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Mobile Technology: The Effects of Technology on Work-Life Balance

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine how advances in mobile technology have affected employees' work-life balance. This study focuses on the increase of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets being used for work purposes during work hours and for work-related matters during an employees' personal time. Advances in technology have greatly impacted occupational stress in many organisations. This study investigates how employees deal with occupational stress and what policies and procedures employers put in place to help minimise the adverse effects of occupational stress on both the employee and employer. This study was conducted through structured interviews with seven employees in Aer Lingus, Ireland's biggest Airline. The participants comprised of two women and five men within the Ground Operations department. Qualitative research was chosen as the research method for this study as it allows more flexibility in the way the research is conducted. The data was collected in the form of structured interviews with the participant sample. This allowed the interviewer to ask relevant questions and probe for a deeper opinion from participants. McCracken's (1988) "long interview" technique was used to conduct the interviews. The data collected was analysed and interpretative analysis was used to determine the study's findings. The data is used to demonstrate how advances in technology has influenced employees' work-life balance and stress levels both positively and negatively.

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1.0 Introduction

In the past twenty years technology has evolved and has drastically changed how we work and live. Work-life balance is a popular topic that many academics have focused their research on. Much of the previous research had focused on how work-life balance has influenced employee engagement and job satisfaction, such as Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, and Weitzman (2001). "This study examines the influence of perceived flexibility in the timing and location of work on work-family balance" (Hill et al, 2001, pp. 51). This study has found that due to cutbacks and employees not being replaced when they leave, remaining employees are being overwhelmed with the increasing workload and decreasing manpower. The study found that perceived flexibility, both flexitime and flexiplace (virtual technology) are factors that helped reduce the level of occupational stress in the workplace.

Academics have also conducted research into how technology has changed the way organisations operate and how it brings many benefits for both the organisation and its employees, such as Berg, Mortberg and Jansson (2005) 'Emphasising Technology: socio-technical implications'. This study found that new technologies have both positive and negative sides. Positive because mobile communication can help individuals organise their lives. While it can be negative because technology can discipline discourse. This

study found that mobile technology has impacted people's lives in the way that they speak and relate to each other (Berg et al, 2005).

There is a lack of research and understanding into how these technological advances have impacted employees' work-life balance especially in the past five to seven years, since the last recession hit the global economy. Workplace technologies are described as "electronic tools both portable and stationary, that are used in conjunction with one's job to communicate and to perform work either in the work place or away from such a setting" (Thomas, 2014 pp. 282). This would include having you work emails synced to your mobile phone and answering work-related emails on this device at any time of the day.

During this research the author will seek to understand the negative effects that advances in mobile technology has on work-life balance. The author has chosen to focus this study on Irish Aviation Company, Aer Lingus. Due to the vast size of the organisation the author has decided to focus on the ground operations department to conduct their research.

Technological advances have impacted work-life balance in every organisation. This study aims to understand how technology and the increased use of mobile communication devices such as smartphones and laptops have affected employees' work-life balance and how they have influenced occupational stresses felt by employees.

The Ground Operations department is highly technology driven and employees are expected to be contactable 24/7, especially the senior

engineers and management. This can have negative effects of employees work-life balance. It is up to each individual to limit how much they allow technology to influence their lives.

The current study will involve interviews with the sample participants in order to gain a deeper understanding of the participants working lives and opinions on technologies influence on their work-life balance. The author will use an interpretive approach when analysing data to conclude with comprehensive findings.

2.0 Literature Review

In the past twenty years advances in technology have greatly changed both our personal and professional lives. Since the mobile phone has become a major element in our everyday lives, it has had both a positive and a negative impact for organisations and their employees.

2.1 Technology

The use of technology in our working lives has both positive and negatives effects on our well-being. CIPD (2013 B) report found that 58% of employees surveyed agreed that mobile devices helps make their work more flexible. Access to the internet is available virtually anywhere once you have a mobile device i.e. smartphone, tablet or laptop. Servers such as Dropbox and iCloud provide users with instant access to documents previously saved to them, therefore allowing users to continue working anywhere, at any time.

With this increasing flexibility comes problems of over working and employees being unable to disengage from their work. Sarker, Xiao, Sarker and Ahuja (2012) identify that 'temporal servitude' i.e. being on call 24/7, has negative effects on the employees' health and well-being which in turn affects their job performance and satisfaction. Temporal servitude then affects the organisation as it is more likely to have higher staff turnover rates and may lose employees with key knowledge in distinct areas that will be difficult to replace.

Sarker et al.'s (2012) study was based on a larger project that was conducted between 2009 and 2012 for which 61 Interviews were conducted. They focused on 21 interviews to conduct a study on WLB. Sarker et al research methodology involved a mixture of structured and semi-structured interviews with the participants. The participants interviewed were IT professionals in mainly based in the US but a number were from Asia and Europe who worked for companies including Nokia, Boeing, KPMG and IBM (Sarker et al, 2012, pp. 155).

They offer a framework that divides employees' perceptions on work-life balance into three categories. These are compartmentalised, overlapping and encompassing.

Compartmentalisation is when individuals demand keeping their work life and personal life completely separate. These individuals rate their personal life as their primary concern and their working life as secondary. They see it as a necessary element in order to fund their personal life. These employees

tend to switch off work-related communication devices during non-work hours. Any interruption into their personal time is deemed unacceptable (Sarker et al. 2012).

Overlapping occurs when emotional and behavioural tendencies from one life affect the other life, in either positive or negative ways. The greater the effort put into trying to balance the two lives, the more conflict the individual is likely to face. Most people don't mind some degree of spillover of work into their personal lives, such as using a smartphone to check work emails during personal time, once it does not become too excessive (Sarker et al. 2012). This ties in with Zedeck, Mosier and O'Driscoll (cited in Guest 2002) spillover relationship model.

Encompassing perspective occurs when an individual sees no separation of their work life and personal life. The individuals' level of success in their work life equals their success in their personal life. This type of individual will prioritise work commitments over family commitments. These individuals embrace the use of mobile technology which enables them to continue working anywhere at any time. One interviewee said "I can go to my son's gym class and yet I can actually do a little bit of work on my iPad while he's there" (Sarker et al. 2012, p. 149).

A lot of the research until recently has focused on the positive influences technology has on the organisation and the workforce. The study aims to identify the negative affects technology has on individuals work and personal lives. It will be interesting to discover the reasons why individuals

allow technology to influence their daily activities in both their personal and working life. It would also be interesting to determine which of the three perspectives Sarker et al. (2012) talks about, accurately describes the participants in the sample of this research.

Communication is a necessary tool in our lives that is used to establish expectations and objectives in every aspect of our lives. When individuals are using mobile technology as a method of communication for work purposes, it is difficult to know when it is unacceptable to contact colleagues during their personal time on work-related issues (Wright, Abendschein, Wombacher, O'Connor, Hoffman, Dempsey, Krull, Dewes and Shelton, 2014). If there are no guidelines or boundaries set, an individual's stress levels may increase, which can lead to other problems for both the individual and the organisation (Wright et al, 2014).

When an organisation provides a mobile device to their employees Sarker et al. (2012) believes this is a psychological contract between the employer and employee which gives the employer higher expectations that the employee will respond to work related calls and emails at any time. Some of their interviewees blamed mobile technology for chaining them to their job. One interviewee said "There is a constant expectation that I am connected... any time between seven am and ten pm" (Sarker et al. 2012, p.145). Another interview said "people don't want to get a blackberry... The moment you're using the Blackberry, you're working 24 hours" (Sarker et al. 2012, p. 146).

Wright et al. (2014) found that individuals who have a positive attitude towards the use of communication technologies for work-related purposes after regular work hours are more likely to have minimal work-life conflict. They also suggest that workers seem to have come to expect work to interfere in their personal lives as work emails are connected to their smartphone. This agrees with Sarker et al. (2012) description of individual who hold an overlapping perspective on work-life balance. Berg, Mortberg and Jansson (2005) conducted a study in Sweden with the aim of finding out individuals' opinions of the use of IT (Information Technology) for work purposes and what they thought about the use of mobile phones in their everyday lives. 90% of the population aged between 16 – 75 years, had a mobile phone subscription, purchased with different intentions for usage.

Their study concluded with the observation that the interviewees were not overly enthusiastic about communication technology being a core element in their jobs, but technology is a core element of their personal lives.

Interestingly eight years later, CIPD (2013b) conducted a study 'Social technology, social business?' which found that 61% of UK employees surveyed use a mobile device for work purposes and 26% use social media i.e. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, for work related tasks.

A study carried out by the Irish Times found that in June 2014 found there were 5.6 million mobile phone subscriptions in Ireland. This study also found that 59% of the Irish mobile subscription market was by smart phone penetration (Burke-Kennedy, 2014).

ComReg's quarterly report (2014) found that 74.1% of all voice and internet subscriptions in Ireland is represented by the mobile market. This report also found that the number of smartphones and tablets used in Ireland in fourth quarter of 2013 was 2,607,507. This is up 9.2% on the previous year (fourth quarter 2012).

The aim of this study is to establish how advances in technology has influenced work-life balance both positively and negatively.

2.2 Work life Balance

A large quantity of the research until now has focused on the work-life balance (WLB) and how individuals family status i.e. single, married with dependents (young children or retired parents), dual-career family, divorced, etc. may have influenced their WLB.

Hill et al (2001, pp.49) define the work life balance as when "an individual is simultaneously able to balance the temporal, emotional and behavioural demands of both paid work and family responsibility".

Zedeck, Mosier and O'Driscoll (cited in Guest 2002) describe a number of models that can be used to explain the relationship between an individual's work life and personal life. There are five models, four of which the study examined.

The first model is the *spillover* model which recognises that one life can influence the other in either a positive or a negative way (Guest, 2002). For example, an employee who uses a company laptop to work when they are

out of the office is great because they can keep on top of their workload and answer emails and queries while out of the office. On the other hand, if the employee is on annual leave, they may feel they are obliged to log into their work emails because they have a company laptop.

The second model is the *compensation* model: i.e. what is lacking in the personal life can be made up for in the individual's professional life (Guest, 2002). For example, an employee may feel that they are not challenged enough in their personal life, but this is made up for in their work life by being a member of a work committee.

The third model is the *Instrumental* model is when an individual's activities in one life facilitate success in the other for example an executive accountant salary pays for his lavish lifestyle and expensive cars (Guest, 2002).

