manager B and D indirectly imply by mentioning visibility would be a huge concern, but this suggests to the lack of interactions among colleagues and clients, thus, decreases productivity, as manger D describes:

"I think the two biggest drawbacks are probably the lack of visibility, lack of availability for business development type things. So interaction, productivity and visibility I think."

The only manager that his concern is different from the above five is because as the nature of the industry he is in:

"I would say probably the data, security, that's one in our industry that is one of the single most important thing." – Manager E.

Although second to that manager E thinks efficiency is also then a concerning factor with flexible working:

"Efficiency as I said, we have meetings, especially meetings with short notice you need to be ready. You need to be ready at a way that the client

wants, not what you want. If a client wants to meet in person. You cannot

offer them a video conference. And that is important."

Health and safety issue also been mentioned by manager C as an important concern on flexible working and should not be ignored. He states that employees working from home should still have a proper setup as an office, such as they cannot be working on a kitchen table to do their job.

5.2 Findings on interviews with employees

All the employees in this research in regards to flexible working work additional time on top of their normal working hours, with employee C has a special arrangement with her firm that allows her to work two days a week from home. All employees answer the location that they spent their time most on flexible working is at home with employee C would also work on the train when commuting to the office.

All four employees perform their flexible work with a laptop, smartphone provided by their company apart from employee D received an additional iPad. They receive no other peripherals such as an additional monitor, keyboard or mouse and an ergonomic chair to work with.

5.2.1 Flexible working – the positives

All four employees replied with contentment with regards to be given the option of flexible working. They express certain positives with flexible working. It allows them to save time on commuting, or able to work while commuting. The time saved from commuting in turn allow them to have extra sleeping time for the day, more personal time when switching off from work, able to perform personal matters while still working such as if the child is sick at home or waiting for parcels delivery. Employee B and C state due to the nature of the long hours of their job and their personal circumstances that they have young children, it would be very difficult to do their job properly without having the ability of flexible working. This also results employee B to feel that she can have better relationship with her family.

Three employees mention being able to work from home eliminates the interruptions and distractions that they would have working in the office with employee C and D emphasise that they are being more productive while working from home.

Well-being in terms of stress level, three out of four employees felt that flexible working has reduced their stress level with various different reasons. Employee A describes on his previous job where working from home is not an option he would be stressed when commuting with bad weather or if his car has problems, also now he doesn't have to worry about organising someone to help if he is waiting for a parcel or if his child is sick. Employee

B describes she feels less stress from the freedom that enable her to work when it suits her:

"it's probably slightly less stress because I am working when it suits me rather than when you are having to stay here (in the office) and finish something."

This is particularly in favour to her because a lot of her clients are based in Australia or the US she feels being able to respond to her clients quicker makes them happy.

An interesting reply from employee C is that she doesn't think the level of stress has changed due to flexible working, instead she is getting the same level of stress from different perspective which is when she encounters difficulties with her I.T. equipment while working from home:

"…sometime I would worry that if the system crashes, I am completed disconnected as you don't feel like you have that assurance that you have when you are in the office."

Although with the above comment from employee C. She as well as the other three employees concur that their overall well-being is better off with flexible working. She also sees that the flexibility given by her employer is an encouragement of trust and therefore she would be obliged her flexibility with her employer and be committed to her job:

"The way I see about it is on balance this great flexibility shown to me by partners (colleagues) and by the employer, so I like to add value back by being able to be flexible with my time."

5.3.2 Flexible working – the negatives

All four employees also have expressed the negative side on flexible working, with affecting their work-life balance being the prominent issue with it. They all have a sense of they never completely shut off from work. One reason with it is that the employees has the ability and the temptation to check their work emails with their mobile devices or even do a bit of work because of it. Employee D admits she used to be particularly bad in this regard:

"Like first thing in the morning I used to check my work emails before I even get out of bed. I've stopped doing that anymore. And I found myself getting annoyed because I see an email from a co-worker saying 'I need this'."

