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IMPACT OF DIGITALIZATION ON EMPLOYEES' WORK LIFE BALANCE IN CORPORATE

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: Digitalization, Work Life Balance, HR Policies, Employee Engagement, Organizational culture, Leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Work and family life have to be in balance to build work life balance, but the increased employment of mothers, rising family hours of work, today's service intensive globalizing economy, and the trend toward long work hours for some and inadequate family income have been more problematic. More and odd working hours leads both work and personal lives are under stress.

Digital technological advancement in the form of smart phones, email, social networking, etc. - are fundamentally changing our relationship to work. Digital technologies enable us to be connected permanently.

How do digital technologies affect our work-life balance?

Workplace has been drastically changed in using digital technologies from remote working style. The first concerns about their effect on our work-life balance appeared almost a decade ago. All traditional kind of organizations were deeply affected by this change as employees, mainly executives, became reachable beyond traditional working hours. Digital technology, like a permanent mail connection and the intrusion of working tools in the personal and family space, became a stress factor. Now to overcome this problem, some companies started to experiment with solutions, such as "one night per week with no email or SMS." And it proved successful, with increased motivation and efficiency.

Digitalization refers to the use and integration of new technologies into everyday life, across all industries and sectors. It is a combination 0f connecting and combining of physical and digital things in new ways, and many consider it to be one of the defining characteristics of modern life.

Transformation happened in the workings of our society including the way that it is structured and the way it communicates due to digitalization. All aspect of life is increasingly shifting to digital communication and media infrastructures.

Digitalization is also reshaping all aspects of the working lifestyle and environment. Technological advancements lead to the way of overcoming traditional barriers imposed by geography, time, and IT access. It is increasingly use of work approaches such as telecommuting, distributed teams, online work, and even entirely virtual companies, meaning that businesses and employees are empowered with newfound freedom and flexibility to work

Digitalization encourages productivity. Productivity can be increased and be efficient if people have solid, uninterrupted time to get work done. Due to easy internet access to employees, they are forced to chase, those periods of continuous concentration and activity are interrupted.

PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Digitalization drastically affects the way in which we combine work and personal time in the employee's perspective. Digital tools have become a huge part of our daily personal lives, employees can be more efficient and flexible, fitting work around their personal lifestyle and routine.

Therefore, work and home life are increasingly mixed. Always bring busy in personal calls at work and sending work e-mails at home after hours is the norm – a socially accepted practice. Flexibility and interconnected relationship between work and home is almost unavoidable, especially in international business. Employees are expected to be highly organized - seamlessly managing work and home simultaneously. For many companies, the need for employees to be available at unusual, once unsociable, personal hours is an unspoken expectation. It is no longer acceptable to simply switch off the server in the evening or use one's 'right to be unavailable'. This study will find the impact of digitalization on the productivity of employees

Organizations which has digital working environment take advantage of cross boarder communication with people often working different schedules in multiple time zones. Being at work is no longer defined by a designated location, but by attention to a task.

The tools alone will not digitalize a business. Only providing access to the technology is not enough, there is a need for companies to adapt processes accordingly. For example, an effective digitalization strategy needs to be introduced and clear boundaries need to be defined to ensure employee happiness, passion, and support.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work life balance has appeared as a major theme during the last two decades, which observed a considerable Escalation of work caused by economic uncertainty, organizational restructuring, and increase in business Competition. According to assessment data tells that the stress on employees to work longer hours under inflexible work schedules is ever increasing.

It is remarkable that employee's awareness of Condition of Work Life varies based on demographic and organizational variables. Administrators understanding of this perception would help them to work on improving the Quality of Work Life.

Batt and Valcour (2000) explored data from dual-career couples found through seven large employers in upstate New York. They uncovered that work pattern characteristics were strong prognosticators of work-family conflicts, and the strongest predictors of employees' control or ability to integrate work and family demands. Expertise responsibilities, adaptable technologies, and long work hours were associated with significantly higher work-family conflicts.