The final model which will be examined is the *Conflict* model. This occurs when there is high demand for the individual in both their personal and professional lives; therefore tough decisions have to be made but may negatively affect the other life (Guest, 2002). For example, an employee in a senior management position will have a very demanding job. At times they may be required to work late nights and in some cases travel for important meetings. This demanding work-life can have negative impacts on the individuals' personal life. For example, if the individual had young children, they may be limited to the amount of time they can spend with them because their work life is so demanding.

Each of these models describes how technology can have positive and negative implications on employees' lives. Such as demanding work lives negatively influencing valuable family time i.e. using a work phone to take phone calls and answer emails while on a family holiday. If this is a regular occurrence, this may damage the individual's relationship with their family members.

As an element of the proposed research, the author wants to establish which of these models is most relevant to today's employees.

2.3 Trends in Workload Requirements

Since the global economy took a major downturn in 2007, many organisations were forced to reduce costs by reducing the numbers of their workforce and freezing pay rates, while without reducing workloads and the levels of production (CIPD, 2013a). The remaining workers are expected to take on the extra workload that would have been covered by the staff who were given redundancies or whom left of their own accord and were never replaced. Hill et al. (2001) found that the average worker now spends an additional three 40-hour weeks' worth of time, per year on the job when compared to the average employees working week in 1996.

CIPD's (2013a) 'Megatrends' report found that 45% of employees surveyed in 2012 agreed that "my job requires that I work hard", increased from only 32% of employees in 1992. This report found that the reasons for the increased pressure on job performance was due to a number of factors including increased workloads and tighter deadlines to get tasks done.

The effects of the recession intensified these pressures on employees to improve their performance, which made many employees work longer hours which in the long run can have negative effects on their physical and mental well-being. Technology has contributed to increasing demands on both the organisation and employees. “Computers schedule tasks much more efficiently, so that there are no pauses between when one ends and the other begins” (Green, cited in CIPD, 2013a).

Now that Ireland is out of recession, the volume of smartphones and tablets being used has increased. 2,607,507 smartphones and tablets were sold in Ireland in the last three months of 2013 (Comreg, 2014).

Due to globalisation there is an increasing requirement for employees to communicate with colleagues based in different countries. Differences in time zones make it difficult for employees to balance their work and personal life when they have to make conference calls late at night or in the early hours of the morning in order to communicate with colleagues in another country (Sarker et al. 2012).

The CIPD (2013a) report found that in the autumn of 2013, employees who felt under excessive pressure at least once a week accounted for 41% of those surveyed. 13% of employees felt under extreme pressure every day when working. This excessive pressure can negatively impact both the organisation and the individual as the individuals’ job performance may not be up to standard of what is expected by their management, as a result professional relationships can suffer and the individual may become more

and more dissatisfied with working in this position in in this organisation 32% of employees who felt under pressure every day, felt they were likely to be out of a job within the next six months (CIPD, 2013a).

CIPD's (2013a) report suggests that the number of employees working long hours each week as fallen to under 20%, but this does not take into consideration, employees using mobile devices to answer work related emails and phone calls outside of regular working hours.

According to the CIPD 'Megatrends' 2013 report, employees surveyed who felt under pressure every single day perceived the recession to be an element in causing reduced employee benefits (30%), increased hours (20%), reduced training budgets (34%) and influenced the organisations decision to give redundancies (40%).

These employees also believe that the recession is a determining factor in the increase of workplace stress levels (84%), Increase in the number of people taking sick leave (49%), Increase in management bullying (42%) and increased levels of conflict between colleagues (40%).

2.4 Occupational Stress

Stress is a major factor in causing ill-health, both mentally and physically. The Health and Safety Authority (HSA) report that in 2012, 8.7% of employees were ill from work, due to stress, depression and anxiety; 13.2% of employees were ill from work due to bone, joint and muscle problems, which can be caused by occupational stress (HSA, 2014).

Soylu and Campbell (2012 pp. 132) propose in their study that “the advanced technology in the workplace imposes additional emotional and physical stresses on business office employees, managers and executives”.

It has been suggested that employers should distribute literature to all employees, giving advice on how reduce physical stresses for example, using ergonomics to reduce the effects of repetitive strain injuries and carpal tunnel (Soylu and Campbell, 2012).

Advances in technology have changed the types and levels of stress in the workplace. As an element of this research the author wants to discover what policies and procedures employers currently have in place to help employees reduce or learn how to manage their stress. If these policies are not successful, what is the employer planning do change in order to improve the overall stress levels in the organisation to improve their employees well-being?

2.4 Research Methods

Murphy and Dotherty (2011) conducted semi-structured interviews with senior management in their study of ‘Company X’. Their single case study approach was the most suitable methodology for their research because it allowed them to interact face-to-face with eight out of their thirteen interviewees (five telephone interviews were conducted with senior managers based in Europe). This allowed them to alter the questions slightly for each interview and allowed them to see the interviewees’ body language

and initial reaction to the questions being asked. Body language can speak louder than words in certain situations.

Sarker et al. (2012) used a mixture of unstructured and semi-structured interviews to conduct their study. Conducting interviews enabled them to get a better understanding of the interviewees' perception on work life balance. Some interviewees gave examples of why they had a particular perception on how technology has influenced their work-life balance. For example one interviewee with an encompassing perspective described how they "just check my email whenever... no cut-off line at night" (Sarker et al. 2012, p.149).

3.0 Research Objectives

3.1 Mobile Technology

In this era of mobile technology, what effect has technology had on work-life balance? This leads to sub-objective research questions.

A report found that by the end of December 2013, there were 5,626,398 mobile subscriptions in Ireland and the mobile penetration rate was up 103.3% on the previous year (ComReg, 2014, pp.8).

Employees use laptops, tablets (iPad and android tablets) and smartphones for both personal and professional use. In order to determine how mobile technology has changed the average 9 – 5 working day, this study aims to determine which mobile communication devices are regularly used for work purposes outside of regular working hours.

The author wants to determine out of the employees who use mobile devices for work purposes, what percentage of these devices are provided by and paid for by the organisation and how many employees use their own personal devices for work purposes.

3.2 Work-Life Balance

There are positives to advances in mobile technology. It has provided people with opportunities that would not have been available to them before mobile technology became a part of our everyday lives (Berg, Mortberg & Jansson, 2005). Technology has increased employees productivity, flexibility and has allowed it become more common place for employees to be contacted at any time of the day or night, i.e. "24/7 uninterrupted connectivity to human and information resources" (Sarker et al, 2012).

This study aims to identify the negative affects technology has on individuals work and personal lives. It also intends to discover the reasons why individuals allow technology to influence their daily activities in both their personal and working life. It would also be interesting to determine which of the three perspectives Sarker et al. (2012) talks about, accurately describes this studies participants attitudes to work-life balance.

Compartmentalisation is described as when an individual demands that their work life and personal life remain completely separate. Any overlap of one into the other will not be tolerated. Individuals who demand this type of work-life balance will use mobile technology to get their work done

efficiently but they will under no circumstances voluntarily use it after work hours Sarker et al, 2012).

The overlapping perspective occurs when the emotional and behavioural boundaries of both work life and personal life overlap in both positive and negative ways. Employees with this perspective don't mind 'spillovers' of their work life into their personal life, but they have a 'zone of tolerance'. They will not let their work life interfere too much with their personal life (Sarker et al. 2015).

The encompassing perspective exists when individuals have no boundaries between their work life and their personal life. Individuals with this work-life balance perspective are career driven and will always put their work first (Sarker et al, 2012).

As described in the literature review, Zedeck, Mosier and O'Driscoll (cited in Guest 2002) describe a number of models that can be used to explain the relationship between an individual's work life and personal life. Each of these models describe how technology has impacted employees' lives in today's modern society. As an element of the research, the author will ask participants structured questions in order to establish which of the three models is most relevant to describe employees' work-personal life relationship today.

This study also aims to establish what type of employees i.e. what position they hold in the organisation, use technology the most during both their working hours and personal time.

CIPD (2013 B) report found that employees have a clear desire to limit and if possible, separate their working lives from their personal lives. This leads to a research question aimed at managers, on how they plan to limit and regulate the use of mobile devices to contact colleagues during non-regular work hours. Also for employees, are they willing to limit their use of mobile devices for work related communication during their personal time?

3.3 Stress

Advances in technology have greatly impacted occupational stress in many organisations. All businesses are at risk of occupational stress levels increasing. Employers must accept the challenge of combating long term effects of occupational stress for both the employers and employees benefit (CIPD, 2015).

Generally, there are four approaches organisations can use to minimise occupational stress. These include policy, procedure and system audit, problem-centred approach, well-being approach and an employee centred approach. Employers may also use measures such as stress management techniques to prevent stress in the workplace (CIPD, 2015).

Stress is a major cause of ill-health in employees. Many individuals suffer both joint and muscle pain. This can be caused by a number of reasons such as heavy workloads and time restrictions (Clarke, 2001). This study aims to discover whether technology has positively or negatively influenced the level and type of stress felt by employees.

This study also aims to discover what stress management methods are used by employers and what the employees think of the procedures that are currently in place. This study also want to determine what the participants would change in their workplace to reduce occupational stress.

This study wants to investigate whether employees are willing to endure the extra stress of bigger workloads and longer hours in order to keep their jobs.

The study anticipants hearing employees' opinions on how mobile technology and the increasingly popular 'virtual office' has affected relationships in the workplace. Do colleagues communicate more frequently through emails and conference calls rather than face-to-face?

The economic downturn has greatly impacted how organisations operate. Many have cut costs by offering redundancies and not replacing employee who hand in their notice. This put extra workloads in the remaining employees. It will be interesting to discover these participants' views on how they cope with the increasing workload and pressure to get things done quickly and efficiently with a reduced number of employees. Are these employees willing to extend their regular working hours in order to meet these extra demands?

4.0 Research Methodology

The author used qualitative research in this study because the purpose of this data collection method is to give the researcher a greater understanding of participants' views on the topic being studied. This study

aims to gain a greater insight into participants' views on how technology has impacted and changed their work-life balance.

Qualitative research was chosen as the research method for this study because it allows more flexibility in the way the research is conducted. There are multiple data collection methods the author can use such as focus groups, interviews, case studies and action research. These methods are more suitable in this research topic than the constricting method of surveys that quantitative research is limited to.

Quantitative data collection methods such as surveys were not used in this study because the author felt this data collection method was too impersonal for this study. Surveys are usually seen as a nuisance by the individuals who complete them. This leads to individuals quickly skimming over the questions and ticking random boxes. Surveys do not give participants the opportunity to give the opinions in detail, like interviews do. Other limitations of using surveys include participants not completing the survey fully or interpreting a question in a different way than it was intended.

