Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library, National College of Ireland

Student name: Tara Gallagher Finn Student number: X21134634

School: National College of Ireland Course: MA in Human Resource Management.

Degree to be awarded:
Master of Arts in Human Resource Management.

Title of Thesis:

Blurring the Boundaries: An explorative study of Millennials, switching off and the Right To Disconnect

An electronic copy of your thesis will be lodged in the Norma Smurfit Library and will be available for consultation. This electronic copy will be accessible in NORMA norma.ncirl.ie the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository. In accordance with normal academic library practice all theses lodged in the National College of Ireland Institutional Repository (NORMA) are made available on open access.

I agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being available for consultation within the library. I also agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being made publicly available on the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository NORMA.

Signature of Candidate: Tara Gallagher Finn

For completion by the School:

The aforementioned thesis was received by _____

Date: _____

This signed form must be appended to all copies of your thesis submitted to your school.

Blurring the boundaries: An explorative study of Millennials, switching off, and the Right to Disconnect

Tara Gallagher Finn

Master of Arts in Human Resource Management

National College of Ireland

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2022

Abstract:

A Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect was introduced in April 2021 in Ireland to respond to increases in flexible working and the expanded usage of technology in the workplace (WRC, 2021). As these facilitate intermingling between work and personal lives, concerns arose about how this could prevent employees from switching off from work. From the literature review, it emerged that the failure to switch off after work can contribute to work-life conflict and a variety of other negative effects on the employee. There have been numerous attempts in Europe to combat this, both legislative and non-legislative. This study aims to investigate the impact of the Irish Code of Practice so far and how it has been received by employers and employees in Ireland. It will focus on millennial employees to explore whether they perceive difficulties with switching off and technology usage after-hours as issues impacting them. A quantitative questionnaire was used to gather data from millennials working in Ireland. This contained pre-existing scales to measure psychological detachment, work-life conflict and technological interruptions after hours, and a series of questions developed by the researcher on the Code of Practice. Respondents came from a wide range of employment sectors, positions within their organisations and working locations. 379 valid responses were gathered, and data analysis was conducted using SPSS.

The results showed correlations between poor psychological detachment and higher levels of work-life conflict, and between poor psychological detachment and negative perceptions of work-related technology interference after-hours. It indicated that senior managers and those working from offices are more likely to suffer from poor psychological detachment, work-life conflict and technology interruptions after-hours. Most respondents had not been notified of the Code of Practice's introduction by their employers, nor had their employers introduced any new policies in response to it. The findings have implications for HR departments and employers, who need to do better at implementing the Code's recommendations and create a Right to Disconnect policy that suits their organisation. Also, the vast majority of respondents support legislating for a Right to Disconnect, which should indicate to legislators that the Code is viewed as an insufficient attempt to tackle the problem.

Keywords: Psychological detachment, switching off, right to disconnect, work life conflict, technology interruptions, millennials

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland
Research Students Declaration Form
(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name: Tara Gallagher Finn

Student Number: x21134634

Degree for which thesis is submitted: Master of Arts in Human Resource Management

Title of Thesis: Blurring the boundaries: An explorative study of whether millennials and the Right to Disconnect

Date: 12 August 2022

Material submitted for award

A. I declare that this work submitted has been composed by myself. ☒

B. I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged. ☒

C. I agree to my thesis being deposited in the NCI Library online open access repository NORMA. ☒

D. ***Either*** *I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.
Or *I declare that the following material contained in the thesis formed part of a submission for the award of

_____

(State the award and the awarding body and list the material below) ☒

Acknowledgements:

I would like to thank my supervisor, Michele Kehoe for all of her support and guidance throughout the research process.

I would also like to thank everyone who took the time to participate in the study.

Thank you to my family, partner and friends for their patience over the past year.

Contents

List of Figures:

List of Tables:

List of Abbreviations:

CIPD Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

HRM Human Resources Management

PD Psychological detachment

TIAH Technology interruptions after hours

WLC Work-Life Conflict

WRC Workplace Relations Commission

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview:

The concept of switching off, also referred to in the literature as disconnecting or psychological detachment, has garnered attention amongst national governments and employee representative groups in recent years. Not too long ago, there were clear divisions between work and personal lives, especially for office workers who usually worked stable hours of 9am to 5pm (Von Bergen, Bressler and Proctor, 2019). However, the literature indicates that increased usage of smartphones and email for work tasks after the workday has ended is blurring the boundaries between work and personal lives (Ajibade Adisa, Gbadamosi and Osabutey, 2017), which is why switching off is often associated with after-hours technology usage. Furthermore, technological advances have enabled many workers to work remotely instead of working solely in traditional workplace settings. This was accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic as many workers were obligated to work from home due to government-imposed restrictions on movement.

However, the end of the global emergency does not signal an end to non-traditional work environments. Working from home will likely be a prominent feature in employment contracts for years to come, as 67% of millennials globally want to retain at least an element of this post-pandemic (Deloitte, 2020). Although these advances often give workers increased flexibility over their working hours (Ajibade Adisa *et al.*, 2017) and cuts needless commutes, the WRC drafted a Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect to ensure that the work-life balance of employees is not compromised in other ways, such as by failing to switch off. The fast-paced nature of modern living can be very stressful and our preoccupation with work, even when off the clock, can be a contributing factor (Sonnentag, 2012). Persistent failure to switch off has been linked to complications for the employee, including interruptions to family life, mental health issues and disengagement from work (Derks *et al.*, 2014). Thus, it is in the interest of the organisation and the employee to facilitate it as much as possible. The Code of Practice received criticism upon its introduction, primarily because it does not legislate for a Right to Disconnect. As it was introduced so recently, there is little existing research on how it has been received by employers and employees in Ireland, or whether most workers are even aware of its existence.

This research aims to fill this gap. If participants are experiencing difficulties with switching off and other negative consequences from work-related technology interruptions after-hours, this may suggest that the Code was inadequate. This study will focus on the millennial generation working in Ireland, as they are the largest segment of the workforce in Ireland and will be for the near future (Deloitte, 2014). Interestingly, it has been suggested that they behave differently in the workplace compared to the generations than came prior (Calk and Patrick, 2017), so they may be better or worse at switching off, or alternatively failure to do so may not bring the same kind of issues. Therefore, a sub-objective of the research is to examine how effectively millennials working in Ireland switch off beyond their contracted hours and whether there is any relationship between this and their perceptions of work-life conflict and use of technology.

1.2 Dissertation Structure:

Chapter 2 will discuss the key literature surrounding switching off and its associated problems. It will also examine the Code of Practice and investigate how it compares to its European counterparts. The contents of this chapter informed the key objectives of the study, and formed the hypotheses developed within Chapter 3. Based on the overall aims and hypotheses developed, a quantitative research approach was chosen in the form of a questionnaire to be released online to millennials working in Ireland. The justification for this decision is elaborated on in Chapter 4. The key findings of the survey will be discussed in Chapter 5, interpreted using descriptive and inferential statistics on SPSS. Further discussion of the findings will be conducted in Chapter 6, which aims to link the findings back to the existing research from the literature review and highlight any noteworthy results. Chapter 7 concludes the study and includes several recommendations for employers, HR departments and the government.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction:

Within this chapter, the seminal and recent literature on switching off and its associated problems of work-life conflict and technology usage after-hours will be analysed. As the key objective of the study is to investigate awareness of the recently introduced Code of Practice, there will be analysis in this chapter of the Code itself and how it compares to other European approaches. As the millennial generation is the population being studied, the literature on potential generational gaps will be considered in the context of how this may impact the findings. Based on the literature, certain hypotheses will be formed and later tested.

2.2 Switching off and difficulties with accomplishing it:

The literature contains several potential explanations for why employees are struggling to disconnect from work after the workday has ended. The concept of switching off, or psychological detachment, derives from a 1998 study by Etzion, Eden and Lapidot in which they explained detachment as 'an individual's sense of being away from the work situation' (cited in Sonnentag, 2011, p. 253). It has more recently been defined as 'refraining from job-related activities and mentally disengaging from work during time off the job' (Sonnentag and Fritz, 2015). Finding ways to achieve this is vital, to enable workers to recover from any stressful experiences encountered during their workday (Germeys and De Gieter, 2017). However, many workers struggle with switching off. The industry that the employee works in has been suggested to play a role, as certain times of the year in some industries can be especially intense and stressful for the worker. A between-person perspective hypothesises that some people are simply better at switching off due to their personality traits (Sonnentag, 2011). Boswell and Olson-Buchanan (2007) explain how ambitious employees, who may have Type A personalities, are more unlikely to disconnect as they see constant connectivity as a path to career progression, and therefore will be reluctant to switch off mentally. They may even enjoy reflecting on work-related issues and therefore do not see it as a threat to their wellbeing (Sonnentag and Bayer, 2005). Similarly, those who respond adversely to

negative events in general may also struggle with disconnecting, as they may be more likely to obsess over work dilemmas and what could potentially happen the next day (Sonnentag, 2012). Mellner (2016) found in his quantitative study of 3846 Swedish workers that men are more likely to disconnect successfully, as are those in non-managerial positions. These possible factors affecting the ability to switch off will be examined within this study also, to investigate who in the workforce is typically struggling.

2.3 The role of Technology:

The literature states that technological advances are making it more difficult to switch off, as they have fundamentally changed how and where people work. Whereas workers in the past had clear lines between their work and personal lives, it is now often the individual's responsibility to set their own boundaries within their mind (Mellner *et al.*, 2016). Many employees now work outside traditional workplace settings because of telecommuting (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007). Rather than commuting to an office, employees can now work from home, or travel to more convenient rural hubs. The number of employees working remotely increased exponentially during Covid due to government restrictions. Even regular IT use during the workday was found to create stressful situations for workers in McDowall and Kinman's (2017) qualitative study with 253 participants. Many participants in this study reported that their organisations lacked policies on appropriate IT use, thereby creating a culture that makes it more challenging to switch off after work. However, there were also few ideas amongst participants for how to combat this, as they viewed initiatives like email-free Fridays as being purely for show, with negative consequences like having more emails to answer on other days.

Email is used frequently for communication purposes, but problems arise when workers are expected to check them and reply outside their typical working hours. Many employees can access their work email via their smartphone and may be tempted to check it regularly if high volumes are being received (Collins, Cox and Wootton, 2015). Workplace telepressure is the desire to reply promptly to technological communications (Barber, Conlin and Santuzzi, 2019) and as the sender

knows emails are sent instantaneously, they naturally expect a rapid response (Collins *et al.*, 2015). This can make it more difficult to switch off (Sonnentag, 2012) as it contributes to an always on culture (Park, Fritz and Jex, 2011). Mellner's (2016) study confirmed that both the use of work-related technology after-hours and expectations of this from employers were negatively related to switching off, meaning respondents experiencing this also encountered problems with trying to disconnect.

Also, the work involved in such tasks can accumulate quickly. This was demonstrated in O'Hara v Kepak Convenience Food, an Irish Labour Court case in which an employee had received many work-related emails after hours. Although her contract stipulated a 40 hour working week, she logged 60 hours including the time spent dealing with emails after-hours (Bell *et al.*, 2021). Interestingly, the Labour Court rejected the employer's claim that she could have completed all her tasks within 40 hours with appropriate time management skills, as the Organisation of Working Time Act 1997 states that employers shall not 'permit' employees to work over 48 hours per week. As the employee was recording her hours on an IT system and the emails were regularly sent after hours, it was decided that the employer was 'necessarily aware' of the situation, and it was irrelevant that she could have completed it within 48 hours (Bell *et al.*, 2021, p. 8). However, although this case concerned the inability to disconnect due to the continuous stream of emails being received, many workers would not exceed the 48-hour maximum working hour limit, so they would not be protected by this outcome.

2.4 Flexible working:

As mentioned, the workday in 2022 does not necessarily occur at a particular location or time. There is regularly more emphasis nowadays on getting one's tasks completed, whether this is done physically at work or when the employee has left the workplace. Examples of this include reading reports or getting ready for meetings or presentations for the following day (Sonnentag and Bayer, 2005). Sonnentag (2012) stresses that more research is needed on how psychological detachment levels differ for those working in non-traditional work settings, as it can no longer be assumed that employees' homes remain places of relaxation. This is even more relevant today,

given the prevalence of working from home since Covid. It has been well documented that there is a shortage of talent, more severely in some sectors compared to others. Therefore, organisations are being pressured to offer flexible working arrangements to attract candidates (Grant, 2019). The 8428 responses from the Remote Working in Ireland Survey 2022 reflects this, as 61% reported that their employers are facilitating their remote work schedules (McCarthy *et al.*, 2022). 88% agreed that their employer needs to offer remote or hybrid work options to attract workers, and 90% claimed that their employers needed to do so to retain workers also. Many employees believe that flexible working is invaluable, as shown in Ajibade Adisa *et al.*'s (2017) study where 90% of interviewees stated that work-related mobile technology made their working lives easier, as inflexibility associated with traditional set working hours within an office brought other strains. Female respondents in particular appreciated such technology, as it enabled them to attend to their children and families and finish their work after-hours at a time that suited them.

