Sulakshana de Alwis*

A CONCEPTUAL MODEL ON HOW TECHNOLOGY ASSISTED SUPPLEMENTAL WORK LEADS TO WORK-LIFE CONFLICT: ENTANGLEMENTS OF ICTS WITH WORK-LIFE EXPERIENCES

ABSTRACT

Empirical evidence suggests that technology-assisted supplemental work is becoming more prevalent in modern workplaces. Employees are often expected to be available to work even after working hours via Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) devices, which leads to work-life conflict. Using three recent empirical studies and relevant literature, this conceptual paper argues that ICTs alone cannot contribute to the employees' work-life conflict because the work-life conflict in today's hyper-connected world results from the constitutive intertwining between ICTs and people's choices, beliefs, norms, and behaviors. Hence, to understand the work-life experiences in modern-day workplaces, it is vital to study the mutual interdependencies between ICT and social elements. Therefore, it is proposed to view contemporary employees' work-life experiences as socio-material assemblages. Depending on the nature of the intertwining between ICTs and social elements, these socio-material assemblages create different experiences for different people. Using this socio-material perspective, the proposed conceptual model calls for more research on technology-assisted supplemental work and work-life conflict. Future research in this area could focus on the role of organizational norms, organizational and national culture, gender norms, segmentation preferences, boundary management tactics, and policies to manage after-hours work via ICTs. The model is presented with possible research suggestions and recommendations for theory and practice.

KEYWORDS: *Work-family conflict, Technology-Assisted Supplemental Work (TASW), Work-life boundaries, ICTs at the workplace, Sociomateriality*

1. INTRODUCTION

Information communication technologies (ICTs) are becoming more pervasive in human life more than ever. ICTs such as smartphones, portable computers, the Internet, e-mail applications, and messaging services have opened up limitless communication possibilities that can connect people anywhere. The pervasiveness of these technologies has become an integral part of the daily lives of many individuals (Ollier-Malaterre et al., 2019). As a result, people now need to manage multiple communication channels and audiences simultaneously. For example, it is unsurprising that a person receives a text message from their part-

* Sulakshana De Alwis, Abertay University, School of Business, Law and Social Sciences, Division of Accounting, Business and Management, United Kingdom; Stockholm University, Department of Computer and Systems Sciences (DSV), Sweden, e-mail: sulakshana@dsv.su.se

ner while emailing a client on the same smartphone. At the same time, they might receive a notification from a social media app that a friend has commented on a recently uploaded photo. These familiar experiences show us that the presence of ICTs in people's lives can no longer be ignored. It is becoming increasingly important to understand the role of ICTs in various areas of human life.

Advances in ICT capabilities have also transformed the world of work. Indeed, ICTs have increased the flexibility of work owing to high-speed Internet connections, smartphones, and supported software constellations that have enabled employees to work from anywhere at any time (Belkin et al., 2020; Wright et al., 2014). Thus, traditional physical workplaces are gradually being integrated into virtual work environments (e.g., intranets) that allow employees to connect with their workspace from anywhere at any time. Although ICTs have allowed employees to be flexible regarding when and where they work, they have also made employees available for work without any boundaries or restrictions (Belkin et al., 2020; Mazmanian et al., 2013). Hence, the role of ICTs in the work-life experience seems paradoxical. Worley and Gutierrez (2020) explain this as a flexibility availability paradox. The flexibility of ICTs empowers employees to decide when and where to work. Still, simultaneously ICTs increase the pressure on employees to be available for work from anywhere and at any time. A new one has replaced the old ideal worker norm. Today, ideal workers are expected to be available anytime via ICTs (Kring, 2020; Worley & Gutierrez, 2020). Such work assignments are often referred to in the literature as Technology Assisted Supplemental Work (TASW). Although studies have been performed to understand the impact of ICTs on work-life conflict, the evidence is still inconclusive. Some studies show that ICTs increase flexibility by decreasing work-life conflict (Adisa et al., 2017; Golden & Geisler, 2007), while other studies claim that ICTs increase work-life conflict due to increased availability and TASW (Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007; Cecez-Kecmanovic et al., 2014; Wright et al., 2014).

To understand these paradoxical experiences of employees, it is essential to understand the role of ICTs in organizational discourse. Although many empirical studies have uncovered how ICTs affect employees' work-life experiences, many of these studies have assumed that technology is an exogenous force that independently affects human life (Adisa et al., 2017; Boswell & Olson-Buchanan, 2007; Carvalho et al., 2021; Eichberger et al., 2021). However, it is crucial to understand that technology alone cannot affect human life. The impact of technology depends on how it is reflected in human feelings, beliefs, and ac-

tions, individually and collectively (Orlikowski, 2007). To highlight these interconnections between ICTs and human elements, Orlikowski (2007) introduced the theory of socio-materiality, which states that technology alone does not affect human life. The constitutive intertwining of technology and human life creates unique human experiences. Therefore, the socio-material view could be used as an ideal theoretical underpinning to understand the role of ICTs in people's paradoxical work-life experiences. This knowledge is vital to help organizations and employees devise work-life balance strategies at both the organizational and individual levels.

Accordingly, this conceptual paper uses insights from socio-material theory to develop an integrated model to explain how ICTs have become interwoven with organizational, social, and individual elements. This conceptual model will facilitate understanding the role of such interweavings in developing new workplace norms that keep employees connected to the organization even after regular working hours and how such norms might affect employees' work-life experiences. Moreover, this article presents important research propositions that can be empirically tested in future studies. In addition, the model will help practitioners develop better organizational strategies and policies to manage the TASW expectations of their managers while enabling a better balance between their employees' work and non-work lives. The remainder of this conceptual paper is organized as follows: the next section discusses how the model is conceptualized based on empirical findings of the three critical studies and suggestions for future research. The following section discusses the theoretical contributions of this model, and the final section discusses the practical implications of the model.