Structured Interviews were used as the data collection method in this study. This allows the interviewer to ask relevant questions and probe for a deeper opinion from participants. Data collected in interviews is more descriptive than that collected in surveys, which allows for a deeper analysis.

When conducting interviews, the author ensured they were consistent by asking all participants the same main questions. How participants answer

these main questions will determine what sub-questions the author would ask next. These questions were useful to steer the conversation if it started to go off topic.

It is important that the participant is not influenced by the interviewers' reaction to their answer to a question they have just answered (Hunter, 2006). It is important that the interviewer does not show their emotions to how a participant answers a question, if they do not necessarily agree with what they have said.

The author used McCracken (1988) "long interview" technique to conduct the interviews. This technique has four steps. Firstly, the researcher has an in-depth understanding of relevant academic literature on the topics of technology and work-life balance.

Secondly, the researcher must understand the research question themselves (Hunter, 2006). If they do not fully understand what they are trying to answer, then the participants in the study will have a hard time understanding what the study is trying to find out.

The third step in this interview technique is to let the participant tell their story. The final step in McCracken's 'long interview' technique is to analyse the interview transcripts to identify themes (Hunter, 2006).

There are different types of questions the interviewer used at different stages of the interview. Generally the opening questions were general and

non-directive in manner. These questions helped the participants ease into the conversation and become more comfortable talking to the interviewer.

The interviewer then used structured questions, also known as “floating prompt” questions to steer the conversation onto a particular topic for discussion (Hunter, 2006). These questions help the interviewer direct participant to talk about topics they need information on in order to have relevant data for analysis.

Towards the end of the conversation, the interviewer used “planned prompt” questions. These can be used to ask participants questions about issues that may have been raised in pervious interviews, with different participants (Hunter, 2006).

The author encouraged the participants to describe their opinions and experiences in detail. This ensure the author has in-depth data to analyse.

Following the approaches of Murphy and Dotherty (2011) and Sarker et al. (2012) this study involved face to face interviews with seven participants. This allowed the interviewer to ask particular questions to the interviewee depending on their answers to previous questions.

Given the nature of the questions and the type of detailed answers the author had anticipated to receive, in order to conduct conclusive analysis, it was feasible to conduct interviews with the participants in the sample. The time frame in which the research is to be carried out allows for interviews and analysis to be completed.

4.1 Sample

The author has chosen to conduct their study on how technology has effected work-life balance on the Irish aviation company Aer Lingus. The company is divided into three main areas. 'In the air' (pilots and cabin crew), 'On the ground' (ground operations) and 'In the Office' (support operations) (AerLingus, 2015).

Aer Lingus' traditional Ground Operations department structure composed of four areas. These are engineering, planning/records, materials and stores.

Within the engineering department there are several roles that are required to be carried out. These include

- Evaluation of technical documents and appropriate instructions issued to planning.
- Maintaining Aircraft Structural damage evaluation and issuing instruction on repair to planning
- Maintaining an efficient aircraft Maintenance schedule, tasks to be performed at pre-determined interval and grouped together to form a check to be carried out on the aircraft at hanger visit, e.g., 50hour, 3 day, 1000hour 20months etc. Up to 3000 individual tasks per aircraft type.
- Power plant section: daily monitoring of engine condition and dealing with vendors, average shop visit to repair an engine can cost 6 million dollars. About 12 engines per year are repaired (Meaney, 2015).

Within the planning and records department roles include

- Short-term planning involves ensuring the aircraft maintenance scheduled as issued by the engineering department is implemented in a timely manner not to exceed their limits and ensure all work is distributed evenly across the week. Work carried out in Hanger 6, usually at night.
- Long-term planning involves ensuring the aircraft maintenance scheduled as issued by the engineering department is implemented in a timely manner, not to exceed their limits. This is carried out over the winter months when there is less requirement for aircraft to maintain the schedule. Checks can take up to 2 week to complete. Work carried out by a third party provider.
- Component-planning involves maintaining aircraft records in accordance with IATA guidelines; Provide long and short term engine/component removal plan based on individual engine limit and spares availability. Up to 2500 records per aircraft. System called AMOS used to control and maintain aircraft records and limits.
- All paperwork raised during the aircraft life is stored by aircraft registration and is considered part of the aircraft history. Aer Lingus are unable to operate or sell the aircraft if this is not maintained. Regular audits by the IAA (Meaney, 2015).

Employees in the materials department carry out duties such as

- Procurement of aircraft spares to ensure parts are available to maintain our fleet without grounding the aircraft, costs is a huge factor; all parts

removed/installed are recorded. Chasing suppliers to ensure parts are returned after repair in a timely and agreed manner (Meaney, 2015).

- Respond to AOG (Aircraft on ground) situations.
- Responsible for the stores at Dublin and out stations. Estimated 8000 parts in stock with a value of approximately €100 million (Meaney, 2015).

Employees in the stores department carry out duties that include

- Itemising all parts and storing them in a secure location to be retrieved at short notice, AMOS used to control this.
- Receive in all repaired/new parts and load on to AMOS (Aircraft Maintenance Overhaul System) and place on shelf.
- Pack and ship unserviceable parts to vendors for repair.

All of these duties carried out by employees in these departments are aided by advances in technology.

Currently a new structure is being trialled in the maintenance department called "Value Streaming". A value stream can be defined as all of the steps required to take a product or service from its starting point all the way through to the customer (Meaney, 2015). This involves taking key players from each of the departments above to support line maintenance for both Aircraft types, Airbus 320 and Airbus 330.

The TEAM is headed up by a Value Stream Manager from Line maintenance, a certified engineer, and takes the responsibility for maintaining the aircraft and ensuring it is fit for flight and is on time.

The author interviewed employees from the ground operations department within Aer Lingus. Interviewees varied from all of the mentioned departments which covered varying pay grades and skill level and length of service. Technology is an essential element in these employees working lives. Aer Lingus relies heavily on technology to operate efficiently. It is paramount that they are at the fore front of aviation technology. All departments use computer software which generate plans and schedules for operations. Senior employees would be on call when big projects are being handled such as the selling of aircraft (Meaney, 2015).

4.2 Ethical Considerations

Participants were concerned about client confidentiality. A confidentiality agreement was drafted for participants to sign which will guarantee full anonymity in this study (See appendix A).

The author will inform participants what the study is about and why the study is being conducted, which is why their participation is required and appreciated in the success of the study.

Due to the Aer Lingus' high media profile in recent months, the participants did not want to be recorded during the interview. The author respected this request and asked permission to take notes during the interview, all participants agreed.

When the study is completed and results are established, participants were given a copy of the findings.

4.3 Research Measures

4.3.1 What the Interviews Involved

In order to receive permission to conduct this study in employees in Aer Lingus' Ground Operations department, the author contacted a senior engineer with the engineering department. This individual granted permission and organised security clearance for the author to come into Aer Lingus' offices to conduct the interviews. Seven Interviews were conducted in July and August 2015.

Organising the interviews involved contacting each participant and arranging a date and time for when they were available to meet. On the day of the interview the author gave the participant the confidentiality agreement to sign. This was signed by both the participant and the author. The participants explained to the author that they did not want the interview to be recorded. The author agreed to their request and took hand written notes during each interview. In order not to forget anything, the author wrote the transcript of each interview on the same day the interview took place. Some of the participants were under time constraints and therefore some interviews have more detail than others.

4.3.2 Constructing the Interview Questions

The author analysed previous studies to determine how they constructed their research questions. For example, Murphy and Doherty (2011) used a semi structured interview approach in their study. They created a number of 'main' interview questions and decided that depending on the respond

they received from the interviewee, they would ask sub-questions. This gave the interviewers flexibility in what they could ask during each interview. They were not restricted to asking exactly the same questions in each interview.

The interview questions address the studies research objects as the author insured to carefully construct the main questions and sub-questions to reflect the aims of the study. This was done by reviewing and analysing current literature in the research topics of technology, work-life balance and occupational stress. Identifying areas in these topics that have not been explored in depth and designed interview questions based on what the study wishes to find out.

4.4 Data Analysis

Due to the similarity of this research to Sarker et al. (2012) singular case study approach, the author will also use an interpretive approach when analysing data. The author used this approach to develop a comprehensive understanding of the participants' views and aims, interpreting these perspectives in a logical framework.

The author conducted seven interviews with employees from the ground operations department in Aer Lingus. The participants vary in the length of service they have in the company, their age, the position and their personal profile. Participant's positions include senior aircraft planners, aircraft maintenance planners, deputy material manager, A320 structures engineer and administrative assistant.

The participants agreed to partake in the study and signed the non-disclosure agreement (appendix A). Due to the Aer Lingus' high media profile in recent months, the participants did not want to be recorded during the interview. The author respected this request and asked permission to take notes during the interview, all participants agreed. Participants' identify will be kept confidential therefore in the analysis section, participants will be called participant A, B, C, and so on.

The interviews took place in July and August 2015 in AerLingus's head office in Dublin Airport. Due to the time restrictions on the participants, interviews were conducted as long as the participant had time to be away from their duties. The author was conscious of these time restrictions and ensured to ask the most important questions first so that the data collected was relevant to the study.

The author decided to use a thematic approach to analyse the data collected from the interviews. This data analysis method was chosen because it is an independent and reliable approach in "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns with data" (Braun and Clarke, 2006 pp. 79, cited in Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas, 2013). There are six phases in thematic analysis, which are outlined in the table 1.

Analysis phases and their descriptions

Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 87)

Familiarising with data

Transcribing data, reading and rereading the data, noting down initial ideas.

Generating initial codes

Coding interesting features of the data systematically across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.

Searching for themes

Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.

Reviewing themes

Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts and the entire data set, generating a thematic map.

Defining and naming themes

Ongoing analysis for refining the specifics of each theme and the overall story that the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

Producing the report

The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a report of the analysis.

(Vaismoradi, Turunen and Bondas, 2013 pp. 402)

The first step in in the thematic approach is organising the data. The author done this by writing the transcripts of the interviews after they had taken place. Due to the participants request not to be recorded, the author was limited to using memory and hand written notes taken during the interview to write the transcripts. The author chose to write the transcripts of the conversations on the evening the interviews took place so that the conservation was fresh in their memory and nothing important would be forgotten.