However, boundaryless work, where workers are unrestricted by time or location, has also been criticised for supporting an always available culture. Interestingly, Mellner *et al.'s* (2016) study suggested that while working anytime negatively impacted psychological detachment, working at any location did not. This is because working anywhere minimised the probability of having long working hours. A potential explanation for this was that working anywhere likely decreases commuting time, so if the employee strictly follows their set working hours, there should be no negative effects on psychological detachment. Despite this finding, the 2022 survey of Irish workers suggests the opposite, as 49% claimed that they work more from home compared to in an office (McCarthy *et al.*, 2022).

2.5 Organisational culture

The literature suggests that organisational culture can also impact how employees switch off. Some cultures pressurise workers to stay longer than is set out in their employment contracts and to work extra hours at home (Shurak *et al.*, 2021). One example is Amazon, which encourages workers to 'toil long and late' (Bergen and Bressler, 2019, p. 52). Shurak *et al.*'s (2021) study reflects this, as work overload was found to be a significant predictor of work-life conflict. Employees may feel

pressured to communicate with their managers at any time, given that their bonus or promotional opportunities may be impacted by their manager's perception of them (Liran and Pascal, 2022). Even if the culture does not demand excessive work as explicitly as Amazon, there may be subtle influences suggesting what behaviours are desired. A longitudinal study by Lazauskaite-Zabielske, Urbanaviciute and Ziedelis (2022) showed that an environment encouraging overwork increased the difficulties with switching off, which in turn increased the likelihood of emotional exhaustion over a four-month period. High workloads may mean the individual feels compelled to take work home to finish it later in the day. Even if they do not actively work at home, the knowledge of having uncompleted work may make it more difficult to switch off. This could become a chronic issue if the high workload persists as the person affected may begin to anticipate and stress about the following day's workload (Sonnentag and Bayer, 2005).

2.6 The millennial experience:

Although the modern-day workforce is multigenerational, the proportions of generations of which it is comprised is changing. The workforce consists mostly of Baby Boomers (born between 1946 and 1964), Generation X (1965-1980) and millennials (Nnambooze and Parumasur, 2016). Although there is not one definition of a 'millennial', the definition which views them as being born between 1980 and 1996 will be used in this study. They form the majority of the workforce today (Buzza, 2017), and will likely reach 75% by 2025 (Deloitte, 2014). Nnambooze and Parumasur (2016) argue that organisations should develop an understanding of different generational habits and needs to enable successful assimilation into the workplace. It is often said that millennials differ from the generations that came prior. Therefore, the outcomes of studies focusing solely on this generation can help organisations alter their attraction and retention strategies to target such applicants (Buzza, 2017), which is especially significant given that they are known for being more difficult to recruit and retain than baby boomers (Calk and Patrick, 2017). These differences are often attributed to a generational gap, as the habits and behaviours of a generation are claimed to be impacted by the mindsets and values that they grew up with (Calk and Patrick, 2017). For example, Baby boomers are

known for prioritising job security and focusing on their careers (Nnambooze and Parumasur, 2016). Conversely, having grown up with rapid technological advancements, millennials have a reputation for being tech savvy, and see their mobile phones as extensions of themselves, with 83% reporting that they always have their phone with them (Bannon, Ford and Meltzer, 2011). Conversely, Philip *et al.* (2017) warns that most existing research on how technology influences work-life balance does not focus solely on millennials.

The literature also emphasises the millennial preference for work life balance, and they expect employers to offer policies to protect their wellbeing and enhance job satisfaction (Buzza, 2017). They are known for favouring informality at work and flexible working opportunities (Philip *et al.*, 2017), and are unwilling to repeat the work lives of their parents which came at the cost of spending time with family. They also prioritise the value of their work over the amount of time spent physically at their desks (Bannon *et al.*, 2011). Their prioritisation of work life balance is relevant for this study as the failure to switch off has been associated with poorer work life balance so millennials may be less likely to connect with work after-hours compared to other generations. However, Philip *et al.* (2017, p. 91) theorised that the overlap of work into home life may eradicate work-life conflict for millennials, as they may see the intrusion of one realm into another as a 'give and take' situation which does not cause distress. However, there was no decisive conclusion drawn on this from the study's results. Cijan *et al.* (2019) has similarly suggested that younger people tend to adapt better with technological change, which could impact the findings here as they may not report detrimental effects from failing to switch off.

However, Deal, Altman and Rogelberg (2010) are critical of the literature on generational gaps. They believe even if such differences exist, they are minimal and unlikely to alter the work environment at all. For example, they point to how millennials report that work is not a fundamental aspect in their lives compared to previous generations, even though this could be explained by factors unrelated to their generation, such as the general increase in working hours today or the fact that millennials are now connected to work from home by mobile devices. Thus, any significant findings may not derive from the demographics being examined, but rather due to the climate they are working in.

2.7 Work-life conflict:

Work-life balance refers to the worker's capacity to maintain stability between their work and non-work-related responsibilities (Ajibade Adisa *et al.*, 2017). As mentioned prior, this is a priority for millennials, and numerous studies suggest it can be negatively impacted by the failure to switch off. A lack of this stability can contribute to work-life conflict, which occurs when work-related pressures begin to interfere with personal activities (Collins *et al.*, 2015). Similarly, Cijan's *et al.* (2019) quantitative study found that technological interference also impacts work-life balance by blurring work and home boundaries. Boundary theory highlights the negative effects of such integration (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007), primarily that individuals become distressed if their preferences for the separation of work and home life do not correspond with how separate they actually are (Germeys and De Gieter, 2017). In accordance with the resource drain perspective, this integration becomes stressful for the employee as they only have a finite amount of energy and number of hours in the day to fulfil their tasks, so they must determine what resources to allocate to home life and work life (Barber *et al.*, 2019). This conflict could have negative consequences for mental wellbeing, by impacting sleep habits and stress levels (Derks *et al.*, 2014). This can be explained by the conservation of resources theory, which states that those at risk of losing resources will be increasingly prone to mental strain (Germeys and De Gieter, 2017). Von Bergen, Bressler and Proctor (2019) stress that even if the individual is not actually disrupted after work, the anticipation of receiving calls or emails can cause stress. It is important to note these studies are criticised for not proving causation between the failure to disconnect and work-life conflict, as they primarily use a correlational design (Sonnentag, 2012).

Boswell and Olson-Buchanan's study (2007) found a positive relationship between work-life conflict and the use of technological devices after the workday ends. This is an influential study as prior research on work-related stress did not distinguish between regular work and after-hours work. Only university staff were surveyed, so it was noted that the results could differ if another industry was studied. In addition,

it focused on workers with traditional working environments rather than remote workers. The findings were echoed in Ajibade Adisa *et al.'s* (2017) qualitative study, where 91% of participants described how mobile technology represents an extension of their work desk at home, thereby invading their privacy and disrupting their family lives. They face intrusions through email-based communication as well as by text messages and phone calls (Von Bergen *et al.*, 2019). However, the extent to which an individual is impacted varies as some construct strict boundaries in their minds to prevent intrusions, whereas others allow the boundaries to overlap (Ajibade Adisa *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, employees' experiences of work life conflict may depend on the type of responsibilities their role involves, how their co-workers interpret work-life balance and the involvement of family members in their lives. For example, individuals with children may have different experiences as they could be too busy with their families to give equal attention to their work (Sonnentag and Kruel, 2006). Additionally, younger people may struggle more if they have not developed coping mechanisms for work-related issues.

Also, determining the extent to which an employee is affected can be somewhat difficult to quantify. As doing minor work-related tasks like answering an email in the evening can seem harmless, it can be difficult to pinpoint how much time is being spent on such work activities (Derks *et al.*, 2014). Although some studies suggest that spillover from work into personal lives can have advantages, the majority agree that it tends to be more negative (McDaniel *et al.*, 2021).

2.8 European and Irish initiatives to aid switching off:

There have been many initiatives in Europe to promote switching off, but the focus of this study will be on the Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect in Ireland. A company culture which encourages employees to constantly be switched on can be detrimental in the long-term for the employee and the organisation. Productivity can be damaged, as highlighted by Von Bergen *et al.* (2019). They comment that working increased hours in Japan compared to other countries has not positively impacted the economy, with their productivity estimated to be two thirds of an American worker. The failure to disconnect could potentially result in burnout,

which increases the likelihood of the employee leaving the organisation, meaning the organisation must bear the costs of replacement (Buzza, 2017). This was supported in Ajibade Adisa *et al.*'s (2017) findings, where the increased use of technology for work resulted in more working hours for 94% of participants, with negative consequences for mental wellbeing that impacted their work performance. As many countries lack legislative guidance on disconnecting, some organisations led the way in introducing initiatives to fill the gap. For example, Volkswagen began limiting the use of company email after work hours in 2011 when employees objected that their work and home lives were becoming too intertwined (Chesley, 2014). However, McDowall and Kinman (2017) are critical of such measures which have little evidence to establish that they work.

The Irish government published their Code of Practice in April 2021 to respond to significant increases in remote working and a rise in employees expected to be constantly available (Bell *et al.*, 2021). There are three major pieces of the Code. These are that workers have the right to not customarily work outside of their contracted hours, they cannot be punished for failing to do so and there is a duty on all employees to consider the right of others to disconnect (WRC, 2021). The Code builds on existing legal obligations for Irish employers and employees to ensure the safety of employees at work under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005. However, the Code specifically targets the safety implications of failing to disconnect from work, by recommending that employers work with employees and/or their trade unions to create a policy on the Right to Disconnect that suits the organisation (WRC, 2021). It stresses that even when the employee is working flexible hours, it should be made clear that boundaries are kept between work and private life. It suggests using techniques like email reminders to display that the receiver is out of office with details of their working times. This could be as simple as stating 'My normal working hours are from X to Y. I will respond to you when I am back at work' (WRC, 2021, p. 12). It also makes recommendations for employees trying to contact their colleagues at inappropriate times, such as stressing when urgent attention is not necessary or use the 'delay send' option to prevent the email being sent outside of regular hours. Furthermore, it advises that managers should be at the forefront of implementing the Code and should ensure that tasks given to employees are capable of being completed during normal working hours. If

the employee is unable to exercise their right to disconnect and cannot resolve the issue within the company, there is provision made in the Code for the employee to raise the issue with the WRC under the OWTA 1997. However, the Code has been accused of not providing enough protection, as the right to disconnect is not binding in law (Bell *et al.*, 2021) even though it is now considered best practice. Assessing awareness of the Code amongst employees in Ireland will be particularly interesting, as there has already been concern expressed by the trade union representing Irish civil servants, the AHCPS. Their General Secretary, Ciaran Rohan has recently expressed appreciation of the Code but cautioned the government that a legal right may be required if the Code fails to achieve its aims (O'Donovan, 2022). Irish teachers have also recently called for a legal right to be legislated for, blaming Covid for the rise in after-hours contact they are receiving from parents and students (O'Regan, 2022)

Portugal has gone further than Ireland by making it illegal to contact workers outside of work hours, along with introducing wellbeing initiatives such as capping overtime (Liran and Pascal, 2022). However, the right to disconnect was not approved by parliament, which would have enabled employees to switch off all work devices after hours (BBC, 2021). France has also been quite progressive in terms of protecting employees from work-related interruptions after-hours. The French Supreme Court ruled in 2001 that workers are not obliged to take their work tasks home (Von Bergen and Bressler, 2019). This was expanded over time, as they ruled in 2004 that being unavailable by phone outside of work hours was not misconduct. A legislative Right to Disconnect was introduced in 2017, although it only applies to organisations with over 50 employees and aims to introduce flexibility rather than outright banning employer-employee contact after hours. It provides that employers and employee representations should have annual meetings on this issue, to strike a balance between employer and employee interests. Problematically, the law obliges organisations to negotiate but they do not legally have to come to an agreement, meaning that any agreement concluded cannot be legally enforced by employees, and there are no financial penalties for those who disregard the law. Thus, in practical terms, it appears that the French legislative right does not offer much more protection than the Irish Code of Practice. However, the French Supreme Court awarded an employee of Rentokil Initial €60,000 for breaching his right to

disconnect, as he was obligated to be available 24/7 to address any issues faced by others at work but was not paid for this availability (Von Bergen and Bressler, 2019).

