The impact of continuous connectivity on work-life balance

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Abstract
In today's organizational environment, work-life balance has become an essential component of motivational management strategies. In an increasingly competitive organizational environment, continuous activity at a sustained pace becomes a certain reality, especially in the context where ensuring the balance between professional and personal life becomes a major challenge for motivational management.
This paper is an analysis of the impact of continuous activity and extended work hours on employee motivation and satisfaction, but also how organizations can support this balance through various means of rewards. Work stress, well-being, zest for life, burnout, etc., are just a few of the terms introduced into the current vocabulary of employees in recent times.
The perception of this fine balance between professional and personal life is individual, depending on expectations, motivation, the employee's psychological profile, social factors or family climate.
This balance of private life versus professional life has a major influence on the well-being and performance of the team, and its imbalance can lead to decreased productivity through employee burnout and the appearance of mental health problems or physical exhaustion.

Keywords: Connectivity, organization, personal life, professional life

INTRODUCTION

Today's practice shows a negative correlation between employees' activities and intrinsic motivation, as well as a decrease in professional and personal satisfaction. Employees supported by the organization through flexibility policy and work-life balance support show higher levels of motivation and loyalty to the organization.

These initiatives can significantly contribute to increasing employee motivation and ensuring a sustainable work environment.

Organizations that develop policies that promote such a balance contribute not only to employee satisfaction and well-being but also to increased team performance and retention.
The importance of people's sustainable behavior has increased in recent literature because environmental performance is influenced, at least in part, by the interaction between people and the environment (Rustam, Wang and Zameer, 2020; Shafiei and Maleksaeidi, 2020; Chen et al., 2021).

World leaders are encouraged to implement appropriate policies to promote sustainable economic growth, gainful employment and decent jobs (Akuma et al., 2024).
Prolonged work and continuous activity, often encouraged to achieve ambitious goals, can have counterproductive effects, leading to burnout, decreased productivity and demotivation.

The specialized literature emphasizes that effective motivational management is closely related to organizational capabilities to develop employees' basic needs, such as autonomy, competence and social connectivity (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

However, when the boundaries between personal and professional life become blurred, employees may experience diminished intrinsic satisfaction and motivation, which

are key factors in the organization's long-term success. Motivational activity can undermine classic motivational strategies, causing employees to perceive organizational goals as a burden instead of an opportunity for personal and professional development. In recent decades, increased workloads, constant availability through technology, and a focus on productivity have made the lines between personal and professional life increasingly blurred. According to specialized literature, the lack of balance between the two spheres of life contributes to the appearance of professional burnout, to the decrease in life satisfaction and even to the deterioration of professional relationships (Jeffrey Greenhaus, 2010).

Continuous work can be defined as the extension of the work schedule beyond the usual hours or the absence of adequate breaks between work sessions and is an increasingly common phenomenon in various sectors of activity, from the corporate to the medical and educational.

This practice is justified by employers through the pressure of ambitious objectives and the need for competitiveness in the globalized market. Recent studies have highlighted the negative consequences of this trend on the mental and physical health of employees, as well as on their social relationships (Brough and O'Driscoll, 2010). Professional overload is one of the most acute problems of our time, becoming a determinant of the current human condition. There are numerous debates and approaches about workplace stress and countering its effects.

Practically, this study proposes to investigate how organizational management can diminish the negative effects of continuous activity on work-life balance and promote a motivating work environment oriented towards sustainable performance.

The research aims to answer the questions: "How does the activity influence the degree of motivation of employees?" and "What are the management strategies by which organizations can support employees in maintaining work-life balance without compromising organizational goals?".

Through this analysis, the study contributes to the identification of optimal motivational strategies that align employee needs with organizational requirements, thus promoting a healthy balance between performance and personal well-being. introduction explains the issue of work-life balance from a motivational perspective. This study emphasizes the impact of organizational management on this aspect and clearly defines the objectives and research questions, all with an emphasis on the importance of supporting employee motivation and performance.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study is based on the critical analysis of the specialized literature to accurately identify the applied methodologies, thus providing new perspectives on motivational management strategies applicable to support work-life balance.

The sources of information used, the electronic search strategy, the study selection process, the methodologies to minimize bias, the data extraction methods, and the additional analyses performed are components of the method of developing the analysis, ensuring the transparency of the results (Gülpinar and Güçlü, 2013).

In order to carry out this study, an extensive search was carried out to identify sources that can provide relevant information. Scientific databases were used as information sources: Science Direct, PubMed, Scopus and Web of Science, covering the period 2010-2024.

The electronic search strategy is based on several criteria: search terms, publication data limits, publication language, and search syntax. This strategy was designed to include all relevant studies related to the study topic.

The study selection procedure involved several steps to include the most relevant and high-quality studies and was carried out in several steps. Initially, all studies identified following the selection criteria were analysed based on titles and abstracts for the researched topic. All studies that did not meet the selection criteria were removed.