The author identified patterns in the data and established four themes. These are work-life balance, communication, stress and technology.

5.0 Results

Below is a table outlining the studies participants' gender, role in the company and length of service in the company.

Name	Gender	Role	Age	Length of service
Participant A	Female	Aircraft Maintenance Planner	50	18 years
Participant B	Male	Senior Aircraft Planner	52	35 Years
Participant C	Male	Aircraft Maintenance Planner	42	15 Years
Participant D	Male	A320 Structures Engineer	28	3 Years
Participant E	Male	Senior Aircraft Planner	54	29 Years
Participant F	Male	Deputy Material Manager	39	24 Years
Participant G	Female	Administrative Assistant	30	2 Years

5.1 Technology

The most common mobile devices used during work hours are smartphones and laptops. This study aimed to determine out of the employees who use

mobile devices for work purposes, what percentage of these devices are provided by and paid for by the organisation and how many employees use their own personal devices for work purposes.

The study found that long serving employees had the laptop supplied by the company. The A320 structures engineer also had his laptop supplied by the company as his job required him to be contactable through emails.

The participants were asked if the company reimbursed them for using their own phones to make work calls. The overwhelming answer was no, the company does not reimburse staff for work related phone calls made on their personal phones. Participant C only has a work phone so the company does pay for his phone calls. Participant B said that there is a way of reimbursement for these calls but it is not worth the paperwork and does not bother filling it out anymore.

5.2 Work-life balance

One of this study's research objectives was to determine which of the three perspectives Sarker et al. (2012) talks about (compartmentalisation, overlapping and encompassing), accurately describes this study's participants' attitudes to work-life balance.

Participant D is an A320 Structures Engineer who has been with the company for three years. This participant explained how when they first joined the airline, they found it very difficult to separate their work life from their personal life. They have so many projects running at the same time, he was worried about them on his time off and could not relax. He would spend

a couple of hours on his day off, using the company laptop to check the progress of these projects. Within a couple of months, the stress was becoming overwhelming so he took his manager aside to explain to him that he was becoming overwhelmed with the pressure and would need longer deadlines for particular projects or he would need someone to help him with the projects.

Participants were asked if they had their work emails synced to their personal devices such as their mobile phone and three out of the seven said yes. Participant F said that they always have their work emails synced to their phone. "As I am in a managerial position, is it expected that I am contactable all the time whether it is by phone or email".

Participant A, who has worked in the company for 18 years, said they definitely would not have their work emails synced to their personal phone because they like to keep their work life and personal life separate "I do not like my work impeding on my personal time".

One of the studies research objectives was to investigate the participants' work/personal life relationship and how technology has impacted this relationship.

The main emerging themes from the data is that participants felt that due to mobile technology being in every part of their lives, they can never full switch off from work, "You are always on call" (Participant E). They are always contactable by some method, whether it is by phone or by emails. Participants feel that it is becoming the norm to answer work related phone

calls and emails during your personal time as you would answer a personal phone call or text message during your free time.

The study found that even though participants find that technology has negative effects on their WLB, it also has some positives on their WLB. Participant C said that mobile devices are an advantage for them because “there may be times I need to be at home for a family reason but I can still complete my full work role off site”. While participant E said technology is positive for them because positive because “it can save you going to the office each day, or returning to the office to address a particular issue”.

Participants were asked if staff are contacted during their personal time. The study found that there are no official procedures for contacting staff on during their personal time, staff are usually only contacted if there are issues that no one else who is currently working can fix or if approval for a particular job is required from the deputy manager.

Participant B explained how they took two days annual leave (Thursday and Friday) to go away for a long weekend with their partner, but there was an engine change scheduled on these days that the participant were taking off. The individual had to answer work-related phone calls on the Thursday evening because there was an issue with a mechanical part for the new engine and the participant was required to oversee the issue using the company laptop on their annual leave. The following morning, the individual was required to check the progress of the engine change on the laptop.

Communication with this employee was necessary due to the nature of the job that was being carried out by the team that they are a part of. The participant explained that due to the seriousness of the job that was being carried out, they did not mind being contacted during their annual leave. They explained that if they were contacted for an issue that someone who was working in the office at that time could have sorted out, then it would have bothered them being contacted during their annual leave.

5.3 Communication

The study anticipated hearing employees' opinions on how mobile technology and the increasingly popular 'virtual office' has affected relationships in the workplace. Do colleagues communicate more frequently through emails and conference calls rather than face-to-face?

The study found that the most commonly used means of communication between colleagues is through email. Although the majority of participants stated that they would prefer to talk to their colleagues face to face.

"We operate a value stream policy in the maintenance dept., so communication within our group is verbal; most of the remainder is via email in order to keep a record of the transaction" (Participant B).

Although participant D stated that the method of communication they use, depends on the situation. "If an issue of high importance occurs you need to cover yourself that you asked a colleague to do something. Therefore you need to send an email as proof. A verbal agreement holds no weight when the deadline passes and the task hasn't been completed".

Participants were asked whether they stayed at their desk for their lunch and the majority stated that they leave their desk because they do not want to be disturbed during their short lunch break. Any emails that come in during this time can be replied when the individual returns to their desk. Participant A stated “I like to take a break and not be disturbed”.

5.4 Stress

The study found that there are many factors that influence employees stress levels. These include lack of resources, time constraints, and heavy workloads, lack of training and unrealistic expectations. Technology has influenced these stresses by making it common place for employees to answer work emails late at night and while on annual leave.

One of the studies research objectives was to discover how the participants cope with increasing workloads and pressure to get things done quickly and efficiently with a reduced number of employees. Are these employees willing to extend their regular working hours in order to meet these extra demands?

The study found that when employees are stressed, they feel that they have to carry on as normal. One participant explained that “in terms of high volume of workload or the case where an aircraft is grounded the stress levels are high and there is no choice but to carry on and rectify the situation”. Although participants did state that their own workload would be similar to that of their colleagues around them, so there is a similar amount of pressure on everyone in the office.

Participants were asked if they have ever felt joint or muscle pain when they have a heavy workload. Four out of the seven participants said yes. Participant A said that they do get muscle pain and a stiff back from sitting at the desk all day, and sometimes they suffer with pains in their wrist from using the computer all day.

The study found that the majority of employees are unaware of any company policies and procedures that were drawn up to help employees suffering from occupational stress. One participant explained that there are guidelines in the health and safety statement, but is unsure if has ever been put into practice.

“We have a safety statement, 127 pages long, part of it deals with respect and dignity in the workplace. Stress is mentioned and a procedure involving your local manager and the company doctor, but I don’t know if it has been tested, especially in a predominately male environment” (Participant B).

One of the studies research objectives was to learn what policies and procedures the employees would put in place to limit technology’s impact on stress and work-life balance.

Participant F, who is a Deputy Materials Manager stated that he would ensure to enforce a no contact policy when employees are on leave. This will ensure all employees get both a physical and mental break from their job for the duration of their leave. This would allow employees to relax and enjoy their time off and not worry about being contacted by the office if there is an issue. Someone else will have to find a solution.

The participants were asked what policies and procedures would they put in place to reduce occupational stress in their working environment. The results found that the office layout and break room facilities, not the canteen, are the main things employees would change. One participant described the office as too clinical and staff morale is low.

6.0 Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine how advances in mobile technology have affected employees' work-life balance. This study focuses on the increase of mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets being used for work purposes during work hours and for work-related matters during an employees' personal time. Advances in technology have greatly impacted occupational stress in many organisations. This study investigated how employees deal with occupational stress and what policies and procedures employers put in place to help minimise the adverse effects of occupational stress on both the employee and employer.

The study found that technology has influenced employee's work-life balance in both positive and negative ways. It is up to the employee to regulate how much they allow their work-life impact their personal life. If one of life is taking over the other, it is the employee who needs to stand up for themselves and talk to management about the issues they are having. The study found that mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets never allow the employees to completely switch off from work. This contributes to occupational stresses employees' experience.

CIPD (2013 B) report found that 58% of employees surveyed agreed that mobile devices helps make their work more flexible. The findings of this study agree with this CIPD report as the participants expressed how they appreciate having the flexibility to work from home. For example, if there was a family situation where they were required to stay at home, but they could keep up with their work by using the company smartphone or laptop to work from home.

ComReg (2014) report that there were 5,626,398 mobile subscriptions in Ireland in 2013 and the mobile penetration rate was up 103.3% on the previous year. This study found that six out of the seven participants possessed a personal smartphone and two of the six participants also had company smartphones and laptops. As the Comreg (2014) report shows that there were over five million mobile subscriptions made in Ireland in 2013, it would be interesting for a further study to be carried out to discover how many of these mobile descriptions were individuals' personal phones and how many of the mobile subscriptions were for company/commercial use.

Sarket et al (2012) describe 'temporal servitude' as being on call 24/7, which can negatively affect employees' health and well-being. This can then affect their job performance and satisfaction. The findings of this study agree with Sarker et al (2012) as participant described how they can feel that they can never fully switch off from work, especially when they have their mobile phone beside them.

One participant described how they do not like any kind of spillover from their work-life into their personal life. They make a point of keeping them separate. This participant does not like that technological advances have changed employer's expectations on their employees but being contactable 24/7. The study agrees with Sarker et al's (2012) work-life balance compartmentalisation perspective. These individuals rate their personal life as their primary concern and their working life as secondary.

Guest's (2002) spillover model and Sarker et al's (2012) overlapping perspective describes how emotional and behavioural tendencies from one life affect the other life, in either positive or negative ways. Most people don't mind some degree of spillover of work into their personal lives, such as using a smartphone to check work emails during personal time, once it does not become too excessive. The finding of this study suggest that the majority of employees have an overlapping work-life balance perspective. Employees do not mind being contacted for work purposes during their personal time, if the issue cannot wait until they return to work. From a ground operation perspective, if there is an issue with a mechanical part of an engine and a senior engineer's guidance is required in order to fix the issue, a senior engineer will have to be contacted whether they are annual leave or working in the office.

The author recognises the concept behind Sarker et al's (2012) encompassing perspective, when an individual sees no separation of their work life and personal life. The finding of this study suggest that there are

very limited number of employees who would have this work-life balance perspective. Perhaps, further research could be carried out on this work-life balance perspective and the types of individuals who have this work-life balance perspective.

The findings of this study suggest that Guest's (2002) conflict model can occur in the ground operations department. As the duties carried out by employees in this department can determine whether an aircraft is mechanically safe to fly. At times employees may be required to work late nights and in some cases travel for important meetings. This demanding work-life can have negative impacts on the individuals' personal life.