Despite criticism of Ireland's Code of Practice, Von Bergen *et al.* (2019) highlight that there is no straightforward solution. Enforcing the same rules on all employees in all industries is flawed, as it may eliminate flexibility. Some employees prefer working after-hours as they feel less pressure to constantly be at their desk throughout the day, which is especially useful if they have non-work-related responsibilities such as school runs to do during the day. A public consultation on remote working in Ireland reflected this, where concern was expressed that as attempts to regulate workers increase, the more flexibility will be lost (Bell *et al.*, 2021).

It will be interesting to conduct this study in Ireland as McDaniel, O'Connor and Drouin (2021) comment that the norms of the country in which the study is conducted can impact the findings. Their research was carried out in the US, which has very different expectations of employee rights compared to other countries. Thus, conducting the study in Ireland which now has the Code of Practice may possibly yield different results, depending on the extent to which Irish organisations have implemented the Code.

2.9 Concluding comments:

The workplace has changed radically in recent years, enabled by rapid advances and increased availability of technology, and a move to hybrid or remote working. This can make switching off after the workday has ended more difficult, thereby increasing the likelihood of work-life conflict. Investigating the millennial experience may yield interesting results due to potential generational gaps. Although there is now a Code of Practice addressing this issue in Ireland, it was only introduced one year ago so there is currently a lack of research on how it has been received by employees and organisations.

Chapter 3: Research Question

Research question: How has the Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect been received by Irish millennials and their employers?

The aim of this study is to assess awareness of the Code of Practice amongst millennial workers in Ireland and evaluate how their employers have reacted to its introduction as this currently represents a gap in the research. One essential aspect of the Code is the right of employees to 'not routinely perform work outside normal working hours' (WRC, 2021, p. 4). Thus, whether this group is struggling to switch off will be explored, along with their perceptions of after-hours technology and work-life conflict. Although the literature did not focus specifically on millennials, it suggested that many modern workers are struggling with these issues.

The hypotheses which will be tested are as listed below:

Hypothesis 1:

H_0: Millennial employees in Ireland report awareness of the Code of Practice and their employers have responded to its introduction.

H_1: Millennial employees in Ireland report low levels of awareness of the Code of Practice and their employers have responded inadequately to its introduction.

Hypothesis 2:

H_0: Millennial employees in Ireland do not experience difficulties in switching off and high work life conflict levels, there is no correlation between switching off and work-life conflict scores.

H_1: Millennial employees in Ireland report difficulties in switching off and high work-life conflict levels and these two variables are correlated.

Hypothesis 3:

H_0: Millennial employees in Ireland do not perceive work-related technologies having a positive or negative influence on their lives outside of work. There is no correlation between switching off and technology interruptions after-hours scores.

H_1: Millennial employees in Ireland perceive a negative influence of work-related mobile technologies on their lives outside of work and these two variables are correlated.

Hypothesis 4:

H_0: There will not be statistically significant differences in responses amongst millennials of different genders, those who work in traditional work settings versus those working from home, those with different positions in their organisations, and those with children versus those without.

H_1: There will be statistically significant differences in responses amongst millennials of different genders, those who work in traditional work settings versus those working from home, those with different positions in their organisations, and those with children versus those without.

Chapter 4 Methodology:

4.1 Introduction:

This chapter will discuss the research philosophy which will be followed in this study, as well as an explanation of the research approach and design that will be taken.

4.2 Research philosophy:

Saunders *et al.* (2009) refer to research philosophy as a 'system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge', which essentially refers to the ideas the researcher has about how to conduct their research. Throughout the process, the researcher makes many assumptions which affect the wording of the research question, the selection of certain data collection techniques and the interpretation of the results (Crotty, 1998).

The research onion depicted in Figure 1 illustrates the six layers of the research process to be covered throughout this chapter.

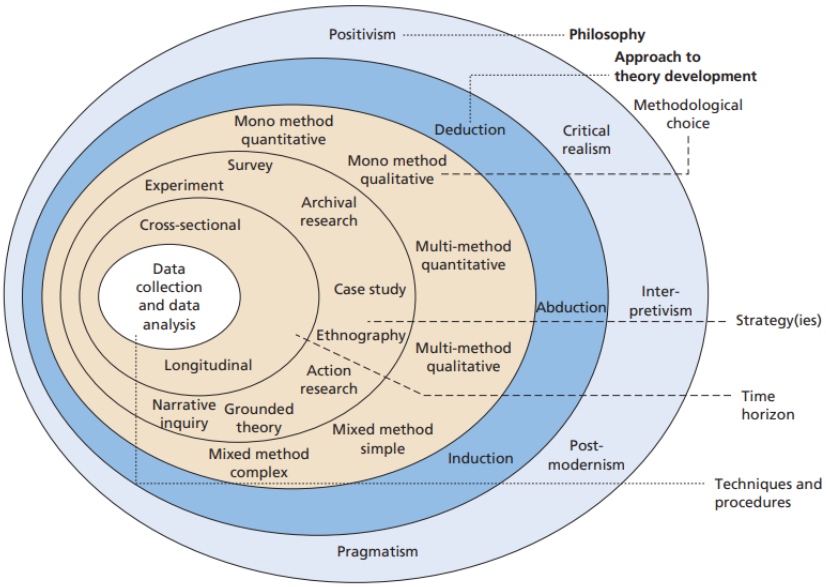

Figure 1: Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornton, 2016, p. 30)

It is important for one to consider their own beliefs and assumptions, and to inspect these views, about the world before conducting research.

Three primary types of research assumptions are those of ontology, epistemology, and axiology (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). These are briefly explained below:

1. Ontology concerns beliefs about what reality is.
2. Epistemology relates to expectations of knowledge, what is viewed as authentic and rational knowledge and the ways in which we share this with others. The assumptions made will determine what the researcher considers the best way of collecting their data. For example, taking a positivist assumption may cause the researcher to choose quantitative methods as this encompasses the idea that objective facts provide better evidence (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).
3. Axiology is related to moral principles. This assumption highlights the importance of ethical considerations throughout the research.

The research philosophy of positivism will inform this study. This usually involves using empirical methods to gather data from which generalisations can be made, free from bias (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). The researcher remains neutral and objective about what is being observed, is usually deductive, and quantitative analysis of a larger sample size is typically undertaken. One benefit of undertaking quantitative research is that the researcher can fairly claim that they did not influence the results, as they typically remain separate from those involved in the research. Conversely, a qualitative approach involving interviews or other direct involvement with the participants could be said to introduce subjectivity to the process, as the researcher could frame their questions differently or understand the response differently depending on the interviewee (Saunders *et al.*, 2009).

4.3 Research Approach:

The researcher must also decide whether to take a deductive or inductive approach. These are explained briefly below:

1. A deductive approach involves conclusions being drawn as the result of a hypothesis. This typically involves developing a plan to test the theory. It tends to search for causal associations between variables (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). This usually involves quantitative research methods being used. One benefit of this approach is that it can be a relatively quick process, as more

time is given to creating the data collection method compared to analysis. It is easier to create a schedule and maintain it using a deductive approach. However, a serious risk is failing to attract responses, which will yield insufficient data, meaning it will become difficult to make generalisations (Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

2. An inductive approach involves gathering data for exploration purposes, there is no initial hypothesis being tested. This typically involves gathering qualitative data, with smaller sample sizes. It has the advantage of enabling different potential explanations of whatever is being studied (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). For example, if millennials respond that they find it very difficult to switch off, but that it is completely unrelated to technology, an inductive approach enables other explanations to be collected. A risk of this approach is that no significant data patterns will be discovered.

This study will take a deductive approach, as certain hypotheses were formed from the literature in Chapter 2.

4.4 Research Design:

The researcher must decide between quantitative and qualitative research, or to choose a mixed method approach.

Quantitative research, typically linked with positivism and a deductive approach, will be undertaken as part of this study to test the hypotheses from Chapter 3. It involves seeking relationships between variables using numerical data and statistical methods of analysis (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Unfortunately, although this methodological choice is useful for discovering relationships, it can rarely establish causation (Stockemer, 2019). Thus, although the findings may show a relationship between millennials and psychological detachment levels, it will not uncover why exactly this is. As the objectives of the study include measuring switching off amongst a generation and awareness of the Code of Practice, the quantitative approach of generating and testing hypotheses was more appropriate than taking an exploratory approach.

A survey was designed and released as part of this study. Surveys are beneficial for gathering data from large sample sizes in a cost-effective manner (Saunders *et al.*,

2016). However, there are limitations on the number of questions that can be asked as participant fatigue should be avoided, and participants may fill the survey out wrong or leave it incomplete (Saunders *et al.*, 2009). Thus, care will be taken to ensure that the scales selected are not overly long, and that the survey's settings are such that all questions must be answered. As this study aimed to gather data which was representative of a large population, millennials working in Ireland, it was thought that using qualitative methods may not be as representative of the larger population, as using interviews necessitates a smaller sample size.

4.5 Questionnaire Design:

The questionnaire was conducted on Google Forms and had five sections excluding the information and consent sheet. It was designed to measure the key concepts discussed in the literature review, mainly awareness of the Code of Practice, switching off, how this may link to work-life conflict, and perceptions of work-related technology after-hours. The first section contained Questions 1-9 and contained demographic questions such as age, gender, industry type, position in the organisation, whether work was remote or in a workplace environment and whether the participant had children. The second section was comprised of Questions 10 and 11, which measured psychological detachment and work-life conflict. Question 10 comprised of a section of a pre-existing scale from Sonnentag and Fritz (2007) called the Recovery Experience Questionnaire. The original scale consisted of 16 items, with four constructs consisting of 4 items, designed to measure psychological detachment, relaxation, mastery and control. It was considered to have good internal consistency, ranging from .79 to .85. Mellner *et al*. (2016) measured Cronbach's Alpha at 0.87 when using only the four items relating to psychological detachment. It was also praised for being short, so could be easily used in further research due to very low time demands on the participant. As the focus of this question was on measuring psychological detachment levels, only this construct from the scale was used. This scale's validity was reaffirmed in further research by Sonnentag, Kuttler and Fritz (2015), Germeys and De Gieter (2017) and recently by Shurak *et al.* (2021), although the researchers removed the item 'I get a break from the demands of work'.

The scale used in Question 11 measured perceptions of work-life conflict. This was created by Gutek, Searle and Klepa (1991) to measure work-family interference but was subsequently used by Olson and Buchanan (2007) to measure work-to-life conflict as they noted that the items reflect the participants' personal life in a broad sense rather than focusing solely on family life. Olson and Buchanan (2007) also found this scale to have good internal consistency (α =.87).

The following section contained Question 12 and aimed to measure the extent to which work-related interruptions from mobile technologies impact the lives of the participants after their workday ends. This 4-item scale was adapted by Tams *et al.* (2020) from a Chen and Karahanna (2018) study and aimed to gather information on after-hours interruptions rather than just typical work overload. It achieved good internal consistency, at α= 0.95. All these scales asked respondents to respond on a 5-point Likert scale of Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree.

The final section contained Questions 13-18 and consisted of 6 items created by the researcher which focused solely on the Code of Practice. This was designed to assess awareness of the Code of Practice, whether the respondent's organisations had made changes because of the Code's introduction and whether there is a general belief that the Right to Disconnect should be legislated for or not.

A cover page was then designed to explain the aims of the study and the criteria required for participation, that the participant had to be born between 1980 and 1996 and work in Ireland. It explained that participation was completely voluntary, and that the respondent could withdraw at any point if they wished. It highlighted what the information gathered would be used for, where it would be stored and that it would remain completely confidential as no email addresses or IP addresses were gathered. The name and email address of the researcher was also mentioned in case the participant had any queries prior to completing the survey or afterwards. The first question after this information asked the participant to consent to continuing with the questionnaire.

4.6 Pilot Study:

A pilot study was conducted prior to the questionnaire being released online. The researcher asked five individuals they knew personally to complete the survey and provide feedback. The researcher was informed by the participants that the questionnaire only took approximately 3-4 minutes to complete so this information was inserted into the information sheet to reassure participants that time constraints should not be an issue. The below changes were also suggested:

1. The list of occupations did not include an option for the Cultural/Entertainment industry so it was suggested that a list of occupations which includes this could be used. In response to this, the researcher found an official list of the primary industry sectors in the EU on the Eurostat website.
2. The questionnaire originally asked the participant to identify their gender as either 'male, female, non-binary or other'. It was suggested that the terms 'male' and 'female' be altered to 'man' and 'woman' instead as this is considered more inclusive terminology. This was changed accordingly.
3. For the question asking where the respondents working hours are carried out, one pilot study participant suggested that the answers be changed to more official terms such as 'remote working', 'blended working'. However, upon reflection, this change was not implemented as the researcher aimed to keep the language used as simple as possible to avoid confusion amongst respondents.
4. Even though a definition of a millennial was provided at the beginning of the information sheet prior to carrying out the survey, it was suggested that the age-range of millennials be inserted into the title of the questionnaire, to avoid any confusion amongst respondents on whether they are eligible to participate. This age-range was inserted into the title as a result.