The remaining studies underwent extensive review to clarify whether they could be eligible for analysis. All studies that met the requirements so far were included in a database where all findings and methodologies developed were critically appraised and synthesized.

The entire process of selecting the papers remaining in the analysis was carried out so that the research was carried out with a minimum degree of bias.

The complex search carried out for the realization of this study tried to identify all relevant studies regarding the complex relationship between the balance of private and professional life with the efficiency of organizational management.

Clear inclusion criteria were formulated for the studies included in the research. These inclusion criteria included factors that minimized the risk of bias and ensured the transparency and impartiality of the entire selection process. The data collection method sought to extract relevant information from the included studies and allowed for a deeper exploration of the topic, focusing on qualitative aspects rather than quantitative measurements.

These additional analyses focused on several aspects:

a. Defining the terms and understanding the balance between professional and personal life;

b. Defining and clarifying the terms of organizational management and human resources;

c. Analysis of human resource communication channels in the context of increasing professional demands and personal duties

d. Methods of analyzing the utilization of free time by employees.

e. Measures to increase the quality of personal and professional life adapted to today

Understanding these issues is important to ensure the usefulness and relevance of the research in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The studies highlight both positive and negative aspects related to the continuous connectivity of employees to activities related to the professional sphere.

I. Negative effects of continuous connectivity on work-life balance
Stress or exhaustion (Burnout)
The notion of stress has become a normality in common language being used very easily, sometimes perhaps without knowing exactly what it refers to, what are the implications and worst of all, the consequences.

One of the problems that occurs very often at work is stress. To be able to prevent and manage it, we need to understand it

Studies in the field describe both "good stress" (eustress) and "bad stress" (distress) and it is essential to permanently find the optimal level of stress that ensures good health.

According to the Explanatory Dictionary of the Romanian Language (DEX), stress is defined as any factor in the environment (trauma, emotions, cold, heat, etc.) capable of causing in humans and animals a state of tension and an alarm reaction of the body, sometimes causing serious illness. By extension, stress also refers to the unfavorable effect produced on the body by such a factor (dexonline)(webdex.ro). In the medical context, stress describes the abnormal reaction of the human body to various environmental factors, trying to defend itself and maintain its basic balance.

The most harmful form of physical and mental stress at work arises when the professional requirements do not match the individual profile, capabilities and expectations of the employee. This is where inner conflicts, frustrations and misunderstandings arise both at work and in the family. All of this leads to the impairment of physical and mental health and, implicitly, to a drop in productivity at work.

Beneficial stress occurs in situations of internal competition between employees as a result of intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. However, this situation, taken to the extreme, is manifested by the failure to successfully fulfill the proposed objectives, exhaustion, stress and the feeling of failure.

So, stress inevitably occurs in the workplace in all its forms. Individual specificity, personality and adaptability make the difference between employees who can become potential victims or who can continue to perform their job duties in a balanced manner.

There are executive and managerial stressors, operational stressors and general stressors that can act synergistically or antagonistically on the employee.
At the executive and managerial level, the reality expressed by the employees consists in the fact that with the increase in responsibilities comes overloading with tasks and increases the level of stress due to the appearance of the pressure of completion times that become much shorter. The responsibility that personal decisions may impact or influence the actions of other people, colleagues, subordinates or collaborators can increase the level of individual stress and concern. The stress is also amplified by the fact that there is the responsibility of being accountable to the superiors, but on the other hand, they must find solutions in full resonance with the requests of the subordinates.

At the operational level, the most common forms of stress are given by improper working conditions, inadequate job design or the incompatibility of the individual with the work carried out. When it comes to skills, a variety of techniques are used, including hiring and selection procedures, as well as training and development programs, to ensure that employees have the knowledge and skills needed to perform a specific job. Similarly, incentives, both monetary and non-monetary, are used to encourage people to achieve their performance goals. These incentives are based on performance evaluation (Ding, Appolloni and Shahzad, 2022).

General stressors are related to job insecurity, legislative changes, difficult family problems or situations, human quality and climate change.
This definition emphasizes the importance of understanding stress not only as a physical reaction but also as a psychological one, significantly impacting the health and efficiency of organizations. Professional overwork, also known as burnout, has a significant impact on organizational efficiency evidenced by a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by prolonged and excessive stress at work.

Perfectionism is a personality trait in which an individual sets unattainable goals and pursues idealism while critically evaluating individual behaviors (Kwon et al., 2022).

Psychological exhaustion is positively associated with socially prescribed perfectionism and negatively related to self-oriented perfectionism and other-oriented perfectionism (Lee and Ha, 2015).

Disruption of family life and personal relationships

Many researchers have focused on the consequences of work on family and the effect of family on work has been neglected (Eby et al., 2005).

Work-family conflict and work-family facilitation predicted work and family satisfaction. Similarly, both types of satisfactions (work and family) predicted feelings that in turn result in life satisfaction (Pattusamy and Jacob, 2017) Work pressures or role pressures interfere with family activities, and demands or role pressures generated within the family interfere with work activities (Carlson, Grzywacz and Zivnuska, 2009).