Dalton and Mesch (1990) evaluated the non-attendance and turnover of employees in two divisions of one company: one with variable scheduling and one not including. Absenteeism fell significantly among employees eligible for variable planning, but turnover was not affected.

Christensen and Staines, 1990; **Dunham et al.,** 1987; **Pierce and Newstrom**, 1983; Pierce, et al., 1989 these all researches have also found inadequate or no support for the relationship between accommodating scheduling guidelines and turnover or organizational commitment.

Bailyn, 1989 associated a structures design group working from home, with scheduling flexibility, to a related position-based group, found the home based, flexible group more likely to keep up their competences coaching and less expected to imagine leaving the company.

Grover and Crooker (1995) studied multiple family-responsive policies together and found that impact of these strategies such as parental leave, flexible schedule and child care assistance on employees with contact to more of these aids exhibited greater structural promise and lower intention to quit. It supported the impression that commercial provision of programs symbolizes concern for employees, thereby positively influencing long-term attachment.

Rice (1985) investigated the association between work satisfaction and Quality of people's lives. He suggested that work experiences and outcomes can affect person's Quality of life, both directly and implicitly through their influences on family interactions, leisure activities and levels of health and energy.

Raghvan (1978), highlighted the significance for employee's participation in management which is implemented in undertakings, establishments, or other organizations and any industry is underscored by Constitution of India. Apart from improved working conditions in the organization for the employees, there are ample evidence to highlight the implication of autonomy and participation at work to foster the meaning to work.

Sirota (1973) that underutilization of worker's skill and abilities cause low Quality of Work Life and suggested job enrichment program to correct the problems of worker's skill and abilities.

Perrons, 2003, pp. 68-72; **Simpson**, 2000; **White et al.**, 2003:- To respond to the new conditions, organizations demand higher performance and commitment from their employees, which is translated into expectations for working longer and for prioritizing work over personal life.

Parasuraman and Simmers, 2001; **Hardy and Adnett**, 2002; **Felstead et al.**, 2002, stated that there are still many important issues that ought to be addressed within the subject of work-life balance. Work-life balance has been mainly judged to relate to individuals, especially women, who are in corporate employment and have family obligations even though not considered closely.

Wise and Bond, 2003: - This study told that because of narrowness in the consideration of work-life balance, pertinent organizational actions are mostly oriented towards the implementation of "family- friendly" policies.

Cully et al., 1999:- This survey showed that a substantially higher proportion of employed men than employed women in the United Kingdom work "long hours" and empirical evidence suggests that men were experiencing lower work-life balance than their female counterparts.

Parasuraman and Simmers, (2001), found that it is not only family obligations that constitute an issue in work-life balance. Any types of activities (e.g. hobbies, time with friends) that the individual desires to pursue outside one's work obligations pertain to work-life balance.

Survey research by Department of Trade and Industry, 2004:- It indicated that more than half of British employees considered that a better work-life balance was necessary in order to pursue their interests in arts and to engage in sports activities. In other recent definitions of work-life balance, approach work life balance as referring to the ability of individuals, regardless of age or gender, to find a way to allow

them to merge work responsibilities with non-work responsibilities, activities and aspirations.

Felstead et al., 2002: - work-life balance is an issue that pertains to all individuals who are in paid work, even irrespective of whether they have family obligations or not.

Kim Washington (2005) suggested that if employee does not receive support early on the job, they will try to obtain it in another place. She also says Valuable Employee Retention Approaches with a specific vision will help to create wholesome workplaces in which everyone is awarded with opportunities for growth, learning and to make contributions to important corporate goals.

Baral (2009) defined the range and operated the coverage of work-life balance practices in some of the leading organizations in India. Based on this study, research suggests the Indian organizations must do a lot to treat work-life balance practices as strategic aspect of organizational performance.

Ebaugh, (1988) & **Burke** (2006) argues that all individuals have several roles - based identities, each of which subscribes to different rules.

Sayah, 2013 spoke about the pervasive character of digitalization and the effects this may have on these boundaries , arguing that the increasing use of various digitalization influence the ways in which individuals manage the boundaries that separate their various personal and work-related roles .