2. CONCEPTUALISATION

Conceptual papers focus on developing logical arguments about how a particular phenomenon operates. Hence, a conceptual paper uses logical argumentation rather than empirical testing to discuss how various constructs relate to each other. In such papers, it is essential to develop logical arguments based on sound theoretical and empirical evidence gathered from previous literature (Jaakkola, 2020). Accordingly, the conceptual model outlined in this paper is developed mainly based on the findings of three empirical studies conducted by the author in collaboration with his research supervisors (Alwis & Hernvall, 2020; De Alwis et al., 2022a, 2022b). All three studies were conducted as part of a doctoral thesis to investigate the role of ICTs in work-life boundary experiences. Hence, each

study is linked to the other and developed around the main research problem of the doctoral thesis, i.e., to understand how ICTs, social, organizational, and individual factors are intertwined in the work-life boundary experiences of working people and how such intertwinement might lead to their work-life conflict or create an imbalance between work and other life domains.

Accordingly, Alwis and Hernvall (2020) studied how work/non-work segmentation preferences might affect work-life conflict in technology-intensive workplaces. The results of this study revealed that the perceived intensity of ICTs mediates the relationship between segmentation preferences and work-life conflict. The mediating role of the perceived ICTs suggests that ICTs alone do not appear to be an exogenous factor affecting individuals' work-life experiences. Accordingly, the author conducted a more in-depth analysis of the following two studies to understand the underlying reasons for the above findings.

The second paper examined the intertwining of ICTs with work-life experiences by examining employee perspectives on managing the boundaries between work and life (De Alwis et al. (2022a). This study explicitly used the socio-material lens to understand the intertwining of ICTs in work-life boundary situations. The results showed that socio-cultural factors are intertwined with ICTs and reconfigure work-life boundary experiences. Specifically, it was found that cultural values such as power distance, collectivism, and gender norms can influence after-hours work through ICTs. It was also found that individuals manipulate the technology and social context to set their preferred boundaries.

The third study examined employers' perspectives on after-hours work expectations. A group of senior managers in two organizations was interviewed. The socio-material analysis revealed that TASW (Technology Assisted Supplemental Work) norms are typical in organizations with intense competition. Top management believes longer working hours are necessary to serve their customers better (De Alwis et al., 2022b). However, these norms lead to negative consequences for those who do not comply, such as punishment and negative performance appraisals. The findings of this study also demonstrate gendered norms for after-hours work that may be discriminatory to female employees in the workplace.

By synthesizing these significant empirical findings, the authors/researchers have developed a conceptual model that discusses how ICTs are intertwined in social, organizational, and individual factors and how these intertwinements promote TASW in organizations and work-life conflict among employees

(see Figure 1). In this model, ICTs are operationally defined as hardware and software constellations such as smartphones, portable computers, the Internet, email, messaging apps, etc., enabling continuous connectivity between individuals. Organizational and social factors represent all social and organizational factors, including customer expectations, top management ideologies, gender norms, cultural values, and policies that affect the TASW of an organization, while individual factors represent individual differences that affect how people experience TASW as employees. These could include gender, boundary preferences, boundary management tactics, etc.

As mentioned earlier, the authors/researchers believe that the role of ICTs in work-life experiences is essentially socio-material. Therefore, the model presents technology not as an independent/exogenous factor but as a factor constitutively interwoven with social, organizational, and individual factors. Hence, this model should be viewed as a socio-material assemblage. Sociomaterial assemblages represent a continuous mutual intertwining between technology and social elements implemented in practice (Leonardi, 2013). In other words, the relationships discussed in the model become irrelevant when technology is absent, but technology alone does not lead to the relationships discussed in the model. Therefore, the relationships discussed in the model should not be viewed strictly as causal linkages but as reciprocal linkages that come into play in practice.
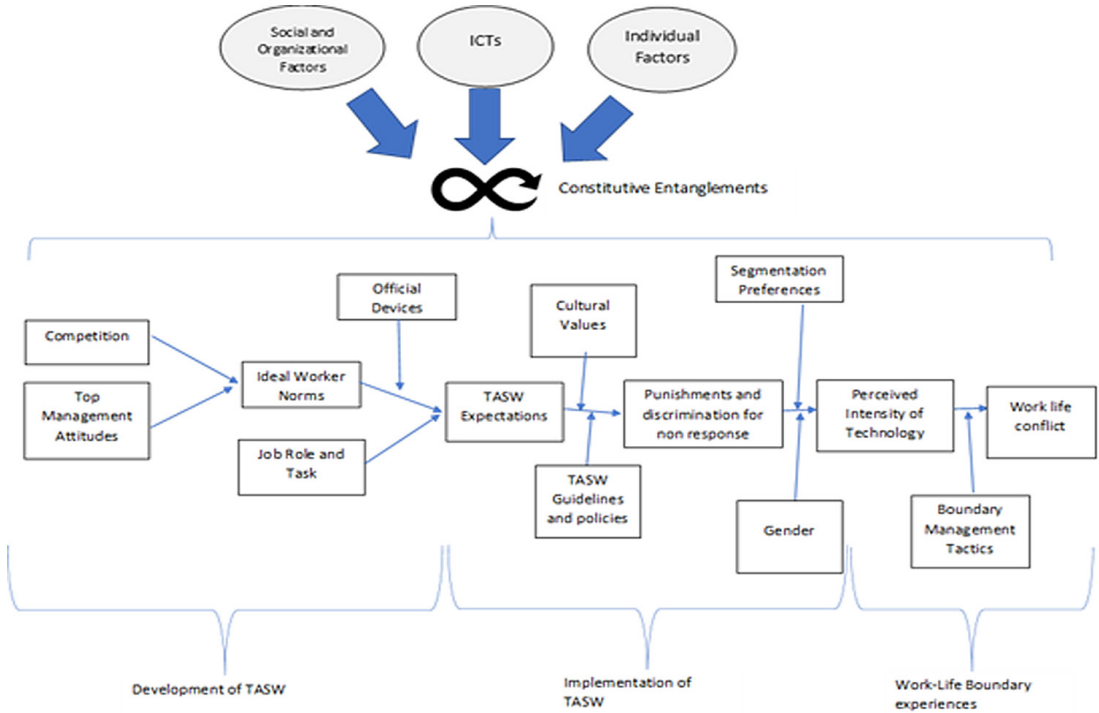
FIGURE 1. A conceptual model depicting how Technology Assisted Supplemental Work leads to work-family conflict
Source: Author

2.1. Reconfigured ideal worker norms

As ICTs have become intertwined with the work norms of organizations, it has become common to expect their employees to be available at the workplace anytime and anywhere (Eichberger et al., 2021). Fenner and Renn (2004) explain that due to advances in ICTs, employees are often expected to respond to workplace communications even after standard working hours. This extension of work beyond the workplace and working hours is called Technology Assisted Supplemental Work (TASW). These after-hours work requirements can involve colleagues, superiors, and external parties such as customers and suppliers. However, this type of work is generally not recognized in formal employment contracts between employees and the organization. Nevertheless, this additional work may be used to define the behaviors of an ideal worker.