Wright et al. (2014) found that individuals who have a positive attitude towards the use of communication technologies for work-related purposes after regular work hours are more likely to have minimal work-life conflict. They also suggest that workers seem to have come to expect work life to interfere in their personal lives as work emails are connected to their smartphone. Boswell and Olson-Bushanan (2007) study found that "employees with higher ambition and job involvement were more likely to use communication technologies after hours".

The findings of this current study indicate indicates that employees who have worked in the company for almost 20 years are embracing the advances in mobile technologies and are willing to use laptops and mobile phones for work purposes during their personal time. This study agrees with Wright et al. (2014) as almost all of the studies participants had a positive

attitude towards smartphones and tablets being used for work-related purposes outside of regular work hours. This would disagree with Boswell and Olson-Bushanan's (2007) findings as all employees have high ambition and are willing to answer work-related calls and emails during their personal time because they know that work would only be contacting them if there was an issue that could not be fixed without them.

Soylu and Campbell (2012 pp. 132) propose in their study that "the advanced technology in the workplace imposes additional emotional and physical stresses on business office employees, managers and executives".

The findings of this current study agree with Soylu and Campbell (2012) as the findings showed how a participant's manager recognised the stress he was under and realised that having the employee work at home on these projects on his days off as well as working on them during office hours was putting the employee's health at risk and therefore reduced the amount of pressure put on this employee by reducing his work load. This employee explained how he will still use mobile devices to check the progress of important projects during his personal time, but has decided to limit this to one hour maximum on his days off, and only for important issues that cannot wait until he returns to the office.

Participant C, who is an aircraft maintenance planner who has been working for the company for fifteen years, explains how mobile devices has positively influenced their life because "there may be times that I need to be at home but I can still complete my full work role off site". This shows

that it is not only employees with higher ambition that are more likely to use mobile technology for work purposes during their personal time.

This study found that mobile technology has influenced employee's work-life balance in both positive and negative ways. The boundary line between an employees work life and personal life is almost non-existent in some cases. It is important those responsible for occupational health, define a policy about virtual work in order to prevent employees becoming overwhelmed with disproportionately high workloads, which in the long term can have negative effects on that employees personal life (Rafnsdottir and Stefansson, 2014).

Based on the findings of the current research the author agrees with Rafnsdottir and Stefansson as a number of the studies participants indicated that employees would benefit from official company procedures that are actually put in place and put into action. Participant E stated "I would like to ensure that all employees are given information to be aware of stress and how to recognise its effects on your health and well-being. Employees should be given information on how to reduce stress and what facilities are available to help reduce stress".

Limitations

There were many constraints that the author has to manage when carrying out this research.

It was difficult to arrange times to meet the participants due to their family and work commitments. Interviews had to be arranged for a time that suited the participants.

The participants were concerned about their privacy during this study and therefore requested that the interviews were not voice recorded. The participants agreed to allow the author take hand written notes during the interview. Confidentiality agreements were signed by both the researcher and the participants to ensure full anonymity during and after the research has concluded.

There was a possibility that participants may become distressed during the interview if they become uncomfortable answering a question they were asked by the author. The author recognised that the participant was becoming distressed and withdrew the question, therefore eliminating the participant's distress.

Interviewees reserved the right to ask the author to remove a part of their interview from the data analysis.

7.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of this study was to understand the negative effects that advances in mobile technology has on work-life balance. The results of the study indicates that technology has impacted employees' work-life balance, but it has both positive and negative consequences. It is up to the individual to control how much they allow technology influence their work-life balance. If someone does not want to be contactable for work related matters, they should have the control to turn off their mobile devices (smartphone, laptop, and tablet) so that their work life will not impede on their personal life.

The study found that the younger generation of employees accept the overlap of work and personal life, and they seem to accept that this is the way the future is going. Employers are beginning to expect that their employees will answer work-related phone calls and emails at any time of the day or night.

The Implications of this may have negative effects on both the employee and employer in the long term. For example, if an employee is starting out in his career, they want to make a good impression with their employer by working overtime and answering work related phone calls and emails during their personal time. The employee is happy to do this and puts the effort in, but if being called numerous times a day, on your day off or after you have finished a day's work, this may become overwhelming and may adversely affect the employees' health both mentally and physically.

The author recommends that if an employee is in a situation like this, they approach their manager and explain to them that they need to limit the amount of calls and emails they answer during their personal time as the current amount of calls received are harming their health.

The employer should have policies and procedures in place that allow employees to openly come to management and talk about issues such as an overwhelming workload, without the employee worrying that there will be negative repercussions on them.

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Appendix A

Non-Disclosure Agreement

The Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to understand the negative effects that advances in mobile technology has on work-life balance.

The study will involve interviews with a sample participants in order to gain a deeper understanding of the participants working lives and opinions on technologies influence on their work-life balance. An interpretive approach will be used when analysing data to conclude with comprehensive findings.

Information for the participant

This non-disclosure agreement informs the participant of the purpose of their involvement in this study.

Participants will partake in a semi-structured interview, which will be recorded on the interviewers mobile device and the interviewer my take notes. The interview will be transcribed for analysis purposes.

Upon signing this agreement, the participant is guaranteed full anonymity. Their name will never be referred to or released at any time during the study or after this study has been concluded.

All data collected, both electronic and transcripts, will be held for a period of one year after the date it was collected. After this period has ended, all data will be destroyed.

By signing this agreement the participant agrees to their comments and opinions being used in the data analysis for this research study. I do not foresee any negative consequences on the participant as a result of their participation on this study.

Participants hold the right to withdraw their comments on a whole or partly, at any stage during the interview and data analysis stages. After the data analysis has been completed and research conclusions have been reached, participants wave the right for their comment and opinions being removed from the study.

Upon this study being concluded, submitted and marked by dissertation examiners, all participants will be given a copy of the study's conclusions.

Confidentiality Agreement

I _____ have read and fully understand the terms and conditions outlined above regarding being a participant in this research study.

I give my permission to be recorded and my comments and opinions to be used on an anonymous basis for data analysis purposes of this research project.

I am participating in this research study on a voluntary basis and I will not be compensated for my participation.

Signed

Participant

Appendix B

Name	Participant A
Position	Aircraft Maintenance planner
Length of Service	18 yrs

Mobile Devices

Interviewer: What mobile devices do you use during work hours to communicate with colleagues?

Interviewee: I use my mobile phone and emails to communicate with colleagues.

Interviewer: Do you use mobile devices such a smartphone or laptop outside of 'normal work hours', for work purposes?

Interviewee: Yes I use a laptop and a smartphone.

Interviewer: Did your employer provide you with these devices?

Interviewee: The laptop was given to me by my manager and the phone is my personal mobile.

Interviewer: Does the company reimburse you for calls made on your personal phone for work related matters during your personal time? Would you expect your employer to pay for these calls?

Interviewee: No I am not reimbursed for work calls during my days off.

Interviewer: In your opinion, are employees willing to limit their use of mobile devices such as smartphones outside of work hours?

Interviewee: Yes I think they are.

Interviewer: Are your work emails synced to your personal devices i.e. smartphone, tablet?

Interviewee: No, definitely not. I do not like work impeding on my personal time.

Interviewer: Do you answer work emails during your personal time?

Interviewee: I cover weekend shifts every few weeks so this is the only time I will answer work emails during my personal time.

Interviewer: Would you check your phone first thing in the morning and before you go to bed?

Interviewee: Yes I do.

Work-Life Balance

Interviewer: What is your opinion on advances in mobile technology and do you think it has impacted work-life balance?

Interviewee: Advances in mobile technology are amazing but means you are always contactable and you never really switch off from work.

Interviewer: Do you find it difficult to separate your work life and personal life?

Interviewee: No, because I make a point of separating them.

Interviewer: Do you find that they can overlap? Does this bother you?

Interviewee: They could but I don't allow it. What bothers me is that it seems to be becoming the norm and I feel that people are feeling pressured into it.

Interviewer: Are there company procedures in place for contacting staff who are on annual leave or out of the office for the day?

Interviewee: No there is not.

Interviewer: To your knowledge, are staff contacted during their personal time? For what purposes are they contacted?

Interviewee: Yes, if there are queries from line maintenance or any problems arise.

Interviewer: Have you ever been contacted by your employer for work related matters, during your personal time? If yes, did this bother you?

Interviewee: Yes, a little. I would not like it to be the norm.

Interviewer: When you finish work for the day, can you switch off and enjoy your personal time?

Interviewee: I make a point of trying to but it's not always possible currently.

Communication

Interviewer: Would you find that you communicate with colleagues through face to face communication or through electronic communication i.e. emails?

Interviewee: Both, depending on proximity.

Interviewer: When you take your lunch, do you leave your desk? Why?

Interviewee: Most of the time. I like to take a break and not be disturbed.

Interviewer: Do you think you concentrate better after your lunch if you have eaten your lunch away from your desk?

Interviewee: I am much more productive on days that I have left for lunch. I feel rested and alert.

Stress

Interviewer: What are the causes of stress in your job?

Interviewee: Not having all the tools necessary to do the job, not having adequate up to date training, unrealistic expectations concerning workloads, unfair treatment, and unequal workloads.

Interviewer: When you feel stressed in work, do you feel that you have to carry on as normal, so that your colleagues do not realise how stressed you are?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: How many days per year would you miss from work due to ill health?

Interviewee: 3-4 days.

Interviewer: Stress can affect everyone differently, both physically and mentally. Have you ever felt joint and muscle pain when you have a heavy workload?

Interviewee: Yes, definitely muscle pain and sometime my back gets stiff from being at a desk all day.

Interviewer: What is your opinion on mobile communication devices affecting stress levels in your working environment?

Interviewee: It overloads you and you are expected to answer call, e mails, other queries as well as doing your normal duties.

Interviewer: To your knowledge, are there company policies and procedures in place to deal with employees suffering from occupational stress?

Interviewee: We have a health and safety programme.

Interviewer: Do you think there procedures help the employees reduce their stress over time?

Interviewee: It depends on the manager.

Interviewer: What policies and procedures would you put in place to reduce stress in your workplace and improve employee wellbeing?

Interviewee: listen to what employees are telling you; be aware of staff moral; have regular meetings with staff; have an open door policy and no negative consequences to reporting that you are suffering from stress

Name	Participant B
Position	Senior Aircraft Planner
Length of Service	35 Years

Mobile Devices

Interviewer: What mobile devices do you use during work hours to communicate with colleagues?