4.7 Sample:

The population being studied were millennial workers working in Ireland. The 2016 Census found that 29.5% of the population was aged between 25-44, which is the age-range in the Census that most closely aligns to the millennial age-range used in

this study (CSO, 2022). Interestingly, this had fallen from 31.6% in 2011 so it is difficult to measure exactly how many millennials are in Ireland today as the 2022 Census results have not been released. However, they undoubtedly still form a significant proportion of the working population so it would have been impossible to survey everyone in this population. Therefore, attracting a representative sample of millennial workers to participate was vital.

The survey was distributed online to expand the reach of the survey beyond the immediate contacts of the researcher. It was released on Google Forms from 13th June until the 4th July, a three-week period, although most responses were recorded in the first week. Convenience sampling was used to attract as many responses as possible as this form of sampling targets individuals who are easily accessible (Stockemer, 2019). The survey was shared on the researcher's LinkedIn account as well as social media site Reddit. Some snowball sampling was also used as personal contacts of the researcher were asked to share the questionnaire amongst any suitable contacts they may have. The aim was to attract a minimum of 100 responses with a relatively even divide of men and women. In the three-week period, the survey received 405 responses. These were exported to Microsoft Excel and then onto SPSS for descriptive and inferential testing.

4.8 Ethical Considerations:

Johnson and Christensen (2008, p. 101) view ethics as the 'principles and guidelines that help us uphold the things we value'. Agunloye (2019) stresses that the extent of ethical considerations required will depend on the typology being used in the study. For quantitative research, he highlights that ethical considerations are more prominent at the planning phase as the study often does not involve direct contact with the participants.

In line with the Respect-for-Persons principle, a consent form was included with the information sheet. This principle states that individuals should have freedom to partake in research without being pressured or coerced (Agunloye, 2019). It was made clear to participants that they had to be born between 1980 and 1996 to participate, so there were no ethical concerns about gaining consent from minors or people who may be unable to fully consent. The consent form also asked participants

to answer 'Yes' to the consent question before they would be brought to any other question in the questionnaire.

The Beneficence Principle compels researchers to take action to shield human participants from any harm arising from the study (Agunloye, 2019). To respect this principle, this study protected the confidentiality of the participants by not gathering IP addresses or email addresses, so participants were untraceable. To further safeguard those who responded, it was described on the information sheet exactly what the data will be used for and that it would be kept on a password protected computer.

4.9 Research Limitations:

- Sample size: Although 405 responses was more than the researcher anticipated receiving, it is still a small sample size compared to the number of millennials working in Ireland.
- Demographics: It was envisaged that the questionnaire would attract similar levels of responses from both men and women, however most respondents identified as men.
- It would have been ideal to conduct a mixed methods approach to this study, so that generalisable data could be gathered from the quantitative questionnaire, but more in-depth insights may also have been obtained from qualitative interviews. Due to time constraints, this was unable to be facilitated.
- As was also an issue within the existing literature, any relationships found between variables as part of the data analysis will be correlational and not establish causation.

4.10 Conclusion:

Once it was decided to follow a positivist deductive research approach, a quantitative survey was designed on Google Forms and released as a pilot study. Once feedback was received, this was released to the public. The data collected was exported to Excel and then uploaded onto SPSS for analysis.

Chapter 5: Findings

5.1 Introduction:

This chapter presents the data gathered from the quantitative survey. Descriptive and inferential statistics will be conducted using SPSS.

5.2 Demographics:

Within three weeks, 405 total responses were gathered, with 379 valid responses. Two responses were excluded for answering both yes and no to the consent question, four were excluded for not working in Ireland and the remainder were excluded for failing to meet the age eligibility requirements. 70.4% of respondents identified as men (n=267), with 28% identifying as women (n=106). There was a minority of respondents identifying as non-binary (n=4) and those who preferred not to say (n=2).

The mean year of birth of the participants was 1989.28, with a standard deviation of 4.38 years, with the median year of birth being 1990.

Most respondents work full-time as shown in Table 1. The most common employment sector reported was Information and Communication (n=89), constituting 23.5% of responses. Professional, scientific and technical activities (n=88) and public sector activities like health and education (n=63) were also frequently selected. This list of employment sectors originated from a Eurostat list of the EU's main economic activities. Not all respondents could identify, with 25 respondents selecting the 'Other' option.

Q4: Do you work full-time or part-time?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Full-Time	358	94.5	94.5	94.5
	Part-Time	21	5.5	5.5	100.0
	Total	379	100.0	100.0	

Table 1:Frequency Distribution-Full-Time and Part-Time work

Q5: Which of the following categories best describes the industry you work in?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1	.3	.3	.3
	Industry (except construction)	18	4.7	4.7	5.0
	Construction	12	3.2	3.2	8.2
	Wholesale & Retail Trade, transport, accommodation & food	28	7.4	7.4	15.6
	Information & communication	89	23.5	23.5	39.1
	Financial and insurance activities	46	12.1	12.1	51.2
	Professional, scientific & technical activities	88	23.2	23.2	74.4
	Public administration, defence, education, human health, social work	63	16.6	16.6	91.0
	Arts, entertainment & recreation	9	2.4	2.4	93.4
	Other	25	6.6	6.6	100.0
	Total	379	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Frequency Distribution-Employment Sectors

In relation to the respondents' positions within their organisations, the majority (n=184) identified as a non-managerial employee. A sizable number also identified as middle management (n=96) and entry-level (n=55).

Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Intern	3	.8	.8	.8
	Graduate-Position	17	4.5	4.5	5.3
	Entry-Level	55	14.5	14.5	19.8
	Middle-Management	96	25.3	25.3	45.1
	Senior-Management	23	6.1	6.1	51.2
	Non-managerial-employee	184	48.5	48.5	99.7
	Other	1	.3	.3	100.0
	Total	379	100.0	100.0	

Table 3:Frequency Distribution-Position in organisation

The majority engage in hybrid working (n=172) as shown in Table 4. The number of days that the respondents report working from home per week is displayed in Table 5.

Q7: Where are your working hours carried out?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	All within a workplace environment	108	28.5	28.5	28.5
	All from home	99	26.1	26.1	54.6
	Both at home and in a workplace environment	172	45.4	45.4	100.0
	Total	379	100.0	100.0	

Table 4:Frequency Distribution-Work location

Q8: If you answered that you work both at home and in a workplace environment in Question 7, do you work from home:

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 day per week	26	6.9	7.9	7.9
	2 days per week	23	6.1	6.9	14.8
	3 days per week	53	14.0	16.0	30.8
	4 days per week	52	13.7	15.7	46.5
	5 days per week	31	8.2	9.4	55.9
	N/A	146	38.5	44.1	100.0
	Total	331	87.3	100.0	
Missing	System	48	12.7		
Total		379	100.0		

Table 5:Frequency Distribution-Days spent working from home

The majority answered that they have no children or child-rearing responsibilities (n=304), with 19% reporting that they do.

Q9: Do you have any children and/or child rearing responsibilities?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	73	19.3	19.3	19.3
	No	304	80.2	80.2	99.5
	4	2	.5	.5	100.0
	Total	379	100.0	100.0	

Table 6:Frequency Distribution-Childrearing responsibilities

5.3 Consistency and Reliability:

Cronbach's Alpha was used to measure internal reliability between items for the scales used. All scales met the requirement of scoring above 0.7 for internal consistency. The scales were used previously in peer reviewed work, although the

test was repeated as the sample used in this study differs from those from other research.

Name of Scale:	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
Recovery Experience Scale/Psychological Detachment	.842	4
Work Life Conflict Scale	.779	4
Technology Interruptions After Hours Scale	.941	4

Table 7:Cronbach Alpha Reliability Statistic

5.4 Objective 1: To investigate awareness of the Code of Practice amongst millennials in Ireland and how their employers have responded to its introduction.

As the Code was only introduced in April 2021, there is no literature on how it has been received by employers or employees. Although 64.1% of respondents reported being aware of its introduction, only 11.1% were made aware by their employers. 71.2% answered that their employer did not make them aware but interestingly 17.7% said they were unsure whether they were informed by their employer.

The results indicate that very few employers in Ireland have introduced policies to respond to the Code's introduction, with only 8.4% stating that new policies had been introduced. 62% answered that their employers had not implemented any new policies, and 29.6% were unsure as to whether they had or not.

There were very few differences reported in working time after-hours post the Code's introduction. Only 7.1% reported spending less time on work-related tasks after-hours since the Code was introduced, with 9.2% reporting that they spend more time on such tasks, with the majority (83.6%) stating that they spend the same amount of time.

Question 17 asked participants whether their organisations encourage employees to use such tools like Out of Office alerts on their emails to remind employees that they are not required to respond out of hours, as was recommended within the Code. 35.9% answered that their employers encourage such tools, whereas 46.4% claimed that they do not and 17.7% were unsure.

Participants were asked whether they think the Right to Disconnect should be protected by legislation. An overwhelming majority, 94.7%, answered Yes. Only 1.6% stated no and 3.7% said they were unsure.

5.5 Objective 2: To investigate Psychological Detachment (PD) and Work Life Conflict (WLC) levels amongst Millennials working in Ireland.

Psychological detachment:

Respondents reported being quite good at switching off after-hours. When asked about their evenings after work, 50.1% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I forget about work'. 69.2% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I distance myself from my work' and likewise, 69.9% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'I get a break from the demands of work'. However, a slight majority (53.3%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement 'I don't think about work at all'. This suggests that millennials working in Ireland overall do not struggle significantly with switching off. These findings differ from the literature, which indicated that the failure to disconnect has become a common challenge.

The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to test normality, which states that the variable is normally distributed if $p>0.05$. For the PD variable, $p=<0.001$ which indicates abnormal distribution. However, Ghasemi (2010) warns against using numerical tests for larger sample sizes as small deviations can appear statistically significant, even though such deviations should not impact parametric test outcomes.

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Psychologicaldetachment	.091	379	<.001	.968	379	<.001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 8:PD normality test

Considering the sample size is quite large at n=379, visual inspections of histograms will be used where the Shapiro-Wilk test suggests abnormality. Skewness and kurtosis values may also be used to test normality if the histogram is ambiguous or only has a few outliers. This should help to ensure that the correct inferential test, whether parametric or non-parametric, is used. A histogram showing the composite scores from the PD scale are shown on Figure 2. Visual inspection of the histogram shows some deviations from normality, and the data is positively skewed.

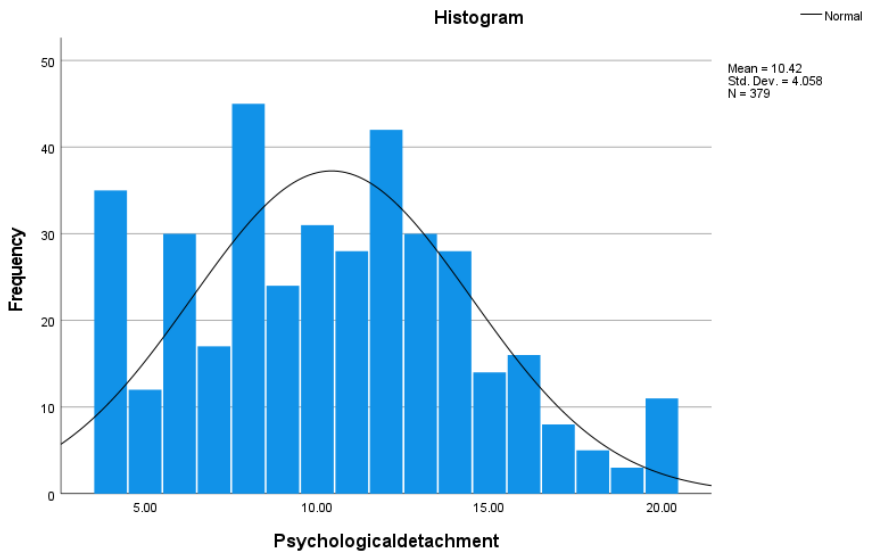

Figure 2:Histogram-PD

To assess normality using skewness and kurtosis values, a z-score must be found by dividing the kurtosis and skewness statistic by the standard error (Uttley, 2019). A z-score of ±1.96 is significant at P<0.05, and a z-score above or below this indicates non-normality. PD scores were not normally distributed with a skewness of .280 (standard error (SE)=.125) and a kurtosis of -.512 (SE= .250).

The PD variable was tested against other demographic variables to investigate if these affected the responses.