MacCormick et al. (2012) stated that the use of smartphones may give rise to new boundaries or may also render existing boundaries permeable. Recent literature exposes that it is to a large extent personal experience that characterizes the influence that digitalization has own boundaries and on work life balance. Much of this recent research literature has taken the case of teleworkers to examine whether, and the extent to which, digitalization, along with the benefits they offer, such as increased flexibility, influence boundaries between different domains.

Hilbrecht et al. (2013) highlight that (a) the flexible, digitalization based environment of teleworkers requires an additional need to contain work time and space; (b) family and availability for children often takes priority; and (c) the importance of leisure is diminished.

Sayah (2013) takes issue with that view contending that folks cannot be classified as 'integrators' (those merging the domains of work and personal life) and 'segmentation' (those maintaining clearer boundaries between different domains).

MacCormick et al., 2012 In general, there are mixed views surrounding the role of mobile telephony for WLB. On the one hand, mobile devices—such as the BlackBerry—promise increased work productivity due to their offering the possibility to engage in various activities from different locations.

Ruppel et al. (2013) begin to explain individuals' relationships with digitalization within their selected organization. They show that among the global virtual team members, on whom they based their study, senior members prioritized digitalization that simply met the task requirements while protecting their WLB, over digitalization that would bring more satisfactory work results.

Koch et al. (2012) recognize that work life boundaries are oftentimes blurred in our era of high connectivity. They argue that use of specific digitalization that permeate the boundaries between personal and work-related activities creates positive emotions that in turn lead to a sense of well-being and increase organizational commitment.

Richardson and Benbunan-Fich (2011) assert that work connectivity is higher after -hours for those who have wireless enabled devices (WEDs), though specific alongside with also organizational factors were found to play a role in this.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses primary data collected from a small survey done on the employees of different industries making the use of digitalization at various level. The focus of the survey was to determine the amount, type, and influence of digitalization use on a randomly representative sample of white-collar employees. All individuals interviewed for this survey (n = 100) self-identified as full-time workers. Digitalization was defined as computer, internet, email, instant messaging, or cell phone use. Our analytic sample includes all respondents who indicated that they use some form of digitalization and excludes cases with missing data from the analysis, resulting in an analytic sample of 71 workers.

We used Google docs to do the survey and SPSS to produce our estimates.

Measures Dependent Variables:

Perceived employee productivity is measured through a single question that asks respondents, "How much, if at all, have technologies such as the internet, email and mobile phones, instant messaging improved your ability to do your job?" The responses range from 1 (a lot) to 4 (not at all). This variable is recoded as a dichotomous variable where 1 indicates improvement in productivity ("some," or "a lot") and 0 indicates little to no increase in productivity.

Perceived employee distresses measured through a single item which asks, "How much, if at all, have technologies such as the internet, email, cell phones, instant messaging increased stress in your job?" The responses ranged from 1 (a lot) to 4 (not at all). This variable is recoded as a dichotomous variable where 1 indicates an increase in distress ("some," or "a lot") and 0 indicates little or no increase in distress.

Key Independent Variables: Digitalization-Based Work Practices.