Other reason is because of the requirement of their job with clients need, along with self-conscious of responsibility as describes by employee C:

"And there is again the nature of our job is that it tends to be around the clock. You might be getting an email that at 12 o'clock at night or 5 am like I was this morning and so if you involve in this transaction there is an expectation or it's probably more pressure you put on yourself that well I am here and I have access so why don't I just log on and do this."

Employee A describes that his well-being is being affected negatively because he tends to skip breaks when working from home:

"…when you work from home sometimes you tend just to skip basically breaks and even lunch and you stay siting at your screen for ten hours straight."

Three employees also mentioned while on flexible working the lack of visibility and interaction with people does have a negative impact. Employee A thinks that it is good to have interaction with people from time to time; Employee B describes that she is getting slower responses from colleagues or employees that work for her compare to other peers that are in the office and while employee C has a similar perception, she also believes other people think that she is not as involved such as team meetings etc.

5.3.3 BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) – Opinions

Three out of the four employees are strongly not in favour of using their own devices for work purposes while employee A would appreciate if he is using his own smartphone to perform his job. The main reason for that is employee A explains he does not like to carry two phones and he is able to choose a better device, something that suitable for his personal life as well as work. Other three employees worried in areas such as they would not feel comfortable with clients highly confidential data on their personal devices, a way to separate their work and personal life that are already blurred with flexible working, as employee C explains:

"…you know having two separate devices you can choose if you locking it in the drawer on Friday evening and take it out on Monday you can do that,

where if it is on your personal device evening if you stop the emails coming in the temptation is to look at them."

Employee D also shares a similar view on having two separated devices:

"I went and actual bought a personal phone and so now I have two phones again first time in four or five years and the sense of freedom that came with that is just brilliant."

She also thinks that it would be much easier if she ever leaves her job she just needs to return all work related equipment and need not to worry about her personal devices.

When asked about what are the potential issue with BYOD all four employees including employee A believe data security of the device would be a major concern, employee C expresses further that any ownership of intellectual property rights would be a big concern also.

Employee B and C also think BYOD is not necessary as employee should not be using their own expenses to perform their job and company should be the one to provide them the equipment in return to build their brand and value.

Employee A mentions having the same phone number for work and personal also means he is always contactable but he does not think anyone would ring at unreasonable hour therefore he sees no issue with it:

"…in terms of the phone number just having the same card, one for work and personal, that means you are always available for work. But usually

people tend not to ring you out of nowhere in the middle of the night for an issue so that never been an issue really."

5.3.4 Area for improvement on flexible working

In the final section of the interview the four employees were asked in what way would the experience on flexible working be improved, either by themselves or their employer.

All four employees admit that self-discipline is very important on flexible working or otherwise it would have negative impacts on well-being and work-life balance i.e. being able to switch off once work is finished, as employee C expresses:

"Discipline by yourself so that you don't logon on Saturday if you don't absolutely 110% need to."

Employee C thinks the employer should provide better equipment for flexible working while employee D feels on top of that the employer should provide additional adequate office equipment. She explains that she may have the technology to do the work but she does not have a correct seat or proper peripherals such as a full size keyboard or mouse and a proper monitor while working from home and people should not have this mind *"we give you a laptop so you can work from home"* and that is.

Employee A thinks there is a "grey area" in defining "when is work" on flexible working and the expectations from the employer should be clarified.

This is when an employee receives a phone call and an email outside normal work office hour, or when an employee is commuting:

"I know a lot of colleagues would do that for example like if they are not driving, when they are commuting on the bus just start replying emails, is it work already or not?"

Employee C expresses her concern on if both the employer and colleagues can improve their mind-set in regards to the perceptions on people that are working remotely, the experience on flexible working would be improved and more effective. She explains at this moment people still think working remotely means less efficient or productive:

"There is this mind-set of people that a lot time people would say to me "oh are you off tomorrow?", and I line it when they don't know I am working from home, because I work probably harder than I would on the day in the office. But it's just that mind-set that because you are not here in the office. You are not working as efficiently or as productively."

Employee D wants to encourage her employer to utilise more on technology such as video conferencing software the like of Skype for meetings so many of her colleagues would save a lot of travels time along with a better use of time.