De Alwis et al. (2022a) and De Alwis et al. (2022b) illustrate that ICTs have been incorporated into corporate work norms. The norms that define the ideal worker have been updated with technological advances, and ideal workers are expected to be available to work even after standard working hours (i.e., TASW).

As noted earlier, the limitless connectivity of ICTs has enabled such norms within organizational settings. Nevertheless, it is not technology that has created the new ideal worker norms but the beliefs and expectations of organizations' leaders and customers, which have led to the rise of such norms (De Alwis et al., 2022b). Today, competition is globalized, and customers are often presented with multiple options.

As a result, customers expect the organizations they deal with to provide superior service available anytime and anywhere (Jahanshahi et al., 2019; Pehrsson, 2011). In addition, the development of ICTs has also changed consumers' expectations requiring service providers to be able to respond to customers' needs anytime, anywhere via ICTs. Therefore, to remain competitive in the market, organizations must be highly responsive to consumer needs (Karampela et al., 2020; Nour, 2012; Pehrsson, 2011). These expectations, in turn, force organizations to continue working after regular hours. For example, if a client has an urgent request, relevant employees must respond to such requests even after standard working hours (Eichberger et al., 2021).

Moreover, if customer requirements are delayed, it will lead to dissatisfaction, and clients may switch

to another competitor (Nour, 2012). These responsive expectations of customers could lead business leaders to expect their employees to be there for customers after hours to serve customers and ensure business sustainability. Such beliefs would then spill over to lower levels of management, creating informal performance norms that require TASW (De Alwis et al., 2022b). Top management's ideology of responsiveness to customers stems from the market's competitiveness. However, their decision to respond to after-hour requests depends on their ideology regarding the work-life balance of their employees (Barber & Santuzzi, 2015; De Alwis et al., 2022b; Frederiksen et al., 2018). Suppose organizational leaders believe the employee's work-life balance is as important as responsiveness to customer needs. In that case, they may believe that after-hours work should be minimized in the organization. De Alwis et al. (2022b) found that in some organizations, the ideal worker is not defined based on TASW engagements but on delivering expected outcomes. In such organizations, leadership gives equal priority to ensuring the work-life balance of their employees as they do to serve their customers effectively. These findings also reflect the constitutive intertwining of ICTs with workplace culture and highlight that even in organizations with the same ICT capabilities, the way ICTs influence work norms depends on leadership ideologies.

P1:   *The competitive nature of businesses in a globalized world forces business leaders to be highly responsive to customers, developing an always-available ideal worker norm.*

2.2. TASW expectations

TASW expectations represent management's expectations for additional after-hours work via ICTs. Expectations are outcomes of ideal worker norms, and when norms are embedded in organizational culture, managers expect related behaviors from their subordinates (Frederiksen et al., 2018; Hammer et al., 2004). De Alwis et al. (2022a) found that employees in the companies studied are expected to be fully available to work even after hours. These findings were also confirmed by the managers in De Alwis et al. (2022b). The managers stated that they expect employees to be available whenever they are needed by the organization when ideal worker norms support these expectations. These expectations are often communicated directly or indirectly to the employees during the hiring process or team meetings. Even if these expectations are not formally acknowledged or documented, once they are communicated, managers expect their

subordinates to comply with the after-hour work requirements (De Alwis et al., 2022a, 2022b).

Further, these expectations are reinforced if employees have been provided with ICT devices at the organization's expense. Such ICT devices are named "official devices." When employees are provided with such facilities, the managers believe they should be available without restrictions. However, when employees use their own ICT devices, they do not demand the same level of availability. These findings also confirm the socio-material nature of TASW expectations; the same ICT devices have different meanings depending on their owners, impacting how employees should behave in their workplaces/homes.

It can also be observed that TASW expectations are more salient for some job roles than for others. Thus, TASW expectations are higher for some jobs than for others. This is particularly true for jobs that involve customer service and sales (De Alwis et al., 2022b). Due to the competitive nature of businesses, these jobs must respond to customer needs around the clock (De Alwis et al., 2022a, 2022b; Zhao et al., 2014). Therefore, even within the same organization, TASW expectations vary depending on the job role and the stakeholders with whom employees interact (De Alwis et al., 2022b). Even when employees use the same technological constellations, the need to work after hours using these technologies varies depending on job requirements. These insights also show that technology is constituted differently in the work-life experiences of employees, even in the same organization.

P2:   *Ideal worker norms and job roles lead to TASW expectations of managers from their subordinates.*
P2a: *TASW expectations would be further reinforced by ideal worker norms if organizations provided ICT devices to employees.*

2.3. Consequences of non-response

Although managers expect their employees to be available via ICTs, employees can accept or reject these expectations as they are not formally written into the employment contract. However, the findings of our studies have shown that if employees do not comply with the TASW expectations, managers will develop a negative impression of them as it violates the ideal worker norm. Managers monitor their subordinates' response levels through various technical means (e.g., delivery reports). However, it is essential to highlight that monitoring is a personal choice. If managers do not intend to do so, they may choose not to monitor

19

their subordinates' after-hour response levels. However, due to the intertwining of ICT skills with cultural values and personal preferences, such behaviors may be observed among managers. Accordingly, employees who do not respond are labeled as disloyal and uncommitted (De Alwis et al., 2022a, 2022b). This discriminatory impression leads managers to issue negative performance ratings to the non-responding employees, even when they are not formally required to respond to managers' TASW expectations (De Alwis et al., 2022b; Worley & Gutierrez, 2020). Sometimes, managers withdraw rewards and deny promotions for non-responsive employees as punishment (De Alwis et al., 2022b).