Interviewee: I use my mobile phone.

Interviewer: Do you use mobile devices such a smartphone or laptop outside of 'normal work hours', for work purposes?

Interviewee: Yes, I use a laptop and mobile phone.

Interviewer: Did your employer provide you with these devices?

Interviewee: My employer gave me the laptop, which I did not necessarily want. My phone is personal.

Interviewer: Does the company reimburse you for calls made on your personal phone for work related matters during your personal time? Would you expect your employer to pay for these calls?

Interviewee: There is a means of reimbursement but not worth the paperwork, so I no longer claim it.

Interviewer: In your opinion, are employees willing to limit their use of mobile devices such as smartphones outside of work hours?

Interviewee: No I don't think they are.

Interviewer: Are your work emails synced to your personal devices i.e. smartphone, tablet?

Interviewee: No. I only use my phone for personal phone calls and texts.

Interviewer: Do you answer work emails during your personal time?

Interviewee: Yes, on the laptop.

Interviewer: Would you check your phone first thing in the morning and before you go to bed?

Interviewee: No. I do not have my phone on me all the time, so it is not important to me to check it all the time.

Work-Life Balance

Interviewer: What is your opinion on advances in mobile technology and do you think it has impacted work-life balance?

Interviewee: I believe there is an over reliance on mobile technology, it has made us more available and therefore advantages will be taken by management, but it is with us to stay so we need to accept and adapt.

Interviewer: In your opinion, has technology had any positive/negative effects on your work-life balance? Explain.

Interviewee: Negative, having started my career without such technology I believe work has been created around the availability of new technology, when you left work, contact generally was only in emergency, now we use it to just pass on information, “to keep you in the picture” usually of little relevance.

Interviewer: Do you find it difficult to separate your work life and personal life?

Interviewee: No, but you need to practice to maintain it.

Interviewer: Do you find that they can overlap? Does this bother you?

Interviewee: Yes it can overlap, as I am part of a 24/7 team but work Monday to Friday. But as stated contact is only in an emergency, most issues can wait.

Interviewer: Are there company procedures in place for contacting staff who are on annual leave or out of the office for the day?

Interviewee: Not that I’m aware of, as it is now generally acceptable call someone at any time regardless of their personnel circumstances, again we make ourselves to accessible.

Interviewer: To your knowledge, are staff contacted during their personal time? For what purposes are they contacted?

Interviewee: Yes, but usually between a group of managers who believe that they need to know, we do have very qualified people covering the late shifts and weekends for aircraft that have technical issues but the decision

making process has been removed from their hands, the thinking can be to kick it up the grade to our senior management, we have seen a change here where problems are now micro managed.

Interviewer: Have you ever been contacted by your employer for work related matters, during your personal time? If yes, did this bother you?

Interviewee: I am contacted regularly usually between 4 and 7 in the evening; no I don't have a problem with it as part of my job requirement/grade, lower grades less calls.

Interviewer: When you finish work for the day, can you switch off and enjoy your personal time?

Interviewee: Yes, again this something you need to practice at, you need to leave your work at work and not over involve your family.

Communication

Interviewer: Would you find that you communicate with colleagues through face to face communication or through electronic communication i.e. emails?

Interviewee: We operate a value stream policy in the maintenance dept., so communication within our group is verbal; most of the remainder is via e-mail in order to keep a record of the transaction.

Interviewer: When you take your lunch, do you leave your desk? Why?

Interviewee: No, canteen facilities aren't great so I bring my own lunch and do some personnel work at my desk followed by a short walk.

Interviewer: Do you think you concentrate better after your lunch if you have eaten your lunch away from your desk?

Interviewee: I do recommend taking a break from the desk but not having a big lunch, but I think in general concentration levels are down in the afternoon in any job.

Stress

Interviewer: What are the causes of stress in your job?

Interviewee: The nature of our business can be stress full but recently the lack of resources and budget cut backs are beginning to show, people with specific tasks not being replaced and the workload being distributed. Too many meetings and taking too long, agenda not being adhered to.

Interviewer: When you feel stressed in work, do you feel that you have to carry on as normal, so that your colleagues do not realise how stressed you are?

Interviewee: Yes, this can happen but you are aware of your own limits so there are ways of coping with situations.

Interviewer: How many days per year would you miss from work due to ill health?

Interviewee: 2 max, flu usually....

Interviewer: Stress can affect everyone differently, both physically and mentally. Have you ever felt joint and muscle pain when you have a heavy workload?

Interviewee: Yes, stress creates tension within your muscle group.

Interviewer: What is your opinion on mobile communication devices affecting stress levels in your working environment?

Interviewee: I would imagine that not being able to switch off (the phone) would be stress full, especially when your company seems to have an unwritten policy of constant contact and communications.

Interviewer: To your knowledge, are there company policies and procedures in place to deal with employees suffering from occupational stress?

Interviewee: We have a safety statement, 127 pages long, part of it deals with respect and dignity in the workplace. Stress is mentioned and a procedure involving your local manager and the company doctor, but I don't know if it has been tested, especially in a predominately male environment.

Interviewer: Do you think there procedures help the employees reduce their stress over time?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: What policies and procedures would you put in place to reduce stress in your workplace and improve employee wellbeing?

Interviewee: Change office outlay – to clinical.

Larger break room – not the canteen, you need somewhere more local.

Less focus on profit, more on people.

Train managers better in how to deal with people, behaviour analysis.

Reduce meeting times and duration.

Staff need to operate within their own comfort zone, not everyone is management material.

Name	Participant C
Position	Aircraft Maintenance Planner
Length of Service	15 years

Mobile Devices

Interviewer: What mobile devices do you use during work hours to communicate with colleagues?

Interviewee: Phone (landline & mobile), laptop

Interviewer: Do you use mobile devices such a smartphone or laptop outside of 'normal work hours', for work purposes?

Interviewee: Yes, I use my laptop and mobile phone

Interviewer: Did your employer provide you with these devices?

Interviewee: Yes, they provided both the laptop and mobile phone.

Interviewer: Does the company reimburse you for calls made on your personal phone for work related matters during your personal time? Would you expect your employer to pay for these calls?

Interviewee: I don't own a personal mobile. Just use work phone. So yes the company pay for my mobile phone bills because it is a company phone.

Interviewer: In your opinion, are employees willing to limit their use of mobile devices such as smartphones outside of work hours?

Interviewee: Yes, I believe so.

Interviewer: Are your work emails synced to your personal devices i.e. smartphone, tablet?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Do you answer work emails during your personal time?

Interviewee: Yes I do. My position in the company requires me to be able to answer urgent emails at any time.

Interviewer: Would you check your phone first thing in the morning and before you go to bed?

Interviewee: Yes, I do. I always have my phone on me.

Work-Life Balance

Interviewer: What is your opinion on advances in mobile technology and do you think it has impacted work-life balance?

Interviewee: It is certainly much easier to contact me so therefore that is what happens as soon as there is an issue.

Interviewer: In your opinion, has technology had any positive/negative effects on your work-life balance? Explain.

Interviewee: All in all, positive because there may be times I need to be at home for a family reason but I can still complete my full work role off site.

Interviewer: Do you find it difficult to separate your work life and personal life?

Interviewee: Sometimes it can be difficult due to my work emails being on the mobile phone.

Interviewer: Do you find that they can overlap? Does this bother you?

Interviewee: They can overlap but I still have a pretty good work-life balance

Interviewer: Are there company procedures in place for contacting staff who are on annual leave or out of the office for the day?

Interviewee: I'm unsure.

Interviewer: To your knowledge, are staff contacted during their personal time? For what purposes are they contacted?

Interviewee: They are contacted if there is something out of the ordinary that others cannot help with.

Interviewer: Have you ever been contacted by your employer for work related matters, during your personal time? If yes, did this bother you?

Interviewee: Yes, never bothered me if it didn't happen for a minimal reason.

Interviewer: When you finish work for the day, can you switch off and enjoy your personal time?

Interviewee: Yes.

Communication

Interviewer: Would you find that you communicate with colleagues through face to face communication or through electronic communication i.e. emails?

Interviewee: I tend to send emails initially and communicate thereafter face to face if possible.

Interviewer: When you take your lunch, do you leave your desk? Why?

Interviewee: Sometimes I do.

Interviewer: Would you regularly eat your lunch at your desk?

Interviewee: Yes. I would usually eat lunch while answer emails or finishing reports.

Interviewer: Do you think you concentrate better after your lunch if you have eaten your lunch away from your desk?

Interviewee: I don't think so but there could be merit to that!

Stress

Interviewer: What are the causes of stress in your job?

Interviewee: Other individuals not striving to create a good working atmosphere for others

Interviewer: When you feel stressed in work, do you feel that you have to carry on as normal, so that your colleagues do not realise how stressed you are?

Interviewee: Even though I have been in the company for 15 years, I am only new in the position I am currently in. So yes, I do feel like I need to keep on going and not let other around me see that I'm stressed.

Interviewer: How many days per year would you miss from work due to ill health?

Interviewee: Less than 2 historically.

Interviewer: Stress can affect everyone differently, both physically and mentally. Have you ever felt joint and muscle pain when you have a heavy workload?

Interviewee: Yes, but I am unsure if that is stress related.

Interviewer: What is your opinion on mobile communication devices affecting stress levels in your working environment?

Interviewee: I don't personally have an issue with it. Our office is full of computers and almost everyone has a mobile phone in the office. I think it is up to the individual to know when stress is affecting they're work and they should know when to step out of the office to get fresh air and clear their mind.

Interviewer: To your knowledge, are there company policies and procedures in place to deal with employees suffering from occupational stress?

Interviewee: I'm unsure... If they is, I am not aware of them.

Interviewer: What policies and procedures would you put in place to reduce stress in your workplace and improve employee wellbeing?

Interviewee: I would like to see better communication between employees and management regarding the issue on an annual basis.

Name	Participant D
Position	A320 Structures Engineer
Length of Service	3 Years

Mobile Devices

Interviewer: What mobile devices do you use during work hours to communicate with colleagues?

Interviewee: Laptop, smartphone, ipad

Interviewer: Do you use mobile devices such a smartphone or laptop outside of 'normal work hours', for work purposes?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: What devices do you use?

Interviewee: Laptop, smartphone

Interviewer: Did your employer provide you with these devices?