"Even a Skype call I think there could be a lot of that for our company meetings, things like that I think I could encourage a lot more of that. There are people I work with travel a good bit to come to a meeting and it would

be an opportunity to Skype as opposed to have them get into their car and

travel for two hours for one-hour meeting and then travel home again."

Chapter 6 – Discussion

This chapter draws the discussion by compare and contrast all the findings that is relevant to the objectives of this research. Many different and similar views were mentioned by the managers and employees. The chapter divides the discussion to the same as the sub-objectives of research questions to provide a thematic approach for better understanding the different areas that will be benefit to both the manager and employee.

6.1 The effects of flexible working for employees and its challenges to the managers

As mentioned from the findings chapter all managers that were interviewed have some degree of doing flexible working themselves therefore their experience can contribute different opinions to those that have no experience on flexible working.

Four managers have mentioned the importance of face-to-face interaction between colleagues and clients with various reasons, while all other four employees also have opinions on physical interaction within the office environment. Two employees agreed with the manager's view that it would be challenging for them that if work required to meet clients face-to-face. One manager specifically mentioned when there is a project between teams, the physical interaction with people is crucial as this can result in better collaboration and save time, this remark by the manager somehow dis-approves Yeow's (2014) study on mobile technology has enabled better project-based organising in a company. Other interesting finding mentioned

by a manager is that flexible working would decrease the number of employees in an office and therefore if everyone is having flexible working at the same time it would be seemed that his office is empty and indirectly giving the impression to any clients that is visiting the scale of his organisation is not as sizable as he would like it to reflect.

A refreshing comment brought by one of the manger in regards to his view about video conferencing technology has re-ignited previous literature in the area by Agius and Angelides (1997), during that time there were many constraints on video conferencing capabilities due to the limited technology. Even with a much advanced technology in both speed and quality on video conferencing capability, the manager still does not convince it can add value to flexible working, with reasons refer back to the aforementioned above physical interaction between people is very important, along with the costs that involves in video conferencing capability, either be the equipment costs or the running costs. Contrary, one of the employee's view believes even a much cheaper solution like Skype would be sufficient and benefit to both the employee and manager or even their client. Therefore, she thinks organisations should utilise more and herself to promote more on the use of video conferencing. One main reason this agrees with literature by Agius and Angelides (1997) is that it reduces stress causes by travelling, which also agreed by the interviewed managers. However, this research has found that from the comments by the four interviewed employees while mobile technology, such as video conferencing, that enabled flexible working has saved travel time, the interviews did exhibit the employees travel to doctor

appointment, bringing their kids to the crèche etc. this happens to coincide with the literature found by Harvey and Taylor (2000) that ICT did not diminish the travel, but instead, has changed the purpose of it, such as ones that illustrated. Which also seemed to agree with the result concluded by Wang and Law (2007) that ICT has not reduced but leads to more travels.

Managers have contributed different views on their perspective of productivity of an employee. A factor that nearly mentioned by all managers is because of the lack of visibility of an employee there is simply unable for the manager to tell if the employee is being productive or not. It merely based on trust from the manager as pointed out by one participant. Many managers also stated that productivity of an employee could be reduced because of the lack of peer pressures in an office environment. These perspectives from managers are almost opposed to the responds by the employees. One in particular mentioned that because she is working from home and there is this traditional mind-set that she would be less productive. She would make sure to prove that she is being more productive while on flexible working by working much harder, often leads to many over-time. However, the managers do agree that productivity while on flexible working is greatly depending on many different situations such as the attitude of individual employee, and the surrounding work environment. One manager explained giving the employee ability to work remotely gives them a sense of trust from their employer and thus this should give them extra encouragement and commitment to their work. Hence the manager perceives an increase productivity from this decision. This has somehow

proved to be a true statement which aligned with one of the finding from the interview with an employee in this research shown in the findings chapter. The employee spoke about being given the flexibility to work has made her to commit to her job and wanted to give it back to the employer through flexibility of her time.