A study by De Alwis, Hernwall, and Adikaram (2022a) showed that accepting TASW expectations is stronger in collectivist and power-distance cultures. In power-distance cultures, people with authority are regarded as necessary, and subordinates do not challenge the authority of their superiors (Allen et al., 2020; Kailasapathy et al., 2014). Hence, in high power distance cultures, employees are expected to follow their superiors' orders without questioning them. Collectivist organizations further reinforce this belief because the workspace is considered the essential area of life in collectivist cultures, and people are expected to be loyal to their workgroup (Allen et al., 2020; Kailasapathy et al., 2014). These cultural values, in turn, encourage managers to enforce their after-hour expectations and punish non-compliance (De Alwis et al., 2022b).

In addition, managers' perceptions of gender norms have also been found to have discriminatory effects on female employees (De Alwis et al., 2022a, 2022b). In traditional cultures, women are expected to handle domestic responsibilities such as childcare and housework (Kailasapathy & Metz, 2012). In addition, women are not encouraged to communicate with non-family men at odd hours, such as at night (De Alwis et al., 2022a). Such gender norms may lead managers to believe that female employees are less suited for jobs that require TASW requirements (De Alwis et al., 2022a, 2022b). In addition, since male employees do not have such barriers, they tend to be more likely to meet TASW expectations than female employees. This difference makes managers assume that male employees are more capable than female ones. Such perceptions directly affect the career development of female employees compared to their male counterparts (De Alwis et al., 2022a). Given these facts, it is essential to note that these cultural values are not a result of ICTs, but rather that ICTs have intertwined with existing cultural norms in society and created a new experience for people.

However, it is important to note that if organizations have clear policies or guidelines on after-hour communications, the negative effect of non-response for TASW could decrease dramatically (De Alwis et al., 2022b). In such organizations, managers view TASW as non-mandatory, leaving it solely up to the employee to decide whether or not to respond. Clear policies will guide managers appropriately when contacting their subordinates via ICTs after hours. In addition, policies will control managers' punitive behaviors because they cannot interpret the TASW norms subjectively (ibid.). In turn, the policies could enable workers to draw boundaries between work and non-work domains without negatively impacting their career progression.

P3:   If employees do not respond to TASW expectations, their managers will implement punitive measures.

P3a: Punitive measures taken by managers would be more salient if the organizational culture holds power distant and collectivist values

P3b: Organisational policies or guidelines on TASW would control managers' punitive behaviors.

P3c: Female employees would experience more discrimination resulting from TASW expectations due to managers' gendered role assumptions.

2.4. Perceived intensity of ICTs

Managers' punitive behaviors towards non-responders of TASW will force employees to respond to managers' TASW expectations, even if they do not want to do so. Job security and career advancement are critical aspects in this regard. Employees will comply with their manager's TASW expectations if they feel that they will lose their jobs due to negative performance evaluations given by their managers (De Alwis et al., 2022b). Alwis and Hernvall's (2020) study showed that employees perceive that ICTs intensify work. This perception is more relevant to employees who prefer segmented boundaries between work and non-work domains (Alwis & Hernvall, 2020). Segmented boundaries mean employees prefer to keep their work and non-work domains at a distance. Such employees do not prefer to engage in work activities in non-work areas and vice versa (Kreiner et al., 2009). Notably, the intensity of ICTs is not the sole outcome of technological capabilities. The interweaving of different socio-cultural expectations, beliefs, and personal preferences creates the feeling that ICTs intensify work.

The perceived intensity of ICTs is higher for female employees than male employees because, as noted above, female employees could get increasingly marginalized due to the TASW expectations of

their managers (De Alwis et al., 2022a, 2022b). Hence, if female employees want to advance professionally, they typically must keep up with their managers' TASW expectations while adhering to societal gender norms. Under such circumstances, female employees may feel more strongly than male employees that ICT devices intensify their work (Alwis & Hernvall, 2020).

P4:   *Managers' TASW expectations increase the perceived intensity of ICTs in the workplace due to managers' punitive behaviors towards non-responders.*
P4a: *Employees who prefer segmented boundaries will perceive a higher intensity of ICTs in the workplace than employees who prefer integrated boundaries.*
P4b: *Female employees will perceive a higher intensity of ICTs in the workplace than male employees.*

2.5. Work-life conflict

Work-life conflict arises when work demands interfere with the successful completion of other life tasks and vice versa (Eby et al., 2005), and the impact of ICTs on work-life conflict is a topic that has been studied extensively in recent decades (Eby et al., 2005). However, the results of these studies have provided mixed results about the relationship between ICTs and work-life conflict. Some studies have found that ICTs reduce work-life conflict by increasing work flexibility regarding location and time (Bittman et al., 2009; Nam, 2014). However, other empirical studies have shown that ICT-induced blurring of boundaries between work and non-work domains can exacerbate work-life conflict due to limitless connectivity (Chen & Karahanna, 2014; Tennakoon, 2018). To rationalize these mixed results, this conceptual paper proposes that the perceived intensity of ICTs influences the work-life conflict level of employees. This proposition is supported by the results of an earlier study by the author (Alwis & Hernvall, 2020), which revealed that employees who do not perceive ICTs as intensifying their work may not perceive higher levels of work-life conflict. However, employees who recognise that ICTs actually intensify their work due to the blurring of boundaries between work and non-work domains would experience higher levels of work-life conflict than others.