Job satisfaction can be defined as the pleasant emotional state resulting from an individual evaluation of the job. On the other hand, family satisfaction is the extent to which an individual is satisfied with his life or family situation (Rathi and Barath, 2013).

Individuals who place both career and family at the center of their concerns feel balanced when they are satisfied and effective in their work and family roles. Any disruption in these roles can lead to imbalance (Bianchi and Milkie, 2010).

Long-term productivity and quality of work

In the medium and long term, continuous connectivity with work activities amplifies the feeling of frustration due to insufficient time left for family, friends and other social and leisure activities. Work without a break causes the salt of fatigue to set in, emotional and physical exhaustion.

Burnout first develops in response to high demands and overwork, and then this precipitates detachment and negative reactions to people and work (depersonalization or cynicism). If this continues, then the next stage would be feelings of inadequacy and failure (reduced personal achievements or professional ineffectiveness) (Maslach and Leiter, 2016).

II. Positive effects of continuous connectivity on work-life balance

Although there is general agreement that work engagement represents a productive and fulfilling state in the occupational domain, there are differences in its definition. For some burnout researchers, engagement is considered the opposite of burnout and is defined in terms of the same three dimensions as burnout, but the positive end of those dimensions rather than the negative. From this perspective, engagement consists of a state of high energy, strong involvement, and a sense of efficacy (Maslach and Leiter, 2016).

The way in which the management of safety and health at work is integrated into the total management of the organization plays a decisive role in contributing to achieving positive effects by ensuring well-being at work and maximizing the work capacity of individuals.

The development of the human resources management system also involves the development of leadership and leaders within organizations. Investing in people is very good

because people are one of the most valuable resources of an organization (Mazilu Alexandrescu, 2023).

The ability of leaders to know their own employees makes it easier to find ways to alleviate work overload. The method of stimulating the synergistic action of human diversity in order to increase work efficiency and the exploration of individual abilities stimulates the feeling of union and team.

Continuous connectivity is directly associated with increased levels of stress and increases in absenteeism at work, but also with employee intentions to leave their jobs. That's why employers are looking for solutions adapted to the current times and the type of employees to eliminate the causes of stress associated with the increase in working time spent solving work tasks.

The de-robotization of the individual from professional activity is a mandatory concern especially for employers interested in respect for human values.
Practically, policies to mitigate the impact of continuous connectivity at the workplace are based on the abolition of human leasing at the workplace in favor of establishing a democratic climate (Ellerman, 2021)

Healthy organizations attract, develop and retain valuable employees who demonstrate leadership capabilities and who possess and apply active knowledge that they pass on in an effective and efficient manner.

The possibility for employees to be able to flexibilize their work schedule in which to perform their work duties gives them a state of comfort and peace.

They can rest and concentrate better causing increased creativity and work productivity. Employees find solutions to problems that arise much easier. Employees can make better use of their working time and use their free time in the family, for personal needs or by participation in various personal development courses (Yucel and Latshaw, 2020).

The employer's offering the employee the possibility to have his own control regarding the prioritization of the tasks that fall to him, causes a decrease in pressure and stress (Chambel, Carvalho and Neto, 2020). Employees can choose to tackle certain work tasks when they feel ready or when time permits. Thus, employees can customize their working time, and the feeling of overload is reduced.

By increasing access to technological resources that facilitate online work meetings, employees can solve some work tasks regardless of where they are, facilitate communication between colleagues or with superiors and subordinates, and reduce time pressure on them (Collins and Smith, 2006).

By constantly improving accessibility and flexibility, continuous connectivity can help achieve a better work-life balance

A new approach to organizations is based on the concept of Well-Being. It includes several directions such as: happiness at work, work productivity and personal and professional development of the employee.

The goal today is for man to improve his productivity by making work more efficient in an optimal work environment that enhances his well-being.

Wellbeing programs focus primarily on the uniqueness of the employee and encourage everyone's specific talents and concerns.

CONCLUSIONS

Although necessary in a modern and dynamic work environment, continuous connectivity poses a number of risks to mental health and work-life balance. The benefits of accessibility and flexibility are often negated by stress and burnout.

It is essential that organizations implement clear policies that support disconnection and promote an organizational culture based on respect for employees' personal time to optimize the impact of technology on their productivity and well-being.

The implementation of Well-Being strategies is a modern concept, adapted to the current time, with healthy benefits for the organization and employees.

Providing support and resources by implementing employee assistance programs, providing mental health counseling and support and access to resources to help manage stress, creating a positive work environment by promoting a positive organizational culture where communication is open, and recognition of merits and mutual support are encouraged are just some of the measures with a positive impact on employee performance.

Professional development by providing employees with training and professional development opportunities that develop their skills suggests that investing in human capital is one of the safest medium and long-term investments in an organization.

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