The issue with different perspectives and responds from the managers and employees implies there is a need of a system to measure productivity, in order to find and prove each of their statement.

6.2 Work Life Balance: The Pros and Cons with technology

The finding from both the managers and employees has perceived and proved that flexible working would affect an employee's work-life balance, in both positively and negatively. The reason which would be pointed out by Kirchmeyer (2000) that the overall work-life balance would only be satisfied if all life domains are well distributed but this is also dully depending on the individual with their discipline. The participants on the employee side has all shown that the negative impact on their work-life balance with mobile technology is because they can now check their emails anytime and anywhere. Few of them found themselves do it automatically the first thing in the morning when they wake up and feels the negative impact from it. This concludes with Duxbury et al. (2014) to understand the reason why that some has positive effects and negative for the others as "self-discipline" and

"self-control" are the keys, which ironically admitted and agreed by one of the employee in this study who checks her email first thing in the morning. One participant from Duxbury et al. (2014) research has pointed out that the onus should be on the company by introducing policy that forbid employee to use their mobile device out of hours. But the effect in this is questionable in reality, further study on companies that have such policy in place may be able to conclude its effectiveness.

Concurrently, however, the employees all seem to be able to find the positive effect on their work-life balance also, e.g., as one employee can leave work early in order to undertake her personal tasks such as collecting her child from school and looking after her until she goes to bed, then the employee can go back to work later in the evening at home. The switching between work tasks and personal matters during a typical day is what many literature referring to as the boundary permeability (Yeow, 2014, Nippert-Eng, 1996; Kakihara, 2003; Maruyama et al., 2009; Duxbury et al., 2014) and that boundary will get more blur as perceived by the managers in this study because they believe that there will be more and more working parents in the society as well as the advancing technology to make flexible working even more common. One employee explains when she was more junior in her position in the company and without her child during that time she would find it normal to stay in the office until nine o'clock at night, but now she is at a different stage of her life with a family and a kid, she can see that her demands on work-life balance has changed. All of the above support the finding by Daipuria and Kakar (2013) that flexible working is the

most sought from employees that are working parents. During the finding a new pattern can also been seen that it appears as it is normal that employees are okay with working outside the office in the time such as while waiting for a doctor appointment or commuting. This indicates and proves about more and more common of the permeability between work and personal life and the changing attitude of an employee. Work-life balance is no longer about getting the balance between work and personal time. It is more about the level of co-existence permeability as described by the literature.

6.3 Well-being – positive and negative effects with technology

From the employees' experience they all established that flexible working has certainly given them some positives with regards to their well-being, their explanations almost totally concur with existing literature that their well-being is better because they have better flexibility to manage their work, and also the saving of commuting time alone would allow them the extra sleep and energy with less stress (Jackson and Van Der Wielen, 1998; Daipuria and Kakar, 2013). But this result is entirely opposite on what Ninaus et al. (2015) with their finding from the literature review. One possible reason of this is because of the different kind of samples in their research as well as their particular labour market. This research may have implied that this area of study is difficult to be generalised.

One of a surprising finding is that there was no direct mention of any concern on employee well-being such as stress, by the managers. However, this research has shown that there is a close correlation between work-life balance of an employee and their well-being. Such as one of an employee describes he is able to look after his child at home if the child is sick and this permeability between work and family life by flexible working has undeniably reduced his stress. And four managers believe from their perspective flexible working has a positive impact on an employee's work-life balance especially for those that have children is based on this fact. Another example would be the one has been mentioned above that the employee can looking after the child's daily routine without affecting her work because of the flexibility. The results from the finding of both the managers and employees consent with Anand et al. (2015) on their study using role theory about "Family Interference with Work" and that employee stress would be reduced and increased in job satisfaction for those with high agreeableness, which also specially mentioned by the three employees who has a child from this research. This also agrees with Cole et al. (2014) that one role (family role in this case) can directly or indirectly has a positive effect to another role (work role) such as job motivation.