Although the perceived intensity of ICTs increases the employees' work-life conflict, employees could manage ICTs at the individual level to overcome the boundaries between work and non-work domains. Boundary management tactics are often discussed in the literature as a strategy adopted by individuals to establish their preferred boundaries between work

and non-work domains (Kreiner et al., 2009). De Alwis et al. (2022a) found that employees use different boundary management tactics, such as task scheduling, configuring ICTs to overcome their TASW work, maintaining separate devices for work and personal life, and specifying personal obligations when interrupted after hours. Through these tactics, they seek to reduce the work-life conflict they experience due to the intensity of ICTs related to the TASW requirements of the organisation. In fact, boundary management is a skill that helps individuals to reduce the work-life conflict experienced due to TASW requirements of the organisations.

P5:   *The higher the perceived intensity of ICTs, the higher the work-life conflict experienced by employees.*
P5a: *The impact of perceived intensity of ICTs on work-life conflict is reduced if employees use boundary management tactics.*

3. THEORETICAL AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

The model and research propositions presented in this paper contribute to several work-life research advances by discussing Technology Assisted Supplemental work and the role of ICTs in work-life conflict. In today's workplace, ICTs have become a ubiquitous factor associated with almost every decision or choice we make in the workplace. Moreover, technology has enabled organisations to keep their employees connected to the workplace, blurring the boundaries between work and non-work domains. The proposed model extends the current empirical base by highlighting the role of ICTs in work-life boundary research. The study proposes that the assumption that technologies are absent from work-life experiences does not provide researchers with an accurate picture of the work-life boundary experiences as ICTs are ubiquitous in people's lives. Conversely, the assumption that ICTs can have an exogenous influence on work-life boundary experiences also seems to be problematic. ICTs alone do not have inherent properties to affect human lives. For example, a person has the choice to turn off their mobile phone if they wish to. Thus, the performance of ICTs depends on the person's choice to use it in day-to-day life. Therefore, the role of technology in employees' work boundary experiences such as TASW is essentially sociomaterial.

As already noted, the constitutive intertwining of ICTs with people's decisions, choices, beliefs, values, and behaviours in the work environment leads to different work-life experiences for different people

even when they use the same constellation of ICTs. In these interrelationships between ICTs and social elements, neither ICT nor social elements are given priority. Both play an equally important role in creating work-life experiences such as TASW in the workplaces. Ideal worker norms today, for example, expect committed employees to be available for work anytime, anywhere. Such norms are neither solely based on advanced ICT capabilities nor on the attitudes of organisations' top management. In fact, ICTs have been intertwined with leadership ideologies and organisational work norms, which support limitless availability. However, if leadership ideologies and organisational norms do not support after-hours work using ICTs, there will not be many TASW expectations in such organisations.

TASW is a result of the inextricable intertwining between ICTs, and social, organisational, and individual factors. Therefore, we cannot separate ICTs from the human elements surrounding that shape work-life experiences in today's technology-driven work environments. Both ICTs and human elements are interconnected by their mutual interdependencies in practice. For example, TASW is not only just an outcome of ICTs, nor is it a consequence of human decisions. TASW is an outcome of the interdependencies between ICTs and human elements. Moreover, the properties of the intertwining are context-dependent and acquired through its practice. Therefore, the same level of TASW may not be the same in all organisations, even if they use the same technological capabilities at work. Furthermore, TASW expectations may differ from one workgroup to another even within the same organisation. Thus, the present study suggests that researchers who study work-life experiences (e.g., TASW) and the boundaries between work and non-work should examine these sociomaterial assemblages more closely. Thus, empirical studies of work-life experiences today must be grounded in sociomaterial theory. Theoretical foundations such as work-life boundary theory should be integrated with sociomateriality, as such a theoretical approach will facilitate work-life researchers to find more interesting information about the work-life experiences of employees in today's technology-driven workplaces. In order to understand these sociomaterial relationships, researchers must move away from traditional positivist research methods involving work-life boundary studies. Instead, the present research proposes that traditional survey research be replaced with newer approaches, such as ethnographic studies or multimodal approaches, to examine these sociomaterial relationships. For example, an earlier study by the researchers used a workshop and vignette-based qualitative approach (Authors, 2022a), which facilitated the discovery of important insights into the interconnectedness of ICTs with cultural values.

Although there are studies that discuss TASW and its consequences (Carvalho et al., 2021; Eichberger et al., 2021; Mellner, 2016), there is a significant gap in the literature that addresses its antecedent issues. Understanding the antecedents will help researchers discuss why TASW exists in modern workplaces. This knowledge is critical to understanding the work-life conflict of employees. As indicated earlier, future research in this area can focus specifically on how customer expectations might contribute to employees' TASW expectations. Therefore, researchers studying work-life balance should combine the theories of customer expectations with work-life balance theories to conduct more focused empirical studies. These studies could focus on how ICTs can respond to customers faster while ensuring employees' work-life balance. In addition, there is a need for further studies on manager's perspectives on TASW in organisations. Thus, future studies could address why some organisational leaders encourage TASW and others do not. I suggest that studying the individual and group factors that might motivate organisational leaders to encourage or discourage TASW would be valuable in this regard.

The impact of cultural values on the development and management of TASW is another important area for future researchers to focus on. Organisational culture and national cultural values can be decisive factors in the development and management of TASW (De Alwis et al., 2022a, 2022b). This conceptual model highlighted how power distance and collectivist values in organisational culture could influence managers' response to non-responders and employees' acceptance of TASW. However, more in-depth studies are needed to understand how ICTs are intertwined with organisational culture. The conceptual model presented here also supports the research agenda proposed by Ollier-Malaterre et al. (2019), which aims to extend the current knowledge on work boundary management through the concept of digital cultural capital. Such an approach will allow researchers to uncover the social inequalities that may arise due to differences in skills and knowledge of technology management.

In addition, the model highlights the importance of examining how prevalent gender norms in society might affect the work-life experiences of female employees due to TASW expectations of the organisations. Although some studies have discussed gender roles in work-life boundary experiences, many of these studies have ignored the role played by ICTs in this regard (Ruppanner & Huffman, 2014; Yasir et al., 2019). Perhaps future research could use the concepts of digital cultural capital and gender norms to uncover the gender aspect of work-life boundary experienc-

es. Similarly, future studies could also focus on individual differences in boundary preferences, and the use of boundary management tactics that might lead to different perceptions of TASW and how such perceptions might affect the work-life conflict of employees.