- **Digitalization**-facilitated Work Extension is measured using two index variables that tap work extension due to email or phone use. Asked question to respondents about checking the work-related email on: 1) weekends; 2) vacations; 3) before work; 4) after work; 5) when you are sick; 6) when running errands?" Responses range from 1 (often), to 4 (never). Responses were recoded so that higher numbers indicated greater work extension and summed together to form an index (6 = no email-related work extension; 24 = high email work extension). Respondents were also asked an identical set of questions about phone use. This general index of work extension combines all measures of email and phone use outside of work (12 = low work extension; 48 = high work extension).
- **Quantifying the Digitalization**-Teleworking is concerned with responses regarding two questions: 1)"Has using email changed the amount of time you spend" specifically working from home, and 2) working at places other than the office and at home?" Responses for both questions are: 1) yes, increased; 2) yes, decreased; 3) no, has not changed the amount of time I spend doing these things." These variables were recoded so that respondents who do not use work email are grouped in the third comparison category (no change). -Based Network Expansion is measured using responses to a single item: "How much, if at all, have technologies such as the Internet, email, cell phones, instant messaging expanded the number of people you communicate with?" Responses are: 1) not at all; 2) only a little; 3) some; 4) a lot. This variable was recoded so that higher numbers correspond to greater levels of network expansion (1= no network expansion to 4 = a lot of network expansion).
  - A last set of variables captures the role of digitalization in effectively accomplishing a series of specific workplace tasks—globally referred to as digitalization-Based Task Completion. Question was asked to respondents: "Which is the most appropriate way to handle the situations:
    - Arrange meetings/appointments.
    - edit/review documents.
    - ask questions about work issues.
    - deal with sensitive issues.
    - bring a problem to your supervisor?"

From this, we created a series of five binary variables that capture whether a task (e.g., arranging meetings) is best accomplished in person (0) versus using DIGITALIZATION (1).

For measuring the Job Satisfaction, respondents were asked question about how much satisfied they were with job. The responses ranged from 1 (completely satisfied) to 4 (completely dissatisfied). This was recoded as a binary variable to reflect those that are generally satisfied (1) and those that are generally dissatisfied (0).

Job Autonomy is measured with a single item which asks, "I have a lot to say about what happens in my job." Responses range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Job Advancement is also measured using a single item. Question was asked to respondent "I have opportunities for advancement in my job." Responses range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Response scales for both Job Autonomy and Job Advancement were reversed so higher numbers correspond to higher levels of agreement.

Job Complexity is measured using responses to four items: 1) job requires a high level of skill 2) job requires creativity 3) job requires the things to do frequently 4) job requires abstract knowledge about the ideas behind work. The responses for these questions range from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The variables were recoded so that higher numbers correspond to higher levels of agreement (except for the question that asks, "My job requires me to do the same thing over and over"). The final measure is an index that sums across these four items (4 = low job complexity to 20 = high job complexity).

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 about Destress and Productivity (*at the end of the paper*) provides descriptive statistics for the analytic sample.

Fig.1

About a third of these workers report an increase in distress that they believe is connected to digitalization, while more than two-thirds report that their productivity has increased because of digitalization.

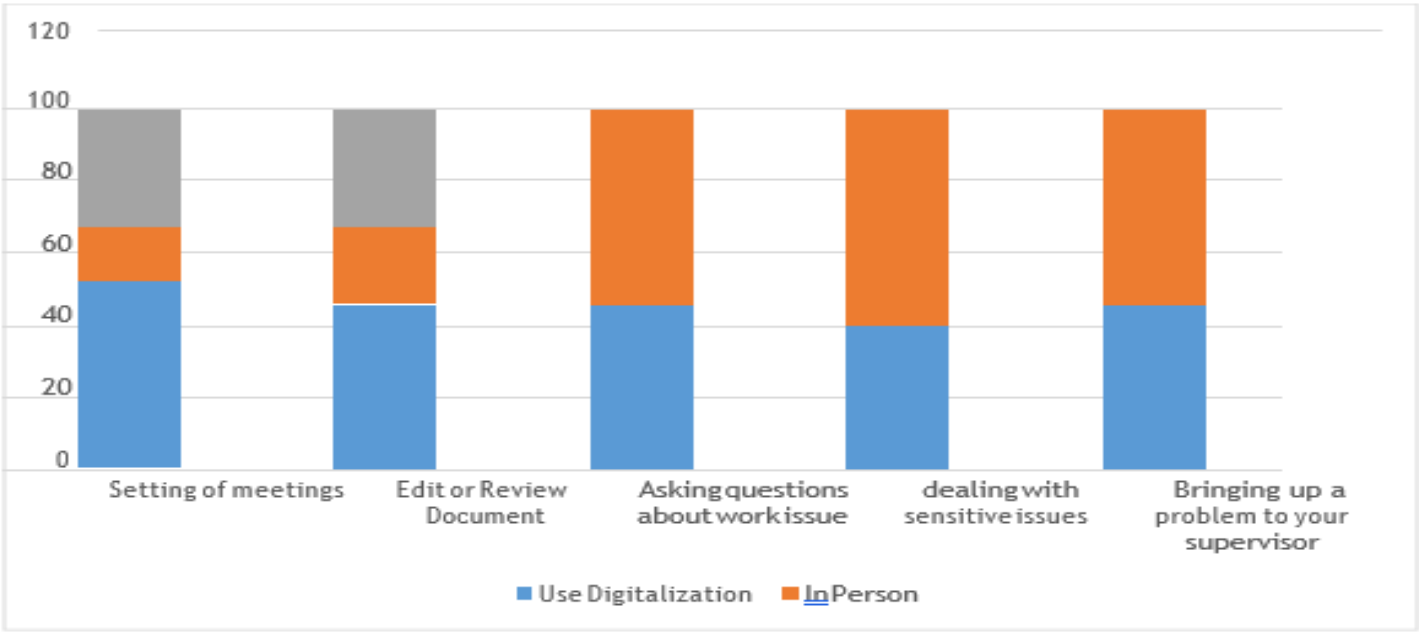
Thus, a sense that digitalization is connected to productivity is more prevalent than the sense that use is stressful in this sample of