There were two managers who think flexible working would impact the employees work-life balance regardless to their personal stage of life. With one still believes that working from 9 to 5 is still existing after so many years. Unfortunately, from all the literature that has been discussed here, maybe

the manager needs to think forward with technology and that working anywhere and anytime will become a more common phenomenon.

One final point that has been raised by one manager and one employee is the health and safety concern when one is working from home. It seems to the employee that employer has failed to identify and understand that if an employee is working from there are more than "just a laptop" needed for flexible working. From the interviews with managers only one has mentioned his concern in regards to this area with employee's well-being shows that there may be a lack of awareness by the managers. As Cole et al. (2014) have pointed out multiple physical and social settings are getting more common outside a traditional office environment, managers need to look into this area particularly for those that are working in facilities management.

6.4 BYOD (Bring Your Own Device)

Although four of the six managers interviewed have heard of and understand the term BYOD and have some degree of understand of it. This finding can still assume that 33% of managers have no knowledge of its existence although this trend meant to be rising to become a popular trend since 2011 (Leavitt, 2013).

Swanepoel (2015) suggests this is an area where managers should learn more about and try to take the advantage of it and that organisation can obtain benefits and opportunities from adapting BYOD. Although one of the

reason Swanepoel (2015) suggests that BYOD would help organisation is to save costs in the business. This may not be true at all as one of the manager pointed out BYOD would bring blur for expenses such as phone calls between work and personal. Also intangible cost such as intellectual property pointed out by the participants that if an employee has taken valuable company information with them on their own devices and if they leave that could potentially inflict a huge cost to the company. Something advised by one of the literature that this cannot be neglected (Thielens, 2013).

All six managers currently are not in favour to allow BYOD into their organisation yet mainly due to the concern of security. This may merely implicate the managers are still lack of the knowledge on BYOD as there are many other organisations have already adapted and have some degree of BYOD policy in place. However, they also have a valid reason to be worried on BYOD as pointed out by Swanepoel (2015) many enterprises that already has BYOD in placed have no idea on how many privately owned devices are connected to the company network. Hence, the literature acknowledges that while there many benefits on BYOD, it also reveals organisation has no control over BYOD but instead can only mitigate the impact of it. This has also reflected and agreed the statement by Olalere et al. (2015) that more studies are needed to understand the security challenges of BYOD. Finally, it seems that none of the six managers have mentioned and perceived that BYOD can reduce costs on users training along with purchasing costs of mobile assets as illustrated by Mahesh and

Hooter (2013). This may explain the costs are insignificant to the managers compare to other factor such as security issue, or simply reiterate their current shallow thoughts and knowledge on BYOD.

A surprisingly large number that three out of four employees do not appreciate with BYOD in this study either. All of them have the same concern as the managers that they do not find comfortable with company's data on their own devices due to security concern. One employee also points it back to the issue with work-life balance by BYOD as this would close the gap between work and personal life as it would be impossible to separate the two devices once it combines to just one device. This point happens to have also been mentioned by one of the manager during the interview.

Two employees also think the reason they do not in favour with BYOD is because they believe the cost on equipment should be provided by the company. Two managers also correspond with the same response and agreed that the organisation should be providing the equipment as they can see employees will most likely do not like the idea that they have to pay their own bill. One of them also explained he would be worried if employee does not have any good knowledge in I.T. and uses an inadequate equipment.

Only one employee finds he would be much preferred to use his own smartphone for work not only that he would only need to carry one device instead of two, but also due to the device is something that he likes to use and is much better for his personal life as well as work. Two managers from

the finding are also perceive the same outcome from their own perspective with regards to BYOD can raise employee's job satisfaction because they can choose device that they are comfortable with and is not "forced" into a particular system. Although there is only one employee out of the four favourable in BYOD, this result can still agree with Weeger et al. (2015) from qualitative research perspective as Grbich (2013, p112) states "No single view nor group of views can be privileged over any others. All are 'valid'.".

In conclusion, BYOD is still not known and aware by many people at this moment of time and future research should investigate the organisations that succeeded in bringing BYOD to their company for a period of time and explore the positives and negatives that exist.