Another important area that could add value to the current empirical base is TASW policy research. There seems to be a lack of research evidence on how TASW is incorporated into formal people management strategies of the organisation. As TASW becomes much more prevalent, it is important to study how formal human resource management policies are modified to capture such aspects of employees' work lives. Capitano et al. (2019), in their conceptual review, discuss the role of HR policies in the development of after-hour expectations in organisations. Future research can therefore examine how specific HR policies and practices could promote or discourage TASW expectations in organisations. Empirical studies, for example, could examine whether organisations consider the boundary preferences of individuals who align with job responsibilities during the employee selection stage.

4. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

Apart from the above research implications noted above, this conceptual model can be used to develop more organizationally relevant policy guidelines to manage TASW expectations and ensure employees' work-life balance. The conceptual model presented in this study suggests that in the absence of clear policies, managers tend to manage TASW based on their personal judgement rather than following specific rules or regulations. Such an approach leads to discrimination and inequalities in the workplace. As found in De Alwis et al. (2022b), clear policy guidelines on TASW requirements can reduce managers' punitive behaviours towards non-responsive employees. It was also found that clear guidelines can reduce gender discrimination that female employees may experience due to prevailing gender norms in the society. However, it is important to consider the business case behind the organisation's TASW requirements. In a competitive business environment, on some occasions, organisations may need their employees to put in extra effort to maintain company profitability. Such business needs could lead to higher expectations for after-hour work. Nevertheless, the formulation and implementation of a clear policy regarding TASW expectations could reduce the variation in the implementation of TASW expectations by different organisational managers (De Alwis et al., 2022b). Accordingly, the following policy recommendations are suggested for organi-

sational managers to effectively manage TASW in their organisations.

4.1. Formal recognition of TASW

Although TASW has become a common phenomenon in organisations, many organisations have not formally recognised TASW in their human resource management agenda. Organisations need to define exactly what is and what is not considered after-hours work. Otherwise, the definition of TASW could vary from person to person, leading to misunderstandings and conflicts. Hence, an important policy decision that organisations need to make is to reach a uniform agreement on what is considered after-hours work and on what occasions such work is acceptable.

It is also important to clearly define how this work will be communicated to employees as such clear guidelines will enable both managers and employees to successfully negotiate after-hours availability issues. As a rule of thumb, TASW work requirements should be implemented in exceptional circumstances, unless specific job responsibilities require extensive after-hours work. If certain job responsibilities require a significant amount of after-hours attention, those employees should be given more flexibility in terms of working hours and work location. In addition, managers must consider their subordinates' non-work responsibilities when implementing TASW. Once these guidelines are implemented, employee acceptance of TASW expectations will increase.

Organisations need to formally recognise employees' TASW in performance appraisals. However, non-adherence to TASW should not be used as a basis for punishing or withholding rewards from employees. They should be considered off-duty behaviour in performance appraisals and weighted less heavily in the overall performance evaluations. No employee should be promoted to a higher position based on their willingness to work after hours. In addition, organisations need to ensure equity in their reward decisions, embracing their workforce's diversity. Female employees in particular must be given special attention when it comes to meeting after-hour expectations, especially in societies where traditional gender norms apply.

4.2. Ensuring person-environment fit

As the model suggests, individual boundary preferences play a vital role in compliance with managers' TASW expectations. Individuals who prefer integrated boundaries may adhere to TASW requirements to some degree than those who prefer segmented boundaries. Therefore, segmentation preferences must be considered during the recruitment and selec-

tion process. A realistic job preview must be provided during selection interviews so that the candidates can decide whether working conditions meet their personal preferences. In particular, individuals who prefer integrated boundaries need to be hired for positions that require extensive after-hours commitment. This can ensure that the individual is suitable for the position and reduce work-life conflicts that might arise from TASW to an acceptable level. In doing so, however, organizations must also be flexible regarding working hours and location since employees who prefer integrated boundaries expect flexibility to pursue non-work activities during official working hours.

4.3. Monitoring TASW engagements

Monitoring TASW engagements in organizations can also control the excessive use of ICTs to connect with employees after hours. Organizations that monitor such behaviors by managers have successfully reduced inappropriate TASW expectations and punitive actions for non-responders (De Alwis et al., 2022b).

4.4. Meeting customer expectations

Organizations must balance customer expectations with the well-being of their employees. Customer responsiveness is an essential element of customer satisfaction. However, organizations must be cautious about delivering on promises such as responsiveness at all times and in all places. Developing such expectations in customers' minds could lead to increased TASW expectations among managers, ultimately affecting employees' work-life experiences (De Alwis et al., 2022a, 2022b; Lewis & Cooper, 2005). In addition, organizations must use the developments in ICTs to facilitate after-hours communications with customers. Technologies like chatbots, message forwarding, and follow-up systems could ensure that after-hours communication with customers and external parties is acknowledged and addressed promptly.

4.5. Top management commitment

As discussed in the conceptual model, top management attitudes and behaviors toward TASW are vital in shaping managers' TASW expectations. Therefore, leaders must develop the right attitude toward employees' work-life balance while ensuring business success. If top management does not consider their employees' work-life balance or non-work domains, it will ultimately increase work-life conflict among employees. Therefore, organizations must ensure top management's highest level of commitment when implementing the above policy recommendations.

5. CONCLUSION

This conceptual paper discusses the role of ICTs in the employees' work-life conflict by presenting a holistic model based on technology-assisted supplemental work (TASW) and work-life boundary theory. This model calls for further research on the impact of ICTs on employees' work/non-work experiences by focusing on the development and management of TASW. Such research will invaluably help practitioners to develop more employee-friendly policies for TASW, which ensure business outcomes and employee well-being. It is essential to understand that ICTs do not have inherent capabilities to impact human lives. The intertwining of ICTs with human elements creates unique work-life experiences for individuals. Future research should, therefore, also incorporate this theoretical foundation when studying work-life experiences in a hyper-connected world.