workers. We can also get a sense of how prevalent digitalization-based work practices are in a recent cross-section of the workforce. The average work extension score is about 22, which suggests that using email and phones to access work outside of standard times and places (e.g. at home due to sickness or on holiday) is pervasive. In Fact, only 13% of our sample details certainly not using the phone or email to check in with work on vacations, before or after work, etc. Most contemporary workers appear to use technology to communicate with work in places that used to be outside of the reach of work (like running errands).

Highly respondents report that digitalization has not changed the amount of time they consume telecommuting. Less than a fifth of the workforce (18%) reports an increase in the time they devote using equipment to facilitate working at home or someplace else. Thus, expansions in digitalization-based telecommuting (from home or other locations) are not the norm.

Respondents do agree that digitalization is influencing the size of their work-related networks. When asked to rank their grid enlargement on a scale of 1 (not at all) to 4 (a lot), the mean response is 3, which suggests that most workers have seen an increase in the scope of their work-related communications.

Fig2. Analysis about "Use of Digitalization for various task"



Finally, the measures for digitalization-facilitated task completion indicate a strong preference to use digitalization to complete specific work tasks. for example, 52% of respondents use digitalization (email, phone, IM, or text message) to arrange meetings or appointments (versus 14% who prefer to do these things in person and 34% who do not use digitalization at work), and 46% use digitalization to edit or review documents (versus 21% in person and 33% who do not use digitalization). However, some work tasks are still primarily attended to in person, including asking questions about work issues (45%), dealing with sensitive issues (59%), and bringing up a problem to your supervisor (54%).

Demographically, just under half of the respondents are female (47%), and the average employee age is 40, 41% of respondents have a college degree or better. The average number of hours worked per week is 41 and the largest income grouping is those that make less than 10,000,00 per year (35%), followed closely by those who make 10,00,000 to under 15,000 (27%). Most of the respondents are employed by someone else (88%) versus 12% who report being self-employed. The sample largely works in the private sector (74%) compared to 26% that work in other sectors.

Job satisfaction, job autonomy, and job complexity measures were all high for this sample. For example, 90% of respondents reported they were "completely" or "mostly" satisfied with their job. The mean for job autonomy is 3.7 (on a five-point scale) and the mean for job advancement opportunities is 3.4 (on a 5-point scale). Average Job complexity is 14, which suggest many respondents are in jobs that require greater levels of creativity and skill.

The major contribution of this paper is to move beyond global measures of the frequency of general Internet or computer use to better understand the context that underlies work-related digitalization in today's workplaces.