PD and Gender identity:

Using the Shapiro-Wilk test, neither gender identity satisfies the normality requirements of p>0.05 as p=<.001 for men and p=.038 for women. The histograms also indicate deviations from normality, especially for men which is skewed to the right in Figure 6. Using skewness and kurtosis results, PD scores were normally distributed amongst women, with a skewness of .049(SE=.235) and a kurtosis of -.411(SE=.465), but not for men, with a skewness of .366(SE=.149) and a kurtosis of -.490(SE=.297).

Tests of Normality

	Q2: What is your gender identity?	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Psychologicaldetachment	Man	.095	267	<.001	.962	267	<.001
	Woman	.112	106	.002	.974	106	.038
	Non-Binary	.260	4	.	.827	4	.161
	Prefer not to say	.260	2	.			

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 9: Normality test-PD/Gender identity

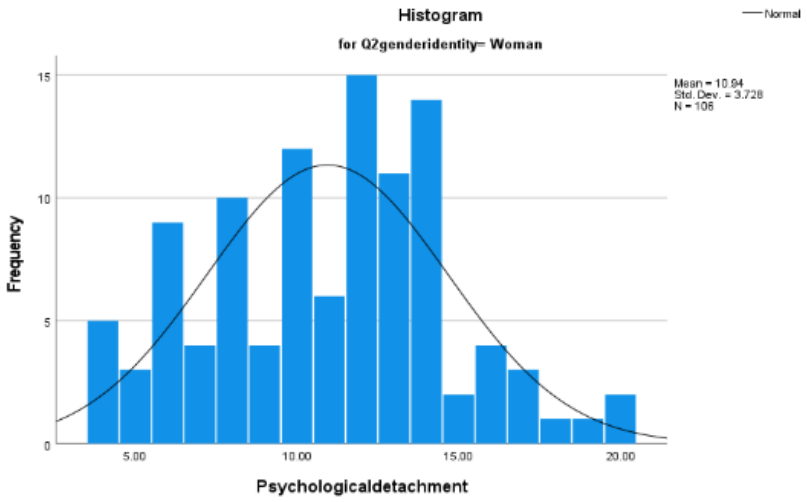

Figure 3: Histogram-PD/Women

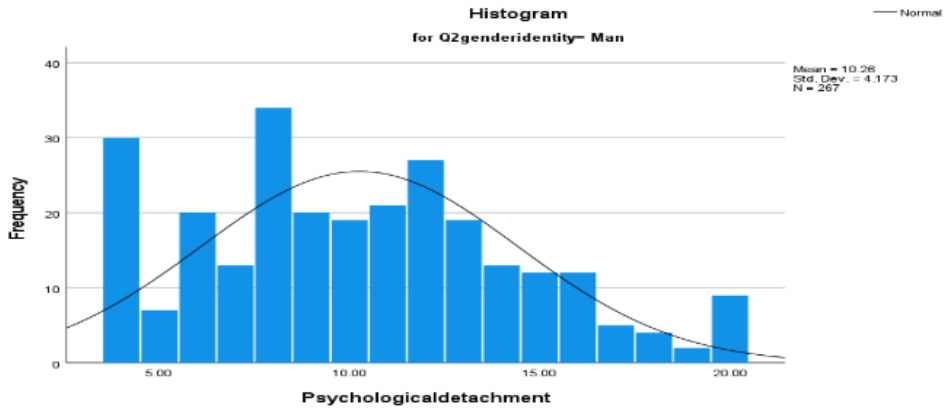

Figure 4:Histogram-PD/Men

The non-parametric Mann-Whitney test was used to investigate if there were statistically significant differences in PD scores between men and women. Unfortunately, there were not enough responses from other gender identities to conduct effective analysis, so the focus is on men and women. Visual inspection of the PD score distributions for men and women for the purposes of the MW test were not similar, so mean scores were used. Scores for men (mean rank=180.80) were not statistically significantly different compared to women (mean rank=202.62), U = 12495.00, z = -1.769, p = .077. This suggests the responses were not affected by gender, contrary to Mellner's (2016) finding that women struggled more with switching off.

Ranks

	Q2: What is your gender identity?	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Psychologicaldetachment	Man	267	180.80	48273.00
	Woman	106	202.62	21478.00
	Total	373		

Table 10:Mean Ranks-PD/Gender identity

Test Statistics[a]

	Psychologicaldetachment
Mann-Whitney U	12495.000
Wilcoxon W	48273.000
Z	-1.769
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.077

a. Grouping Variable: Q2: What is your gender identity?

Table 11:Mann-Whitney test-PD/Gender identity

PD and Employment Sectors:

The PD variable was tested against employment sectors to investigate if the industry the participant works in affects their experience of switching off. As shown in Table 12, only the Information and Communication, Professional, scientific and technical sectors and those identifying as 'Other' are abnormally distributed according to the Shapiro-Wilk test as p<.05.

Tests of Normality[a]

	Q5: Which of the following categories best describes the industry you work in?	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[b]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Psychologicaldetachment	Industry (except construction)	.216	18	.027	.904	18	.067
	Construction	.221	12	.110	.932	12	.397
	Wholesale & Retail Trade, transport, accommodation & food	.107	28	.200*	.950	28	.196
	Information & communication	.088	89	.088	.953	89	.003
	Financial and insurance activities	.097	46	.200*	.957	46	.090
	Professional, scientific & technical activities	.124	88	.002	.964	88	.015
	Public administration, defence, education, human health, social work	.111	63	.053	.974	63	.209
	Arts, entertainment & recreation	.218	9	.200*	.934	9	.523
	Other	.174	25	.049	.915	25	.040

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Psychologicaldetachment is constant when Q5: Which of the following categories best describes the industry you work in? = Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing. It has been omitted.

b. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 12:Normality test-PD/Employment industry

However, skewness and kurtosis z-scores indicate normality as skewness for Information and Communication was .330(SE=.255) and kurtosis is -.753(SE=.506), skewness for Professional, scientific and technical activities is .271(SE=.257) and kurtosis is -.379(SE=.508) and skewness for Other is -.045(SE=.464) and kurtosis is -.231(.902), which are acceptable z-scores once converted.

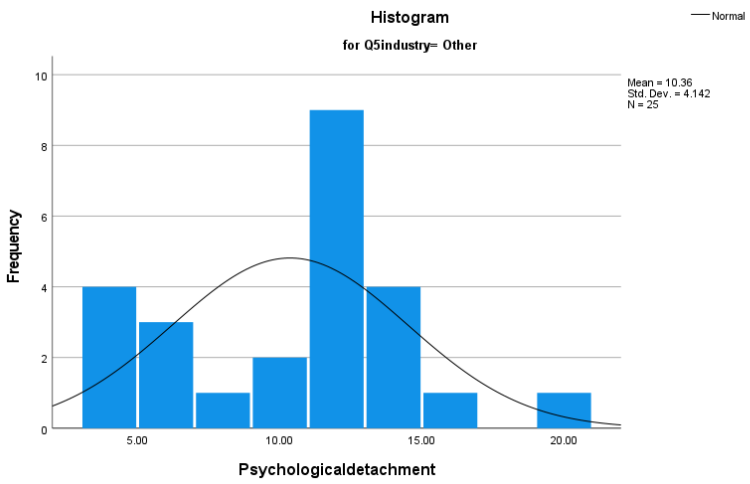

Figure 5:Histogram-PD/'Other'

The non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis (KW) test is used for inferential testing, as the histogram for those who answered 'Other' in Figure 8 shows significant deviations from normality. Mean scores were used as visual inspection of a boxplot showed distributions of scores were not similar for all sectors. It was found that the means for the different sectors do differ as shown in Table 15 but were not statistically significant, $\chi^2(3) = 7.136^a$, $p = .623$.

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.[a,b]	Decision
1	The distribution of Psychologicaldetachment is the same across categories of Q5: Which of the following categories best describes the industry you work in?.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.623	Retain the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

Table 13:Kruskal-Wallis Result-PD/Employment Industry

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary

Total N	379
Test Statistic	7.136[a]
Degree Of Freedom	9
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.623

a. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

Table 14:Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary-PD/Employment Industry

Report

Psychologicaldetachment

Q5: Which of the following categories best describes the industry you work in?	N	Mean
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	1	12.0000
Industry (except construction)	18	8.3889
Construction	12	10.7500
Wholesale & Retail Trade, transport, accommodation & food	28	10.8929
Information & communication	89	10.7978
Financial and insurance activities	46	10.5217
Professional, scientific & technical activities	88	10.0227
Public administration, defence, education, human health, social work	63	10.4921
Arts, entertainment & recreation	9	11.5556
Other	25	10.3600
Total	379	10.4169

Table 15:Mean results-PD/Employment Industry

PD and Position in Organisation

The PD variable was also tested against the respondent's position in their organisation. As shown in Table 16, the Entry-level, Middle Management and Non-managerial employees are not normally distributed according to the SW test whereas the other positions were normally distributed as p>.05.

Tests of Normality[c]

	Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation?	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Psychologicaldetachment	Intern	.304	3	.	.907	3	.407
	Graduate-Position	.181	17	.143	.922	17	.163
	Entry-Level	.134	55	.015	.941	55	.009
	Middle-Management	.130	96	<.001	.968	96	.018
	Senior-Management	.143	23	.200*	.963	23	.526
	Non-managerial-employee	.099	184	<.001	.963	184	<.001

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

c. Psychologicaldetachment is constant when Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation? = Other. It has been omitted.

Table 16:Normality testing results-PD/position within organisation

Using skewness and kurtosis values to assess normality, Entry-level and Middle-management positions also appear normally distributed. Entry-level had a skewness of .524(SE=0.322) and kurtosis of -0.349 (SE=0.634) and Middle-management had a

skewness of -0.120(SE=0.246) and kurtosis of -0.518(SE=0.488) However, the position of non-managerial employee had a skewness of 0.414(SE=0.179) and a kurtosis of -.237(SE=0.356) which failed the z-score normality requirements of ±1.96. The histogram for the Entry-level position also shows deviations from normality so the non-parametric test Kruskal-Wallis test is used for inferential testing.