Interviewee: Yes, Laptop was provided by company

Interviewer: Are these your own personal devices? Smartphone & ipad are my devices

Interviewer: Does the company reimburse you for calls made on your personal phone for work related matters during your personal time? Would you expect your employer to pay for these calls?

Interviewee: No, employer does not pay for these calls. Yes I would expect employer to pay, though I only accept work calls for this reason, I do not dial out.

Interviewer: In your opinion, are employees willing to limit their use of mobile devices such as smartphones outside of work hours?

Interviewee: Many employees use their personal phone number as their work number also, (given the limited amount of work smartphones issued) and therefore are usually always available to take calls. Employees greatly limit the use of work related mobile devices outside of working hours

Interviewer: Are your work emails synced to your personal devices i.e. smartphone, tablet?

Interviewee: No, as these are my personal devices

Interviewer: Do you answer work emails during your personal time?

Interviewee: Aer Lingus have a Maintenance Control Centre (MCC) for out of hours support, yes I answer work emails where there is an urgent request for me to action.

Interviewer: Would you check your phone first thing in the morning and before you go to bed?

Interviewee: No, neither

Work-Life Balance

Interviewer: What is your opinion on advances in mobile technology and do you think it has impacted work-life balance?

Interviewee: I think work life balance depends greatly on the individual. Advances in technology has brought instant access to information and contact ability of the individual but the onus is on the individual to manage their time efficiently.

Interviewer: In your opinion, has technology had any positive/negative effects on your work-life balance? Explain.

Interviewee: I'd say it has pros and cons. Technology allows instant access to information which is beneficial to allow an employee to act on an issue. However, it also allows a company/ manager to contact an individual with ease to fix a problem which has a negative impact in their personal time.

Interviewer: Do you find it difficult to separate your work life and personal life?

Interviewee: When I first joined the airline I found it very difficult as I had many active projects with various deadlines – I felt preoccupied with these deadlines during my time off and couldn't relax. I feel aviation deadlines are even more stressful as if these deadlines aren't met the aircraft doesn't fly, passengers stranded and hundreds of thousands of euro lost per day as a result, there is little to no room for error. I now have a good work life

balance as I am comfortable in my ability to manage my deadlines during working hours.

Interviewer: Do you find that they can overlap? Does this bother you?

Interviewee: At times they overlap, this is hugely due to the nature of aviation. Other companies may have no need to contact employees out of hours but with a 24/7/365 operation it is inevitable they shall overlap. It doesn't bother me as I am only contacted when the employees on site cannot fix a problem. I have no issue being contacted in this respect as it promotes the safety of our passengers and aircraft, this is the Aer Lingus ethos and is what our company and employees stands for. I would only have an issue if I was contacted for an issue that could be sorted by an employee on-site. (E.g. It is easier to ring me to ask "Where is such a manual kept?" instead of simply looking for it.

Interviewer: Are there company procedures in place for contacting staff who are on annual leave or out of the office for the day?

Interviewee: Yes, but these are all managed locally. For example, each department would handle this issue in their own way. We have procedures in place – colleague will be briefed on all projects the person is involved in and shall handle all queries in their absence. In our department we would only ring an employee on annual leave as an absolute last resort.

Interviewer: To your knowledge, are staff contacted during their personal time? For what purposes are they contacted?

Interviewee: Yes. Usually when an aircraft has been damaged. (E.g.) A birdstrike or ground damage to the aircraft or engine. The aircraft is grounded until rectification action is accomplished. This is an all hands on deck situation to get the aircraft flying asap as passengers are left waiting.

Interviewer: Have you ever been contacted by your employer for work related matters, during your personal time? If yes, did this bother you?

Interviewee: Yes, on occasion, perhaps once a month. It doesn't really bother me as the company offers many exciting opportunities and courses and the company award those who sacrifice their free time.

Interviewer: When you finish work for the day, can you switch off and enjoy your personal time?

Interviewee: Yes, My phone is on should I need to be contacted but I can relax without the stress of being contacted, it is seldom enough.

Communication

Interviewer: Would you find that you communicate with colleagues through face to face communication or through electronic communication i.e. emails?

Interviewee: It depends on the situation. Where possible face to face. If an issue of high importance occurs you need to cover yourself that you asked a colleague to do something. Therefore you need to send an email as proof.

A verbal agreement holds no weight when the deadline passes and the task hasn't been completed.

Interviewer: When you take your lunch, do you leave your desk? Why?

Interviewee: Usually I do, canteen or otherwise. If I have personal things to do (online banking, browse social media) I would have lunch at my desk.

Would you regularly eat your lunch at your desk?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Do you think you concentrate better after your lunch if you have eaten your lunch away from your desk?

Interviewee: Yes, always

Stress

Interviewer: What are the causes of stress in your job?

Interviewee: Time constraints, sheer volume of workload, Technical content in every aspect of the job, consequences involved if a job is performed incorrectly.

Interviewer: When you feel stressed in work, do you feel that you have to carry on as normal, so that your colleagues do not realise how stressed you are?

Interviewee: In part, in terms of high volume of workload or the case where an aircraft is grounded the stress levels are high and there is no choice but

to carry on and rectify the situation. However, colleagues would be aware of the stress levels, it wouldn't be a stress that would be hidden for any reason.

Interviewer: How many days per year would you miss from work due to ill health?

Interviewee: Zero.

Interviewer: Stress can affect everyone differently, both physically and mentally. Have you ever felt joint and muscle pain when you have a heavy workload?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: What is your opinion on mobile communication devices affecting stress levels in your working environment?

Interviewee: I think mobile technology is a way of life now and is no more of a negative impact than any other form of work related literature

Interviewer: To your knowledge, are there company policies and procedures in place to deal with employees suffering from occupational stress?

Interviewee: I am unsure of this. Perhaps there is something but it's certainly not preached about too loudly.

Interviewer: Do you think these procedures help the employees reduce their stress over time?

Interviewee: Perhaps they would. Though the company allows staff to take a break whenever they feel they require one. Go for a walk outside, get coffee etc. so I think it is a fair system

Interviewer: What policies and procedures would you put in place to reduce stress in your workplace and improve employee wellbeing?

Interviewee: A room for employees to relax and enjoy their break. There is a canteen upstairs but this is unsuitable. If there was a dedicated area for staff to unwind and relax I think this would help.

Name	Participant E
Position	Senior Aircraft Planner
Length of Service	29 Years

Mobile Devices

Interviewer: What mobile devices do you use during work hours to communicate with colleagues?

Interviewee: I use my phone during work hours.

Interviewer: Do you use mobile devices such a smartphone or laptop outside of 'normal work hours', for work purposes?

Interviewee: Yes.

Interviewer: What devices do you use?

Interviewee: I have a smart phone and a Microsoft Surface tablet/laptop.

Interviewer: Did your employer provide you with these devices?

Interviewee: Yes they provided both the phone and laptop.

Interviewer: Does the company reimburse you for calls made on your personal phone for work related matters during your personal time? Would you expect your employer to pay for these calls?

Interviewee: No work calls made on personal device. But if so yes, I would expect them to be paid for.

Interviewer: In your opinion, are employees willing to limit their use of mobile devices such as smartphones outside of work hours?

Interviewee: This question is unclear! However in my opinion employees transact company business on mobile devices, outside work hours.

Interviewer: Are your work emails synced to your personal devices i.e. smartphone, tablet?

Interviewee: Yes, they are synced to my personal phone.

Interviewer: Do you answer work emails during your personal time?

Interviewee: Yes I respond to emails that require an immediate reply. If they are non-urgent, I would reply to them the next time I am in the office.

Interviewer: Would you check your phone first thing in the morning and before you go to bed?

Interviewee: Yes, but only because I use it as an alarm clock.

Work-Life Balance

Interviewer: What is your opinion on advances in mobile technology and do you think it has impacted work-life balance?

Interviewee: Advancements are great, and yes the advance in mobile technology has impacted work – life balance. Some times for the better and sometimes not! (In my opinion).

Interviewer: In your opinion, has technology had any positive/negative effects on your work-life balance? Explain.

Interviewee: Yes, it has affected work-life balance both positively & negatively.

Positive because it can save you going to the office each day, or returning to the office to address a particular issue.

Negative because unless the device is turned off, one is always on call!

Interviewer: Do you find it difficult to separate your work life and personal life?

Interviewee: No I do not.

Interviewer: Do you find that they can overlap? Does this bother you?

Interviewee: Yes and No.

Yes because if I have a family event, I want to enjoy my time away from work and spend time with my family. I do not work issues imposing on my personal time with my family.

No because if the problem requires urgent attention, I would rather get the issue sorted out quickly, rather than let the problem go on longer, which may affect other employees doing their jobs.

Interviewer: Are there company procedures in place for contacting staff who are on annual leave or out of the office for the day?

Interviewee: No.

Interviewer: To your knowledge, are staff contacted during their personal time? For what purposes are they contacted?

Interviewee: Yes, and from personal experience, this contact is as required.

Interviewer: Have you ever been contacted by your employer for work related matters, during your personal time? If yes, did this bother you?

Interviewee: Yes I have been contact on my days off but it was for issues that could not wait. Decisions needed to be made and my consultation on the issue was required, so in cases like this, it does not bother me.

Interviewer: When you finish work for the day, can you switch off and enjoy your personal time?

Interviewee: Yes I can.

Communication

Interviewer: Would you find that you communicate with colleagues through face to face communication or through electronic communication i.e. emails?

Interviewee: I talk to my colleagues through emails and face to face to those around me.

Interviewer: When you take your lunch, do you leave your desk? Why?

Interviewee: Yes, because I enjoy the break.

Interviewer: Would you regularly eat your lunch at your desk?

Interviewee: No, I prefer to have a break from looking at the computer screen for a while during the day.

Interviewer: Do you think you concentrate better after your lunch if you have eaten your lunch away from your desk?

Interviewee: Yes I definitely would find that I am more productive when I have been away from my desk, even for 20 minutes.

Stress

Interviewer: What are the causes of stress in your job?

Interviewee: Time restraints.

Interviewer: When you feel stressed in work, do you feel that you have to carry on as normal, so that your colleagues do not realise how stressed you are?

Interviewee: No I don't. We all have a similar workload so my colleagues would be under the same amount of pressure as myself.

Interviewer: How many days per year would you miss from work due to ill health?

Interviewee: None.

Interviewer: Stress can affect everyone differently, both physically and mentally. Have you ever felt joint and muscle pain when you have a heavy workload?

Interviewee: No I cannot say that I have.

Interviewer: What is your opinion on mobile communication devices affecting stress levels in your working environment?