6.5 Limitations

One of the limitation of this research is it does not take into the account of the generation of the workforce although the samples in this research consisted between the age of thirties to sixties i.e., the generation of baby boomers to the generation Y. Research by Bussin and van Rooy (2014) has shown generations value rewards differently, rewards such as career advancement and work life balance which we have discovered from this research or literature review above. Although their research also has its own limitation such as it is limited to the financial sector. Nevertheless, the question of different in generations is out of scope for this research.

Another limitation consider on this research is although the finding from employees claimed that they are more productive when they are working remotely such as at home. The finding concerns from managers in regards to employees' productivity cannot be ignored. Therefore, it would be unable validate such claims in this research but only use what data has been gathered in this study as a reference. A more systematic approach would be needed in order to measure productivity and thus, further research in this area is possible once a system is in place to allow measuring productivity.

This research has its own limited insight due to the small number of samples that were used, i.e., with only six sample on manager's perspective and four on the employee's opinions. Also the original idea of the research is to have equal number of samples from both the manager and employee side of the interviews in order to probe if there are any balanced opinions but it has since changed during the interview process period due to the nature outcome of the participants. Purposive sampling method was used and hence the samples were chosen by the author due to the fact that he knows all the participants personally. Therefore, it could be argued that the data gathered during the interviews are more in-depth due to the participants are more comfortable to share their opinions with the author, or in fact entirely the opposite.

Finally, although it can be said that the result of this research cannot be generalised because of the small number of samples, as discussed earlier by comparing previous study by Ninaus et al. (2015), it seems that this

research has also proved that it would be very difficult to find generalisation

in the nature of this area of study.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion

This study was to find out what are the opportunities and challenges managers are facing on flexible working employee with mobile technology. The findings were gathered by analysing the different views and opinions coming from both managers and the employees. At the end of this study it has concluded few areas focus on flexible working that managers should consider to look into for the benefit of their organisation, as well as the challenges.

7.1 Implications

One of the intriguing findings from this research is in regards to the different stress level that may arise from while working remotely as pointed out by one employee. As at present people who do not have any profound I.T. knowledge are still relying heavily on their I.T. support personnel with regards to their I.T. issues, either be the local I.T. support person in their company or just any I.T. savvy friends that they may have. Therefore, it is understandable to think if an employee who is working remotely from their office and have the "fear" or feeling anxious about on flexible working due to in the event of possible I.T. issue that limited their ability to perform their job. Stress cannot be ignored as it can develop into more serious health issue such as anxiety or depression. Manager should take this into the account of consideration. But in overall from this study, the implication is that flexible working reduces stress of an employee and manager should take this as an opportunity option for improvement to their organisation.

With the arrival of computer tablets such as Apple's iPad. Due to the simplicity and speed, these devices are favourable to employers and employees to use over the traditional PCs or laptops. As one of the manager suggested, he would be very happy to provide his employees iPad for them to check their work emails while away from their office due to the speed to turn on the device and can see the emails right away, compares to if they are using their laptop. This has coincided with one employee's opinion and suggestion that company should be providing better and up-to-date mobile technology to their employees.

Trusting is seemingly to be a very important factor as two managers stated they think flexible working would only work unless if there are ways to track employee's productivity. However, as this study has found from the employee's point of view. All the employees claimed that they are more productive while on flexible working. One employee has pointed out the lack of visibility in the company has made her to think being negative in productivity by her employer due to the traditional mind-set. Therefore, this study implicate managers should take note in this regards for improvement such as to change their attitude to employee on flexible working, or more efforts in communicate with the employees on flexible working are needed, in order to close this mind-set.

All the employees in this study have indicated that they did not receive any additional equipment to support their flexible working environment. One employee emphasised the importance in this regards and admiringly it was perceived as an important factor also by one of the manager although the

majority numbers of other managers did not perceive in this area is an alarming result. The fact that to ensure an employee has adequate equipment such as ergonomic chair and proper screen can further enhance their job satisfaction and productivity. Also potential HR, work related regulations may arise as pointed out by the only manager that anticipated about it. Therefore, manager should take into the account when an employee is working remotely he/she has the adequate support in regarding to their I.T. equipment on top of the physical environment that they are working in.