REFERENCES

1. Adisa, T. A., Gbadamosi, G., & Osabutey, E. L. (2017). What happened to the border? The role of mobile information technology devices on employees' work-life balance. *Personnel Review*, *46*(8), 1651-1671.

2. Allen, T. D., French, K. A., Dumani, S., & Shockley, K. M. (2020). A cross-national meta-analytic examination of predictors and outcomes associated with work–family conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *105*(6), 539-576. https://doi.org/10.1037/apl0000442

3. Alwis, S. D., & Hernvall, P. (2020). Technology Intense Workplaces, Boundary Preferences and Work–Life Conflict: Evidence from Sri Lanka. *South Asian Journal of Human Resources Management*, *8*(1), 29-53. https://doi.org/10.1177/2322093720965326

4. Barber, L. K., & Santuzzi, A. M. (2015). Please respond ASAP: workplace telepressure and employee recovery. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *20*(2), 172.

5. Belkin, L. Y., Becker, W. J., & Conroy, S. A. (2020). The invisible leash: The impact of organizational expectations for email monitoring after-hours on employee resources, well-being, and turnover intentions. *Group & Organization Management*, *45*(5), 709-740.

6. Bittman, M., Brown, J. E., & Wajcman, J. (2009). The mobile phone, perpetual contact and time pressure. *Work, employment and society*, *23*(4), 673-691.

7. Boswell, W. R., & Olson-Buchanan, J. B. (2007). The use of communication technologies after hours: The role of work attitudes and work-life conflict. *Journal of Management*, *33*(4), 592-610.

8. Capitano, J., McAlpine Kristie, L., & Greenhaus Jeffrey, H. (2019). Organizational Influences on Work–Home Boundary Permeability: A Multidimensional Perspective. In M. R. Buckley, R. W. Anthony, E. B. John, & R. B. H. Jonathon (Eds.), *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management* (Vol. 37, pp. 133-172). Emerald Publishing Limited. https://doi.org/10.1108/S0742-730120190000037005

9. Carvalho, V. S., Correia, I., & Chambel, M. J. (2021). Is it ok to be connected outside the office? The impact on well-being at work and the mediating role of the work and family relationship. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, *ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print). https://doi.org/10.1108/IJOA-01-2021-2577

10. Cecez-Kecmanovic, D., Boell, S., & Campbell, J. (2014). *Materiality of connectivity in the net-worked society: A sociomaterial perspective* 25th Australasian Conference on Information System, Auckland, New Zealand.

11. Chen, A., & Karahanna, E. (2014). Boundary-less technology: Understanding the effects of technology-mediated interruptions across the boundaries between work and personal life. *AIS Transactions on Human-Computer Interaction*, *6*(2), 16-36.

12. De Alwis, S., Hernwall, P., & Adikaram, A. S. (2022a). "It is ok to be interrupted; it is my job" – perceptions on technology-mediated work-life boundary experiences; a sociomaterial analysis. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, *ahead-of-print*(ahead-of-print). https://doi.org/10.1108/QROM-01-2021-2084

13. De Alwis, S., Hernwall, P., & Adikaram, A. S. (2022b). What leads technology assisted supplemental work expectations and how are they managed?: An exploration of managerial perspective on Technology Assisted Supplemental Work expectations. *S+-outh Asian Journal of Human Resources Management*, *In review*. https://doi.org/10.1108/QROM-01-2021-2084

14. Eby, L. T., Casper, W. J., Lockwood, A., Bordeaux, C., & Brinley, A. (2005). Work and family research in IO/OB: Content analysis and review of the literature (1980–2002). *Journal of vocational behavior*, *66*(1), 124-197.

15. Eichberger, C., Derks, D., & Zacher, H. (2021). Technology-assisted supplemental work, psychological detachment, and employee well-being: A daily diary study. *German Journal of Human Resource Management*, *35*(2), 199-223. https://doi.org/10.1177/2397002220968188

16. Fenner, G. H., & Renn, R. W. (2004). Technology-assisted supplemental work: Construct definition and a research framework. *Human Resource Management*, *43*(2-3), 179-200. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.20014

17. Frederiksen, A., Kato, T., & Smith, N. (2018). *Working Hours and Top Management Appointments: Evidence from Linked Employer-Employee Data*. https://EconPapers.repec.org/RePEc:iza:iza-dps:dp11675

18. Golden, A. G., & Geisler, C. (2007). Work–life boundary management and the personal digital assistant. *Human relations*, *60*(3), 519-551.

19. Hammer, T. H., Saksvik, P. Ø., Nytrø, K., Torvatn, H., & Bayazit, M. (2004). Expanding the psychosocial work environment: workplace norms and work-family conflict as correlates of stress and health. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, *9*(1), 83.

25

26

20. Jaakkola, E. (2020). Designing conceptual articles: four approaches. *AMS review*, *10*(1), 18-26.

21. Jahanshahi, A. A., Nawaser, K., & Brem, A. (2019). The effects of customer capital on customer response speed and innovativeness: the mediating role of marketing capability. *International Journal of Innovation Management*, *23*(06), 1950058.

22. Kailasapathy, P., Kraimer, M. L., & Metz, I. (2014). The interactive effects of leader–member exchange, gender and spouse's gender role orientation on work interference with family conflict. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, *25*(19), 2681-2701.

23. Kailasapathy, P., & Metz, I. (2012). Work–Family Conflict in Sri Lanka: Negotiations of Exchange Relationships in Family and at Work. *Journal of Social Issues*, *68*(4), 790-813. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2012.01776.x

24. Karampela, M., Lacka, E., & McLean, G. (2020). "Just be there": Social media presence, interactivity, and responsiveness, and their impact on B2B relationships. *European Journal of Marketing*.

25. Kreiner, G. E., Hollensbe, E. C., & Sheep, M. L. (2009). Balancing borders and bridges: Negotiating the work-home interface via boundary work tactics. *Academy of management journal*, *52*(4), 704-730.