Interviewee: It depends on the individual.

Interviewer: To your knowledge, are there company policies and procedures in place to deal with employees suffering from occupational stress?

Interviewee: Yes as far as I am aware there are company procedures. I think they are outlined in the health and safety manual.

Interviewer: Do you think these procedures help the employees reduce their stress over time?

Interviewee: Yes I think they do help if people follow the procedures when they are feeling stressed.

Interviewer: What policies and procedures would you put in place to reduce stress in your workplace and improve employee wellbeing?

Interviewee: I would like to ensure that all employees are given information to be aware of stress and how to recognise its effects on your health and well-being. Employees should be given information on how to reduce stress and what facilities are available to help reduce stress.

Name	Participant F
Position	Deputy Material Manager
Length of Service	24 years

Mobile Devices

Interviewer: What mobile devices do you use during work hours to communicate with colleagues?

Interviewee: Smartphone & Laptop

Interviewer: Do you use mobile devices such a smartphone or laptop outside of 'normal work hours', for work purposes?

Interviewee: Yes, Smartphone & Laptop

Interviewer: Did your employer provide you with these devices?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Are these your own personal devices?

Interviewee: No, but can use for person use

Interviewer: Does the company reimburse you for calls made on your personal phone for work related matters during your personal time? Would you expect your employer to pay for these calls?

Interviewee: My mobile bills are paid for by the company

Interviewer: In your opinion, are employees willing to limit their use of mobile devices such as smartphones outside of work hours?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Are your work emails synced to your personal devices i.e. smartphone, tablet?

Interviewee: Yes they are. As I am in a managerial position, is it expected that I am contactable all the time whether it is by phone or emails.

Interviewer: Do you answer work emails during your personal time?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Would you check your phone first thing in the morning and before you go to bed?

Interviewee: Yes

Work-Life Balance

Interviewer: What is your opinion on advances in mobile technology and do you think it has impacted work-life balance?

Interviewee: Mobile e-mails have made it the “normal” to expect a reply as quick as we would reply to a text and it can adversely affect work-life balance unless I / We manage them correctly.

Interviewer: In your opinion, has technology had any positive/negative effects on your work-life balance? Explain.

Interviewee: Both.

Positive, (note 1) Having remote access to my e-mails allows me filter out the non important e-mails (IE, read delete or read & forward for someone else to do.)

Work life is then more manageable

Negative, I / We need to set expectations of others as to how / when an e-mail is replied to when not at work.

If you don't I / We are expected to be "on call" 24 /7.

Interviewer: Do you find it difficult to separate your work life and personal life?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: Do you find that they can overlap? Does this bother you?

Interviewee: Yes, but both ways and fair is fair!!

IE, see note 1 & if I need to address personal issues on company time I can take my work with me.

Interviewer: Are there company procedures in place for contacting staff who are on annual leave or out of the office for the day?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: To your knowledge, are staff contacted during their personal time? For what purposes are they contacted?

Interviewee: Yes and (in the main) work stoppage issues

Interviewer: Have you ever been contacted by your employer for work related matters, during your personal time? If yes, did this bother you?

Interviewee: Yes and no

Interviewer: When you finish work for the day, can you switch off and enjoy your personal time?

Interviewee: Yes

Communication

Interviewer: Would you find that you communicate with colleagues through face to face communication or through electronic communication i.e. emails?

Interviewee: Both, but e-mails for non urgent issues.

Interviewer: When you take your lunch, do you leave your desk? Why?

Interviewee: I try to as it helps recharge the batteries.

Interviewer: Would you regularly eat your lunch at your desk?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: Do you think you concentrate better after your lunch if you have eaten your lunch away from your desk?

Interviewee: Yes

Stress

Interviewer: What are the causes of stress in your job?

Interviewee: Unrealistic requests and lack of support

Interviewer: When you feel stressed in work, do you feel that you have to carry on as normal, so that your colleagues do not realise how stressed you are?

Interviewee: Yes

Interviewer: How many days per year would you miss from work due to ill health?

Interviewee: 7 days total in 14 years.

Interviewer: Stress can affect everyone differently, both physically and mentally. Have you ever felt joint and muscle pain when you have a heavy workload?

Interviewee: No

Interviewer: What is your opinion on mobile communication devices affecting stress levels in your working environment?

Interviewee: Unless I / We have our own checks / balances as to how we use mobile devices, it can have a negative effect on stress.

Interviewer: To your knowledge, are there company policies and procedures in place to deal with employees suffering from occupational stress?

Interviewee: I'm not aware of any policies / procedures, for my grade. Other areas have designated rest rooms / areas.

Interviewer: Do you think there procedures help the employees reduce their stress over time?

Interviewee: N/A to me, but correct procedures should help.

Interviewer: What policies and procedures would you put in place to reduce stress in your workplace and improve employee wellbeing?

Interviewee: No contact policy for leave.

Name	Participant G
Position	Administrative Assistant
Length of Service	2 years

Mobile Devices

Interviewer: What mobile devices do you use during work hours to communicate with colleagues?

Interviewee: I use my mobile Phone.

Interviewer: Do you use mobile devices such a smartphone or laptop outside of 'normal work hours', for work purposes?

Interviewee: Yes I use a smartphone, tablet and a laptop.

Interviewer: Did your employer provide you with these devises?

Interviewee: No, they are my own personal devices.

Interviewer: Does the company reimburse you for calls made on your personal phone for work related matters during your personal time? Would you expect your employer to pay for these calls?

Interviewee: No I pay my own phone bills regardless of whether I made work calls on them. No I wouldn't expect my employer to pay for my phone bills. I am only with the company for two years and in a relatively junior position.

Interviewer: In your opinion, are employees willing to limit their use of mobile devices such as smartphones outside of work hours?

Interviewee: Yes I think they are.

Interviewer: Are your work emails synced to your personal devices i.e. smartphone, tablet?

Interviewee: No I like to keep my work emails separate to my personal emails.

Interviewer: Would you check your phone first thing in the morning and before you go to bed?

Interviewee: Yes for personal call and messages, and checking social media.

Work-Life Balance

Interviewer: What is your opinion on advances in mobile technology and do you think it has impacted work-life balance?

Interviewee: I don't find that it has impacted on my work-life balance but I think it has on some of my colleagues in a negative way.

Interviewer: In your opinion, has technology had any positive/negative effects on your work-life balance? Explain.

Interviewee: In my opinion, technology has had a positive influence on my work-life balance. For example, I can use technology (smartphone or tablet) during work hours for personal reasons such as keeping in touch with friends and family.

Personally, I don't think technology has negatively impacted on my life. I grew up when technology was evolving. You could even say that I grew as technology grew.

Interviewer: Do you find it difficult to separate your work life and personal life?

Interviewee: No I don't. I enjoy my job but I am able to keep my work life separate to me personal life. I don't let my work life negatively impact on my personal life.

Interviewer: Are there company procedures in place for contacting staff who are on annual leave or out of the office for the day?

Interviewee: Yes, staff can be contacted through text or email but this is rarely done – only in emergency situations.

Interviewer: To your knowledge, are staff contacted during their personal time? For what purposes are they contacted?

Interviewee: No, not that I know of.

Interviewer: Have you ever been contacted by your employer for work related matters, during your personal time? If yes, did this bother you?

Interviewee: No I have not.

Interviewer: When you finish work for the day, can you switch off and enjoy your personal time?

Interviewee: Yes I can. As I said previously, because I enjoy my work, I am able to switch off from it during my personal time.

Communication

Interviewer: Would you find that you communicate with colleagues through face to face communication or through electronic communication i.e. emails?

Interviewee: I would say it is mostly through emails, though just marginally.

Interviewer: When you take your lunch, do you leave your desk? Why?

Interviewee: Yes, to get away from the phone and the computer for a while. As I am looking at a computer screen for the majority of the day, it is nice to have break and rest your eyes from the glare from the computer screen.

Interviewer: Do you think you concentrate better after your lunch if you have eaten your lunch away from your desk?

Interviewee: Yes, I definitely do. If for some reason I had to have my lunch at my desk, I would feel tired and I may even get a headache towards the end of the day. I definitely concentrate better if I have had a break from sitting at my desk.

Stress

Interviewer: What are the causes of stress in your job?

Interviewee: My workload can vary widely and with very little notice I could have a big report to have done with a couple of hours. That can be very stressful. I would have to drop everything else I was doing or planning on doing in that time, to get this urgent report done for my manager.

Interviewer: When you feel stressed in work, do you feel that you have to carry on as normal, so that your colleagues do not realise how stressed you are?

Interviewee: No, I usually ask for help.

Interviewer: How many days per year would you miss from work due to ill health?

Interviewee: 1 to 2 days.

Interviewer: Stress can affect everyone differently, both physically and mentally. Have you ever felt joint and muscle pain when you have a heavy workload?

Interviewee: Yes, sometimes I have backache and tension in my shoulders.

Interviewer: What is your opinion on mobile communication devices affecting stress levels in your working environment?

Interviewee: I don't feel that it adds to stress levels.

Interviewer: To your knowledge, are there company policies and procedures in place to deal with employees suffering from occupational stress?

Interviewee: No, not that I am aware of. If there is, they should be made available to all employees.

Interviewer: What policies and procedures would you put in place to reduce stress in your workplace and improve employee wellbeing?

Interviewee: Giving employee's flexible leave and personal days when they are feeling overwhelmed due to work related matters.

Appendix C

Personal Learning Statement

Undertaking this dissertation is one of the most challenging and rewarding things I have done to date. I now understand and know first-hand how much time, effort and dedication it takes to complete a research project such as this. At times you can become overwhelmed with the amount of work that needs to be done while under time constraints, but I have learnt to take a step back, identify what tasks need to be completed first and make a plan from there on.

Conducting this study for my dissertation over the past year has been a time consuming process. As I was in college full-time for a number of months and then in full-time employment towards the end of this study, I had to focus on my dissertation.

In order to prioritise my dissertation I developed the ability to manage my time accordingly to ensure I met self-set deadlines. In order to do this, I set specific periods of time during weekday evenings and spent one full day at the weekend working on this project.

During this year long project I have developed my independent learning skills, secondary research skills and primary research skills.

I have improved my independent learning and secondary research skills by consistently reading academic literature on the areas of technology, work-

life balance and occupational stress. I have improved my primary research skills by conducting numerous interviews for this study.

I feel a great level of pride for completing this research project as part of the Human Resource Management master's programme in National College of Ireland.