This research re-iterates managers need to know the importance and the changing nature of work life balance nowadays. The experience from the employees have shown that flexible working is now not just about working from home in a fixed set of hour. As two employees has illustrated their daily work life has now mixed with their personal live in order to achieve the best balance between the two, and the way to achieve this is constantly switching between the two life during the day. Managers need to understand and accept this is a growing trend for employees and to support the employees with the technology that are currently available.

Managers should explore and understand more on BYOD as this can give them competitive advantage on attracting and retaining talent employees. This research has found that many managers are still unaware or fully understand the concept of BYOD. Thus this gives them the uncertainty and concern with security issues in BYOD. Incidentally the findings here showed that most employees are also find an uneasiness with BYOD. This could

contribute the reason why the slow traction on this trend in the current working environment. Thus many opportunities on further research into this phenomenon is possible in future. It would be interesting to see in the next few years when the efficiency of mobile apps become even more efficient, how does it impact on the matters that have been discussed in this study.

7.2 Summaries and further research

In summaries of the conclusion, below are the final thoughts from this research:

In conclusion of all areas that have been explored, productivity would seem to be the main concerning factor for almost all mangers in this study. This is reasonable and understandable as the success of an organisation remarkably depending on the contribution of employees' productivities and it is solely the responsibility of the manager.

Although there are points that were made by the manager concerns. The fact is that the technology is there and available, but only at a huge cost. Thus, the ultimate challenge to manager as it seems is costs for the organisation. Therefore, one important recommended step suggests by this research is every manager needs to evaluate the relationship between costs versus benefits on mobile technology for flexible working in order to gain the most welfare out from it.

With all the limitations are considered in this research. This study has now concluded with the questions that were asked in the introduction: By enable flexible working for an employee. It seems this would improve their work-life balance, well-being, and better job satisfaction. The organisation will be benefit by this strategy but managers are also need to aware with the challenges that revealed in this study.

The final recommendation is further research in this areas of topic can be taken using longitudinal design and/or along with different methodology which can result to have a more concrete evidence by the discoveries from this research.

Appendix A: Interview Questions for Managers

Interviewee's Biography

1) What is your age?
2) What is the business area of the organisation and what is your position in the organisation?
3) Do you work remotely yourself and if so, how often you do it?

Manager's perceptions on flexible working using mobile technology

4) Do any of your employees working remotely?
5) What if any are the challenges of flexible working to an employee?
6) How do you think flexible working effects your employees?
7) In what way do you think introducing flexible working has any impact on productivities in an organisation? Positive or negative or both? If so, why?

BYOD

8) Have you heard of BYOD and if so, how much do you know about it?
9) Do you have any BYOD policy in your organisation?
   o If not, do you think you will introduce it to your organisation? Are there any reasons why not?
   o If yes -> Jump onto next question.
10) In your opinions, what are the positives and negatives with BYOD?

Future working culture of an organisation

11) Have you any plans to increase the availability of mobile technology on flexible working available for employee or is it already enough for the organisation? Is there any reason with your answer?

Final thought on flexible working from above points

12) Which is the most concerning factor on enabling flexible working?

Appendix B: Interview Questions for Employees

Interviewee's Biography

1) What is your age?
2) What is your home situation?
3) What is the business area of the organisation and what is your position in the organisation?
4) How often do you work remotely, part of work hour or additional?
5) Can you tell me about all the locations you've had work remotely?
6) Which location did you work remotely most?

Employee Satisfaction and work life balance with flexible working

7) How do you feel about working remotely?

8) How does working from home influence your well-being?
9) What influence/effect does this have on work-life balance?

BYOD awareness

10) What equipment is provided by your employer to enable you work remotely?
11) If there is a choice, would you like to use your own mobile equipment (BYOD) to do your job? Why?
12) Are you aware of any issues if you use your own mobile devices for work?

Area for improvement on flexible working

13) In what way could the experience be improved on flexible working either by yourself or the employer?

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