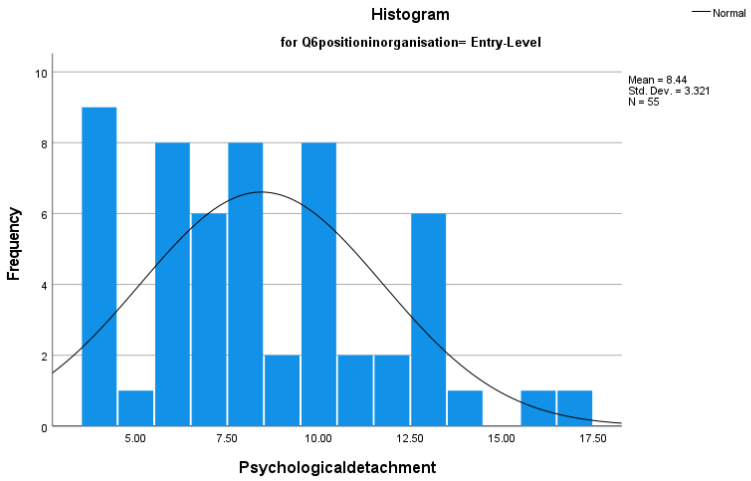

Figure 6:Histogram-PD/Entry-level position

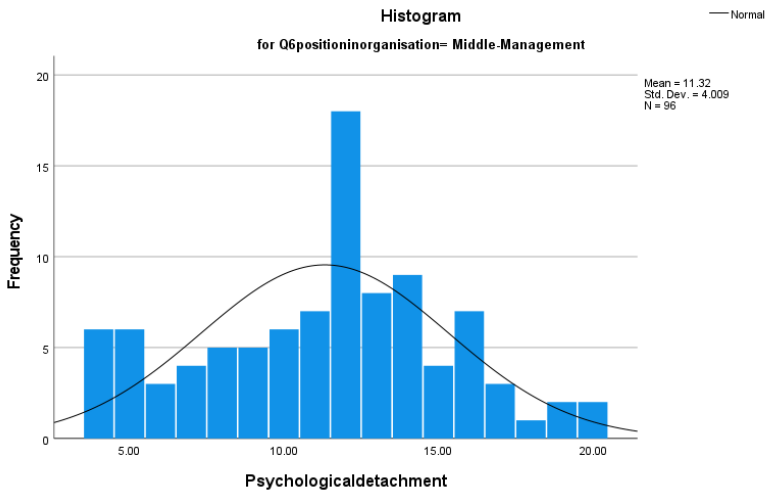

Figure 7:Histogram-PD/Middle-Management

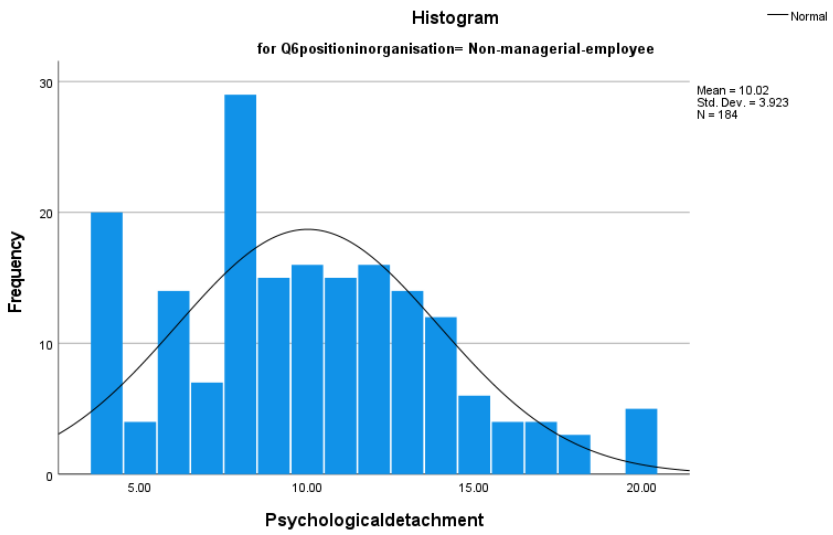

Figure 8:Histogram-PD/Non-managerial employee

Visual inspection of a boxplot showed that distributions of PD scores were similar for all groups. Median PD scores were statistically significantly different between groups, $\chi 2(3)=38.783a$, p=<.001. Pairwise comparisons were performed using Dunn's (1964) procedure with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Adjusted p-values are presented. This revealed statistically significant differences in median PD scores between Entry-level (8) and Middle-management (12) (p =.000), entry level and senior management (14) (p=.005) and entry-level and non-managerial employee (10) (p=.001), but not between other group combinations. This suggests that entry-level employees are better at switching off than higher up positions, somewhat confirming Mellner's (2016) findings where those not in managerial positions were better at switching off.

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.[a,b]	Decision
1	The distribution of Psychologicaldetachment is the same across categories of Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation?.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

Table 17:Kruskal-Wallis test result-PD/position

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary

Total N	379
Test Statistic	38.783[a]
Degree Of Freedom	6
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	<.001

a. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

Table 18:Kruskal-Wallis test summary-PD/position

Report

Psychologicaldetachment

Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation?	N	Median
Intern	3	13.0000
Graduate-Position	17	12.0000
Entry-Level	55	8.0000
Middle-Management	96	12.0000
Senior-Management	23	14.0000
Non-managerial-employee	184	10.0000
Other	1	6.0000
Total	379	10.0000

Table 19:Median results-PD/position

Pairwise Comparisons of Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation?

Sample 1-Sample 2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj. Sig.[a]
Other-Entry-Level	73.518	110.173	.667	.505	1.000
Other-Non-managerial-employee	116.364	109.481	1.063	.288	1.000
Other-Graduate-Position	153.971	112.350	1.370	.171	1.000
Other-Middle-Management	154.208	109.752	1.405	.160	1.000
Other-Intern	161.333	126.075	1.280	.201	1.000
Other-Senior-Management	215.761	111.533	1.935	.053	1.000
Entry-Level-Non-managerial-employee	-42.846	16.779	-2.554	.011	.224
Entry-Level-Graduate-Position	80.452	30.299	2.655	.008	.166
Entry-Level-Middle-Management	-80.690	18.464	-4.370	<.001	.000
Entry-Level-Intern	87.815	64.734	1.357	.175	1.000
Entry-Level-Senior-Management	-142.243	27.112	-5.246	<.001	.000
Non-managerial-employee-Graduate-Position	37.606	27.677	1.359	.174	1.000
Non-managerial-employee-Middle-Management	37.844	13.747	2.753	.006	.124
Non-managerial-employee-Intern	44.969	63.550	.708	.479	1.000
Non-managerial-employee-Senior-Management	99.397	24.148	4.116	<.001	.001
Graduate-Position-Middle-Management	-.238	28.730	-.008	.993	1.000
Graduate-Position-Intern	7.363	68.374	.108	.914	1.000
Graduate-Position-Senior-Management	-61.790	34.922	-1.769	.077	1.000
Middle-Management-Intern	7.125	64.015	.111	.911	1.000
Middle-Management-Senior-Management	-61.553	25.347	-2.428	.015	.319
Intern-Senior-Management	-54.428	67.023	-.812	.417	1.000

Each row tests the null hypothesis that the Sample 1 and Sample 2 distributions are the same. Asymptotic significances (2-sided tests) are displayed. The significance level is .050.

a. Significance values have been adjusted by the Bonferroni correction for multiple tests.

Table 20:Pairwise comparisons-PD/position

PD & Work location:

The PD variable was tested against the work locations of the respondents. The Shapiro-Wilk test results suggested abnormality as shown in Table 20 as p<.05.

Tests of Normality

	Q7: Where are your working hours carried out?	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] Statistic	df	Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	df	Sig.
Psychologicaldetachment	All within a workplace environment	.078	108	.100	.969	108	.013
	All from home	.091	99	.041	.954	99	.002
	Both at home and in a workplace environment	.100	172	<.001	.965	172	<.001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 21:Normality testing-PD/work location

Using skewness and kurtosis values, all appear normally distributed. 'All within a workplace environment' has a skewness of .076(SE=.233) and kurtosis of -.770(SE=.4612), 'All from home' has a skewness of .364(SE=.243) and a kurtosis of -.494(SE=.481) and 'Both at home and in a workplace environment' has a skewness of .357(SE=.185) and a kurtosis of -.331(SE=.368). However, the histogram representing those working all within a workplace environment in Figure 16 shows significant deviations from normality.

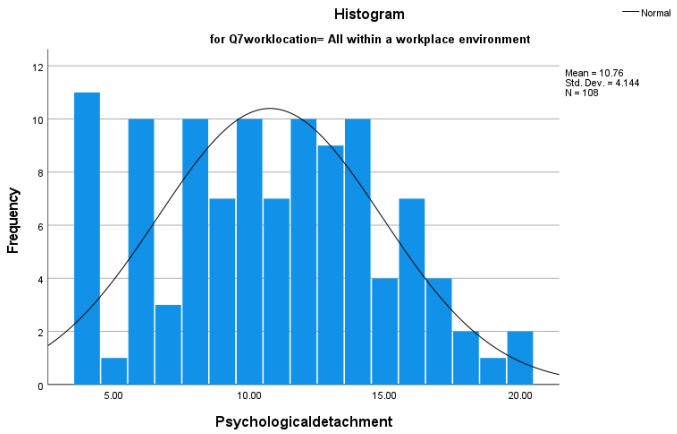

Figure 9:Histogram-PD/All within workplace environment

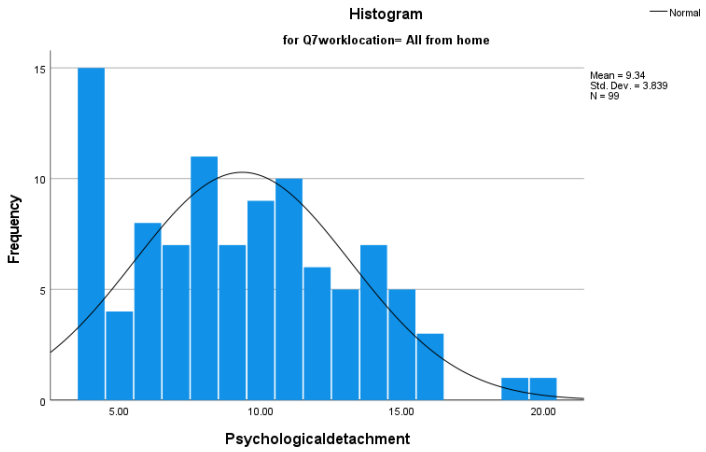

Figure 10:Histogram-PD/All from home

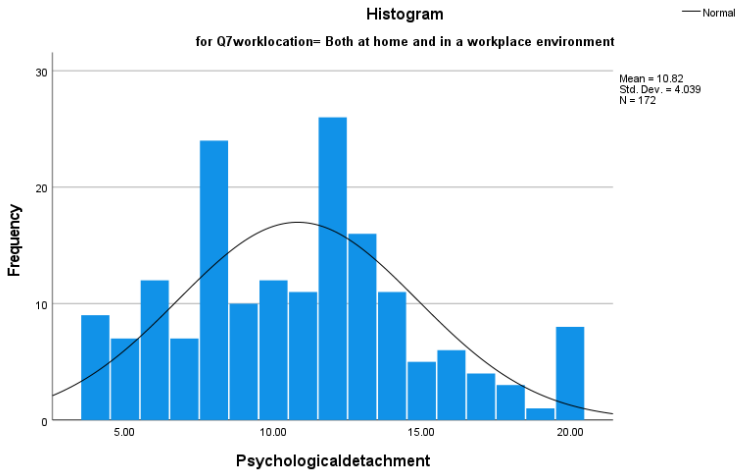

Figure 11:Histogram-PD/Both at home & workplace environment

A non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was run to determine if there were differences in PD scores between participants with different working locations. Distributions of PD scores were similar for all groups, assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. Median PD scores were statistically significantly different between groups, $\chi 2(3)=8.920a$, p=.012. Pairwise comparisons were performed using Dunn's (1964) procedure with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Adjusted p-values are presented. This revealed statistically significant differences in PD scores between those working all from home (Mdn=9) and both from home and a workplace environment (Mdn=11) (p=.018) and all from home and all within a workplace environment (Mdn=11) (p=.034), but not between those working both at home and within a workplace environment and those working all within a workplace

environment (p=1.00). This suggests that those who work exclusively from home find it easier to switch off.

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.[a,b]	Decision
1	The distribution of Psychologicaldetachment is the same across categories of Q7: Where are your working hours carried out?.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.012	Reject the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

Table 22:Kruskal-Wallis Test results-PD/Work location

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary

Total N	379
Test Statistic	8.920[a]
Degree Of Freedom	2
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.012

a. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

Table 23:Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary-PD/Work location

Pairwise Comparisons of Q7: Where are your working hours carried out?

Sample 1-Sample 2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj. Sig.[a]
All from home-Both at home and in a workplace environment	-37.899	13.774	-2.751	.006	.018
All from home-All within a workplace environment	38.486	15.192	2.533	.011	.034
Both at home and in a workplace environment-All within a workplace environment	.587	13.405	.044	.965	1.000

Each row tests the null hypothesis that the Sample 1 and Sample 2 distributions are the same. Asymptotic significances (2-sided tests) are displayed. The significance level is .050.

a. Significance values have been adjusted by the Bonferroni correction for multiple tests.

Table 24:Pairwise Comparisons-PD/Work location

Report

Psychologicaldetachment

Q7: Where are your working hours carried out?	N	Median
All within a workplace environment	108	11.0000
All from home	99	9.0000
Both at home and in a workplace environment	172	11.0000
Total	379	10.0000

Table 25:Median results-PD/Work location

PD and Childrearing responsibilities:

The PD variable was tested against the presence of children or childrearing responsibilities. Using the Shapiro-Wilk test, the data for those who answered that they have children is normally distributed as p>.05 whereas the data for those who answered No is not as p<.05.

Tests of Normality

	Q9: Do you have any children and/or child rearing responsibilities?	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Psychologicaldetachment	Yes	.102	73	.057	.975	73	.154
	No	.100	304	<.001	.961	304	<.001
	Prefer not to say	.	2	.			

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 26:Normality test-PD/Children

The skewness and kurtosis results confirmed this, as the skewness z-score for those who answered No was too high at .373(SE=.140) with normal kurtosis results at -.679(SE=.555).