We find that some level of work-related email and phone use outside of traditional work boundaries (e.g., work extension) is common, but increased time spent working outside the office (e.g., digitalization-based telecommuting) is not. In addition, we find that, on average, employees report expanded work-related networks that are supported by digitalization. The role of digitalization in facilitating network expansion is well documented (e.g., *Kennedy et al.*, 2008), so this is not surprising. Perhaps more informative are the patterns that document whether employees complete a range of common work tasks in person or using digitalization. Here we find that using digitalization to facilitate coordination and editing tasks is common, but that many employees still ask questions, or raise sensitive issues or problems in person, rather than via communications technology. Taken as a whole, we believe these descriptive patterns describe work environments in which technology is augmenting more routinized tasks but is not replacing the role of in- person communication in some key work contexts.

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CONCLUSION

Healthy work-life balance is a difficult challenge even in the best of times. Digital things help in working life but give pressure also. Today's portable electronic devices have obliterated the line between work and home. Those days are gone when leaving the office or shop meant leaving our work behind. Today employees are available to their supervisors, coworkers, and customers around the clock.

The connection of enhanced workloads with technology that keeps us constantly connected to our jobs finds an increasing number of workers feeling overwhelmed, discouraged, and depleted.

In 2006, 53% of employees felt they had a good work-life balance, according to a Corporate Executive Board (CEB) report. That number fell to 30% in the first quarter of 2009, the CEB reported. Now a days almost all employees are so busy in making a life, but they have no time to live a life. After that only 5% employees are getting good work life balance otherwise almost sectors have imbalance between personal and professional life.

In divergence, abundant studies have shown the most productive employees are well-rounded professionals with full and well-adjusted lives - both in and out of the workplace. As Well, the most successful companies are those that foster employee health and well-being while enhancing organizational performance and productivity.

Today work-life balance ranks as one of the most important workplace attributes; second only to payment, and people who feel they have a better work-life balance tend to work 21% harder than employees who feel overworked.

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Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (N = 71)

Variables in the Analysis	%/Mean	Std. Err.
Dependent Variables		
% Increased Distress (1= "a lot" or "some")	0.33	
% Increased Productivity (1 = "a lot" or "some")	0.69	
Digitalization based work practices		
Work Extension (low = 12 to high = 48)	21.83	0.37
% Increase in Telecommuting	0.18	
% Decrease in Telecommuting 0.06	0.06	
Network Expansion (1 = low to 4 = high)	2.99	0.05
% Arrange Meetings--In Person	0.14	
% Arrange Meetings—Digitalization	0.52	
% Edit/Review Docs--In Person	0.21	
% Edit/Review Docs—Digitalization	0.46	
% Ask Questions--In Person	0.45	
% Ask Questions—Digitalization	0.22	
% Sensitive Issues--In Person	0.59	
% Sensitive Issues—Digitalization	0.07	
% Problems to Supervisor--In Person	0.54	
% Problems to Supervisor—Digitalization	0.12	
Total Work Tasks--In Person (0 to 5) 1.94 0	1.94	0.07
Total Work Tasks—Digitalization	1.39	0.06
Control Variables		
Age (years; 18 - 88)	39.60	0.50
% female 0.47	0.47	
% Diploma 0.29	0.29	
% Some College 0.29	0.29	
% College/Advanced Degree 0.35	0.35	
Average Weekly Work Hours (1 - 61)	40.82	0.54
% Income less than 30K	0.35	
% Income 31 - 49K	0.27	
% Income 50 - 74K	0.18	
% Income 75K or greater	0.20	
% in professional job	0.22	
% in managerial/executive job	0.09	
% in other	0.31	
% in service	0.18	
% Self Employed	0.12	
% with Large Private Employer	0.31	
% with Medium Private Employer	0.16	
% with Small Private Employer	0.27	
% with Other (Govt/Non-Profit/Other)	0.26	
% Reporting high job satisfaction	0.90	
Job Autonomy (1 = low to 5 = high)	3.67	0.05
Job Advancement (1 = low to 5 = high)	3.35	0.05
Job Complexity (4 = low to 20 = high)	13.76	0.14