26. Kring, C. (2020). The New Ideal Worker Is a Super Navigator. In M. las Heras Maestro, N. Chinchilla Albiol, & M. Grau Grau (Eds.), *The New Ideal Worker: Organizations Between Work-Life Balance, Gender and Leadership* (pp. 125-135). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-12477-9_8

27. Leonardi, P. M. (2013). Theoretical foundations for the study of sociomateriality. *Information and organization*, *23*(2), 59-76.

28. Lewis, S., & Cooper, C. (2005). *Work-Life Integration: Case Studies of Organisational Change*. Wiley. https://books.google.lk/books?id=1qEAjt-5HPYC

29. Mazmanian, M., Orlikowski, W. J., & Yates, J. (2013). The Autonomy Paradox: The Implications of Mobile Email Devices for Knowledge Professionals. *Organization Science*, *24*(5), 1337-1357. https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1120.0806

30. Mellner, C. (2016). After-hours availability expectations, work-related smartphone use during leisure, and psychological detachment. *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, *9*(2), 146-164. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJWHM-07-2015-0050

31. Nam, T. (2014). Technology use and work-life balance. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, *9*(4), 1017-1040.

32. Nour, M. A. (2012). An integrative framework for customer relationship management: towards a systems view. *International Journal of Business Information Systems*, *9*(1), 26-50.

33. Ollier-Malaterre, A., Jacobs, J. A., & Rothbard, N. P. (2019). Technology, Work, and Family: Digital Cultural Capital and Boundary Management. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *45*(1), 425-447. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-073018-022433

34. Orlikowski, W. J. (2007). Sociomaterial Practices: Exploring Technology at Work. *Organization Studies*, *28*(9), 1435-1448. https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840607081138

35. Pehrsson, A. (2011). Firms' customer responsiveness: relationships with competition, market growth, and performance. *Journal of Strategy and Management*.

36. Ruppanner, L., & Huffman, M. L. (2014). Blurred boundaries: Gender and work–family interference in cross-national context. *Work and Occupations*, *41*(2), 210-236

37. Tennakoon, U. S. (2018). Crossing the Work/Life Boundary with ICT: Moderating Effect of ICT Perception on the Relationship between Cross-domain ICT Use and Work/Life Conflict. *South Asian Journal of Human Resources Management*, *5*(2), 194-215.

38. Worley, J. A., & Gutierrez, K. J. (2020). Hope for the (New) Ideal Worker: Resolving the Flexibility-Availability Paradox. In M. las Heras Maestro, N. Chinchilla Albiol, & M. Grau Grau (Eds.), *The New Ideal Worker: Organizations Between Work-Life Balance, Gender and Leadership* (pp. 9-23). Springer International Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-12477-9_2

39. Wright, K. B., Abendschein, B., Wombacher, K., O'Connor, M., Hoffman, M., Dempsey, M., . . . Shelton, A. (2014). Work-Related Communication Technology Use Outside of Regular Work Hours and Work Life Conflict: The Influence of Communication Technologies on Perceived Work Life Conflict, Burnout, Job Satisfaction, and Turnover Intentions. *Management Communication Quarterly*, *28*(4), 507-530. https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318914533332

40. Yasir, M., Majid, A., Yasir, M., & Khan, N. (2019). Boundary integration, work/family enrichment and life satisfaction among female nursing staff. *Management Research Review*, *42*(6), 740-759.

41. Zhao, X., Mattila, A. S., & Ngan, N. N. (2014). The Impact of Frontline Employees' Work–Family Conflict on Customer Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Exhaustion and Emotional Displays. *Cornell Hospitality Quarterly*, *55*(4), 422-432. https://doi.org/10.1177/1938965513517172

KONCEPTUALNI MODEL KAKO DODATNI POSAO ZASNOVAN NA TEHNOLOGIJI VODI DO KONFLIKTA IZMEĐU POSLOVNOG I OSOBNOG ŽIVOTA: POVEZANOST IZMEĐU INFORMACIJSKO-KOMUNIKACIJSKIH TEHNOLOGIJA I DOŽIVLJAJA POSLOVNOG I OSOBNOG ŽIVOTA

SAŽETAK

Empirijski dokazi sugeriraju da dodatni posao, zasnovan na tehnologiji, postaje sve češći na modernim radnim mjestima. Od zaposlenika se često očekuje da budu na raspolaganju za posao čak i nakon radnih sati, putem informacijsko-komunikacijskih tehnologija (IKT), što dovodi do konflikta između poslovnog i osobnog života. Koristeći tri nedavne empirijske studije i relevantnu literaturu, u ovom se radu razvija argument da same IKT ne mogu doprinijeti konfliktu između poslovnog i osobnog života zaposlenika, s obzirom da je navedeni konflikt, u današnjem hiper-povezanom svijetu, rezultat konstitutivnog povezivanja između IKT-a te ljudskih izbora, vjerovanja, normi i ponašanja. Stoga se smatra da razumijevanje doživljaja poslovnog i osobnog života na suvremenim radnim mjestima traži proučavanje međuovisnosti između IKT-a i društvenih elemenata. Predlaže se da je doživljaj poslovnog i osobnog života suvremenih zaposlenika potrebno promatrati kroz uklapanje društvenih i materijalnih čimbenika. S obzirom na prirodu povezivanja između IKT-a i društvenih elemenata, uklapanje socio-materijalnih čimbenika stvara različite oblike iskustva za različite ljude. Predloženi konceptualni model traži dodatno istraživanje u području dodatnog posla zasnovanog na tehnologiji te konflikta između poslovnog i osobnog života, promatranog iz socio-materijalne perspektive. Buduća bi se istraživanja mogla usredotočiti na ulogu organizacijskih normi, organizacijske i nacionalne kulture, rodnih normi, segmentacijskih preferencija, taktika uspostavljanja granica između poslovnog i osobnog života te politika za upravljanje radom od kuće pomoću IKT-a. Uz model se prezentiraju i preporuke za teoriju i praksu.

KLJUČNE RIJEČI: *konflikt između poslovnog i osobnog života, dodatni posao zasnovan na tehnologiji, granice između poslovnog i osobnog života, IKT na radnom mjestu, socio-materijalna perspektiva*

27