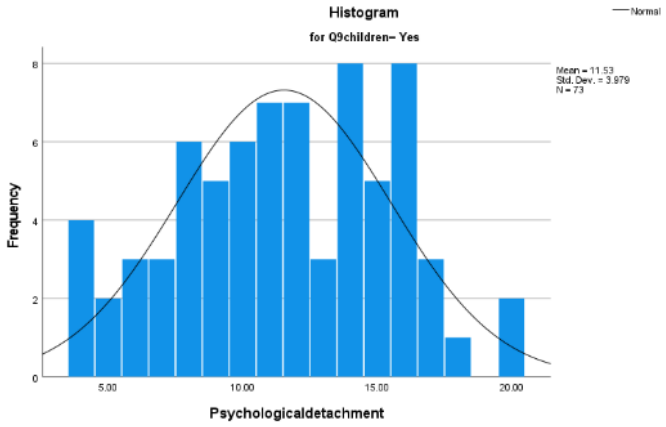

Figure 12:Histogram-PD/Children 'Yes'

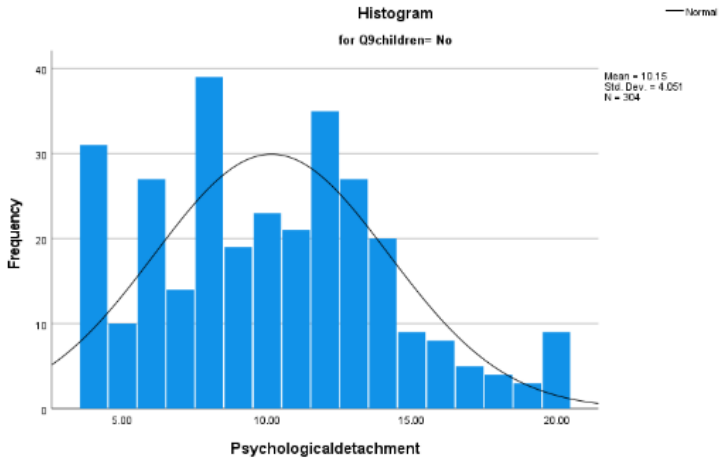

Figure 13:Histogram-PD/Children 'No'

A non-parametric Mann-Whitney U test was run to determine if there were differences in PD scores between respondents with children and without. Distributions of PD scores for these groups were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection. PD scores for those with children (mean rank=220.47) were statistically significantly higher than those without (mean rank= 181.44), U=8798.5, z=-2.757, p=.006. This suggests that those with children find it more difficult to disconnect than those without children.

Ranks

	Q9: Do you have any children and/or child rearing responsibilities?	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Psychologicaldetachment	Yes	73	220.47	16094.50
	No	304	181.44	55158.50
	Total	377		

Table 27:Mean Ranks-PD/Children

Test Statistics[a]

	Psychologicaldetachment
Mann-Whitney U	8798.500
Wilcoxon W	55158.500
Z	-2.757
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.006

a. Grouping Variable: Q9: Do you have any children and/or child rearing responsibilities?

Table 28:Mann-Whitney test results-PD/Children

Work-life conflict (WLC)

It was thought that millennials working in Ireland would report high levels of WLC, especially those also struggling to switch off. 64.9% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'After work, I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do'. There was a relatively even split of those agreeing and disagreeing with the statement 'On the job, I have so much work to do that it takes away from my personal interests' with 42.2% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 39.9% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. 57% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement 'My family/friends dislike how often I am preoccupied with my work while I am home'. 52.6% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement 'My work takes up time that I'd like to spend with family/friends'. Composite scores with a range of 4-20 were calculated. The median score was 12, suggesting there are not particularly high levels of WLC amongst respondents.

The Shapiro Wilk test results suggest that the WLC variable is abnormally distributed, as shown on Table 28, p<.001. The histogram of Figure 26 indicates that the data is concentrated in the middle of the graph, and the kurtosis results also fail the normality requirements at -.668 (SE=.250).

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Worklifeconflict	.070	379	<.001	.981	379	<.001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 29:Normality test-WLC

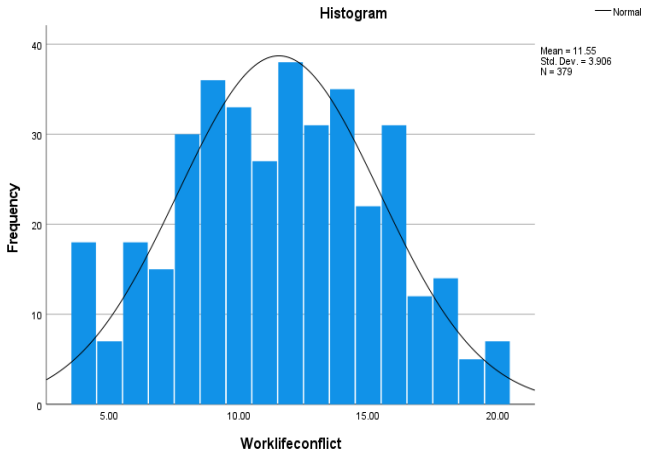

Figure 14:Histogram-WLC

The WLC variable was tested against other demographic variables to investigate if responses differed.

WLC & Gender identity:

According to the Shapiro-Wilk test displayed in Table 29, the results from women are normally distributed as p=.1 whereas the men are not as p<.05. The skewness and kurtosis results confirm this, as women are normally distributed with skewness levels of -.004(SE=.245) and kurtosis of -.538(SE=.465), whereas the kurtosis level for men is too high at -.705(SE=.297) with normal skewness levels of -.020(SE=.149).

Tests of Normality

	Q2: What is your gender identity?	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Worklifeconflict	Man	.076	267	<.001	.980	267	<.001
	Woman	.092	106	.028	.979	106	.100
	Non-Binary	.203	4	.	.980	4	.899
	Prefer not to say	.260	2	.			

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 30:Normality test-WLC/Gender identity

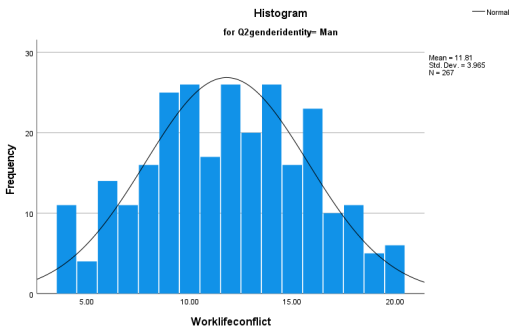

Figure 15:Histogram-WLC/Men

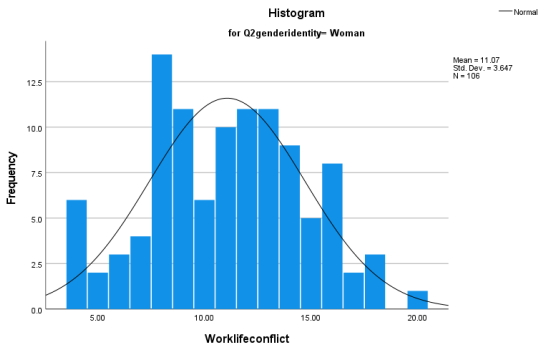

Figure 16:Histogram-WLC/Women

A Mann-Whitney test was run to determine if there were differences in WLC scores between men and women. Distributions of WLC scores for men and women were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. Median WLC scores were not statistically significantly different between men (12) and women (11), $U = 12625$, $z = -1.63$, $p = .103$. Therefore, there is no evidence that gender influences WLC scores.

Test Statistics[a]

	Worklifeconflict
Mann-Whitney U	12625.000
Wilcoxon W	18296.000
Z	-1.630
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.103

a. Grouping Variable: Q2: What is your gender identity?

Table 31:Mann-Whitney Test-WLC/Gender identity

Report

Worklifeconflict

Q2: What is your gender identity?	N	Median
Man	267	12.0000
Woman	106	11.0000
Non-Binary	4	11.0000
Prefer not to say	2	5.0000
Total	379	12.0000

Table 32:Median Ranks-WLC/Gender Identity

WLC and Employment sector:

All results are normally distributed as p>.05 under the Shapiro-Wilk test so the parametric one-way Anova test was used for inferential testing. Inspection of a

boxplot showed no outliers in the data. There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances (p=.546). WLC levels were statistically significantly different for various occupational sectors, F(8,369)=2.517, p<.011. Tukey post hoc analysis showed the mean difference between Professional, scientific and technical activities (12.11 ± 3.7) and Wholesale & Retail trade (9.21 ± 3.74) (p=.017), with an increase of 2.9(95% CI,.29-5.5) but no other group differences were statistically significant.

Tests of Normality[a]

	Q5: Which of the following categories best describes the industry you work in?	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[b]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Worklifeconflict	Industry (except construction)	.174	18	.153	.923	18	.145
	Construction	.159	12	.200*	.943	12	.534
	Wholesale & Retail Trade, transport, accommodation & food	.127	28	.200*	.947	28	.171
	Information & communication	.093	89	.057	.974	89	.069
	Financial and insurance activities	.071	46	.200*	.972	46	.339
	Professional, scientific & technical activities	.103	88	.022	.982	88	.244
	Public administration, defence, education, human health, social work	.106	63	.078	.975	63	.217
	Arts, entertainment & recreation	.118	9	.200*	.984	9	.980
	Other	.117	25	.200*	.968	25	.599

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Worklifeconflict is constant when Q5: Which of the following categories best describes the industry you work in? = Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing. It has been omitted.

b. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 33:Normality testing-WLC/Employment Sector

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Worklifeconflict	Based on Mean	.866	8	369	.546
	Based on Median	.794	8	369	.609
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	.794	8	352.390	.609
	Based on trimmed mean	.863	8	369	.548

Table 34:Levene Statistic-WLC/Employment Sector

ANOVA

Worklifeconflict

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	297.989	8	37.249	2.517	.011
Within Groups	5461.344	369	14.800		
Total	5759.333	377			

Table 35:Anova results-WLC/Employment Sector

WLC and Position in the organisation:

Using the Shapiro-Wilk test for the variable of position within the organisation, Middle management, senior management and non-managerial employee results were abnormally distributed as p<.05 whereas other positions were normally distributed. Upon visual inspection of the histograms, only senior management appears abnormally distributed, shown in Figure 17. The skewness and kurtosis scores for senior management also suggest abnormality, with a skewness of 1.066(SE=.481) and kurtosis of 1.946(SE=.935).

Tests of Normality[c]

	Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation?	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Worklifeconflict	Intern	.349	3	.	.832	3	.194
	Graduate-Position	.194	17	.088	.897	17	.061
	Entry-Level	.094	55	.200*	.966	55	.118
	Middle-Management	.098	96	.024	.973	96	.047
	Senior-Management	.186	23	.038	.904	23	.030
	Non-managerial-employee	.071	184	.026	.983	184	.023

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

c. Worklifeconflict is constant when Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation? = Other. It has been omitted.

Table 36:Normality testing-WLC/Position

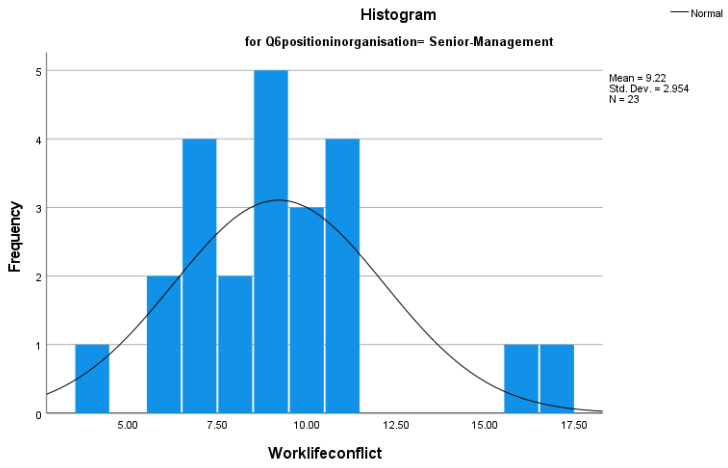

Figure 17:Histogram-WLC/Senior Management

The non-parametric Kruskal-Wallis test was used to investigate differences in WLC scores from different positions within organisations. Distributions of WLC scores were not similar for all groups, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. The

mean ranks were statistically significantly different between groups $\chi 2(3)=22.178a$, p=.001. Pairwise comparisons were performed using Dunn's (1964) procedure with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Adjusted p-values are presented. Values are mean ranks unless otherwise stated. This post hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences in WLC scores between senior management (9.2174) and non-managerial employees (12.0707) (p= .01), and senior management and entry-level (11.8909) (p=.049), but not between any other combination of positions. This suggests that senior managers experience higher WLC levels than other employees, which sounds reasonable considering one would expect greater levels of responsibility in these positions, and therefore perhaps more blurring of the boundaries between home and work life.

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.[a,b]	Decision
1	The distribution of Worklifeconflict is the same across categories of Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation?.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.001	Reject the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

Table 37:Kruskal-Wallis test Result-WLC/Position

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary

Total N	379
Test Statistic	22.178[a]
Degree Of Freedom	6
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.001

a. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

Table 38:Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary-WLC/Position

Report

Worklifeconflict

Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation?	N	Mean
Intern	3	10.3333
Graduate-Position	17	9.1765
Entry-Level	55	11.8909
Middle-Management	96	11.4375
Senior-Management	23	9.2174
Non-managerial-employee	184	12.0707
Other	1	5.0000
Total	379	11.5488

Table 39:Mean Ranks-WLC/Position

WLC and Work Location:

The Shapiro-Wilk test showed only those working all from home are normally distributed. However, visual inspection of the histogram displays approximately normal distribution, as do the skewness and kurtosis scores. Skewness for All within a workplace environment is .068(SE=.233) with kurtosis of -.814(SE=.461), skewness for All from home is -.136(SE=.243) and kurtosis of -.425(SE=.481) and skewness for those who answered both is .083(SE=.185) and kurtosis of -.641(SE=.368).

Tests of Normality

	Q7: Where are your working hours carried out?	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] Statistic	df	Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	df	Sig.
Worklifeconflict	All within a workplace environment	.081	108	.080	.973	108	.027
	All from home	.100	99	.017	.983	99	.220
	Both at home and in a workplace environment	.079	172	.011	.978	172	.008

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 40:Normality test-WLC/Work location

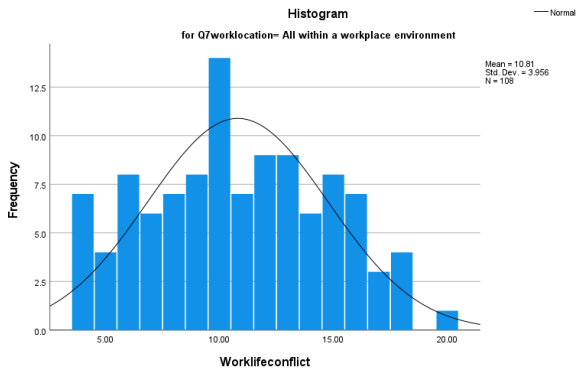

Figure 18:Histogram-WLC/All within workplace environment

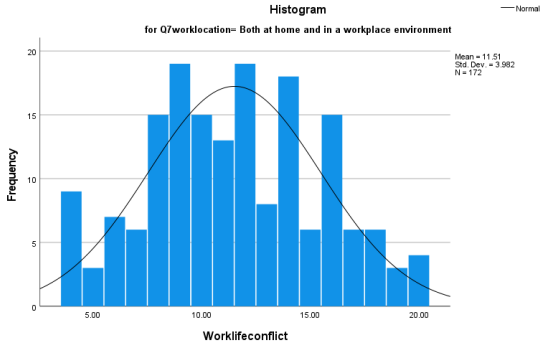

Figure 19:Histogram-WLC/Both at home and in workplace environment

A parametric one-way Anova test was carried out. There was homogeneity of variances, as assessed by Levene's test for equality of variances (p=.281). WLC perceptions were statistically significantly different for those with different working locations, F(2,376)=4.534, p=.011. A Tukey post hoc analysis revealed an increase in WLC scores from 12.42±3.56 for the group who worked from home to 10.8±3.95 for the group conducting all their hours in a workplace environment, an increase of 1.61 (95% CI, .35 to 2.88), which was statistically significant (p=.008).

Tests of Homogeneity of Variances

		Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
Worklifeconflict	Based on Mean	1.273	2	376	.281
	Based on Median	1.422	2	376	.242
	Based on Median and with adjusted df	1.422	2	375.306	.242
	Based on trimmed mean	1.282	2	376	.279

Table 41:Levene Statistic-WLC/Work location

ANOVA

Worklifeconflict

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	135.772	2	67.886	4.534	.011
Within Groups	5630.075	376	14.974		
Total	5765.847	378			

Table 42:Anova Test result-WLC/Work location

Multiple Comparisons

Dependent Variable: Worklifeconflict

Tukey HSD

(I) Q7: Where are your working hours carried out?	(J) Q7: Where are your working hours carried out?	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
All within a workplace environment	All from home	-1.61869*	.53842	.008	-2.8856	-.3518
	Both at home and in a workplace environment	-.70607	.47508	.299	-1.8239	.4118
All from home	All within a workplace environment	1.61869*	.53842	.008	.3518	2.8856
	Both at home and in a workplace environment	.91261	.48816	.149	-.2361	2.0613
Both at home and in a workplace environment	All within a workplace environment	.70607	.47508	.299	-.4118	1.8239
	All from home	-.91261	.48816	.149	-2.0613	.2361

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Table 43:Tukey post hoc analysis-WLC/Location of work

WLC and Childrearing responsibilities:

Those with children obtained normally distributed results under Shapiro-Wilk whereas those who answered no were not normally distributed as p=<.001. Visual inspection of the histogram in Figure 20 for those who answered 'No' displays approximate normal distribution with some outliers. However, the kurtosis z-score suggests abnormal distribution at -.736(SE=.279) so the non-parametric Mann-Whitney test will be used to determine if there were differences in WLC scores between those who reported having children and those who did not.

Tests of Normality

	Q9: Do you have any children and/or child rearing responsibilities?	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Worklifeconflict	Yes	.094	73	.179	.971	73	.089
	No	.079	304	<.001	.979	304	<.001
	4	.260	2	.			

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 44:Normality test-WLC/Children

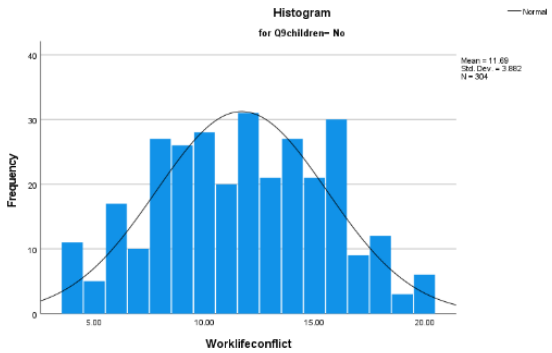

Figure 20:Histogram-WLC/No children

Distributions of WLC scores for these groups were similar, as assessed by visual inspection. WLC scores for those with children (Mdn=11) were not statistically significantly higher than for those with none (Mdn=12), U = 9931, z = -1.398, p = .162. Therefore, there is no evidence to suggest having children has a significant effect on WLC scores.

Test Statistics[a]

	Worklifeconflict
Mann-Whitney U	9931.000
Wilcoxon W	12632.000
Z	-1.398
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.162

a. Grouping Variable: Q9: Do you have any children and/or child rearing responsibilities?

Table 45:Mann-Whitney Test Results-WLC/Children

Report

Worklifeconflict

Q9: Do you have any children and/or child rearing responsibilities?	N	Median
Yes	73	11.0000
No	304	12.0000
Prefer not to say	2	10.5000
Total	379	12.0000

Table 46:Median Ranks-WLC/Children

5.5 Objective 3: To investigate the influence of work-related mobile technologies on the lives of millennial employees outside of work

It was anticipated that there would be a correlation between poor PD and increased TIAH, as regular access to work-related technology can blur the boundaries between work and home life. Interestingly, many participants responded that they do not struggle with work-related TIAH.

65.5% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement 'After regular working hours, I feel overloaded because I receive more interruptions from mobile technologies than I can process', 66.2% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement 'After regular working hours, I feel rushed due to frequent interruptions from mobile technologies'. 67% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement 'After regular working hours, I feel busier because I must handle interruptions from mobile technologies' and 61.7% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement 'After regular working hours, I feel pressure due to interruptions from mobile technologies'.

The Shapiro-Wilk test was utilised to assess normality for this scale. The null hypothesis here must be rejected as p<.001. Visual observation of the histogram in Figure 21 also demonstrates significant deviations from normality. The skewness and kurtosis levels also suggest abnormalities as the skewness value is -.545(SE=.125) and kurtosis is -.617(SE=.250).

Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Techinterruptionsafterhours	.166	379	<.001	.905	379	<.001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 47:Normality test-TIAH

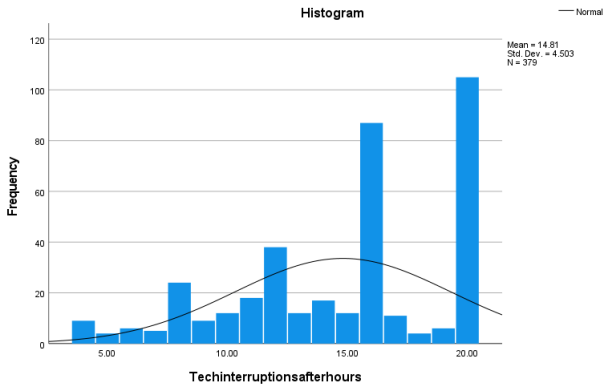

Figure 21:Histogram-TIAH

The effect of TIAH was tested against several demographic variables to investigate if there were statistically significant differences in the responses.

TIAH and Gender Identity:

As shown in Table 48, p<.001 for both men and women under the Shapiro-Wilk test so the data for gender is not normally distributed, shown also by visual analysis of the histograms.

Tests of Normality

	Q2: What is your gender identity?	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Techinterruptionsafterhours	Man	.169	267	<.001	.897	267	<.001
	Woman	.149	106	<.001	.924	106	<.001
	Non-Binary	.265	4	.	.838	4	.189
	Prefer not to say	.	2	.			

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 48:Normality test-TIAH/Gender identity

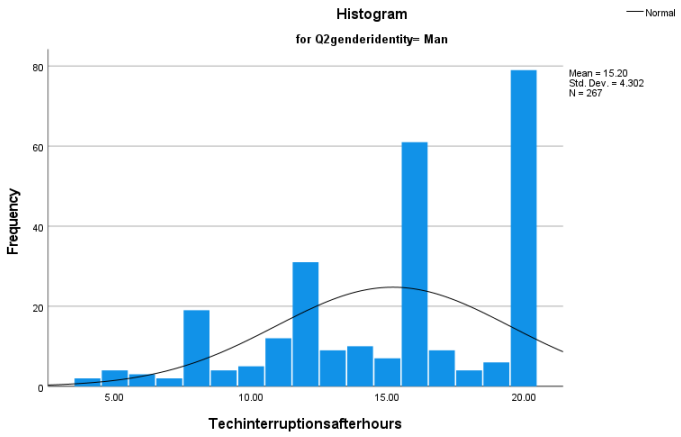

Figure 22:Histogram-TIAH/Men

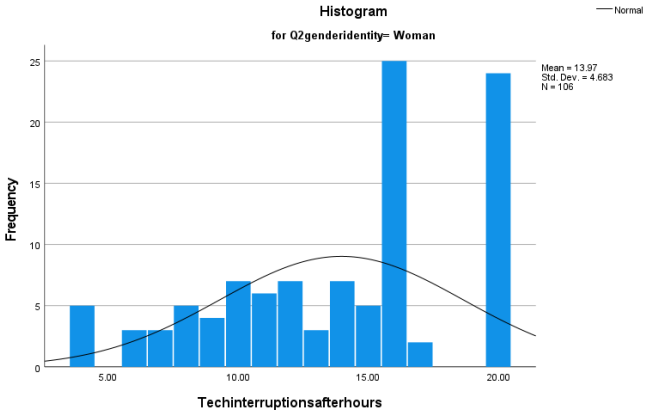

Figure 23:Histogram-TIAH/Women

The non-parametric Mann-Whitney test was used to investigate if there were differences in TIAH scores between men and women. Distributions of the scores were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection. Mean scores for men (mean rank=195.05) were statistically significantly higher than for women (mean rank=166.73), U=12002.05, z=-2.329, p=.020, suggesting TIAH affects women more negatively than men. This differed from Boswell and Olson Buchanan's (2007) findings, which observed no relationship between TIAH and gender. This contradicted their expectation as they expected women to be more negatively impacted since stereotypical gender roles typically see women do more household and family work after working hours.

Test Statistics[a]

	Techinterruptionsafterhours
Mann-Whitney U	12002.500
Wilcoxon W	17673.500
Z	-2.329
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.020

a. Grouping Variable: Q2: What is your gender identity?

Table 49:Mann-Whitney test statistics-TIAH/Gender

Ranks

	Q2: What is your gender identity?	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Techinterruptionsafterhours	Man	267	195.05	52077.50
	Woman	106	166.73	17673.50
	Total	373		

Table 50:Mean Ranks-TIAH & Gender

TIAH and Position in Organisation:

TIAH was also tested against positions in the organisation. As shown by the Shapiro-Wilk test results and visual observation of the histograms in Figure 24 and 25, the data is not normally distributed. Only Graduate positions or senior-management positions were normally distributed according to Shapiro-Wilk as p>.05.

Tests of Normality[c]

	Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation?	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Techinterruptionsafterhours	Intern	.385	3	.	.750	3	.000
	Graduate-Position	.143	17	.200*	.902	17	.075
	Entry-Level	.204	55	<.001	.895	55	<.001
	Middle-Management	.167	96	<.001	.929	96	<.001
	Senior-Management	.126	23	.200*	.949	23	.276
	Non-managerial-employee	.203	184	<.001	.877	184	<.001

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

c. Techinterruptionsafterhours is constant when Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation? = Other. It has been omitted.

Table 51:Normality Test-TIAH/position

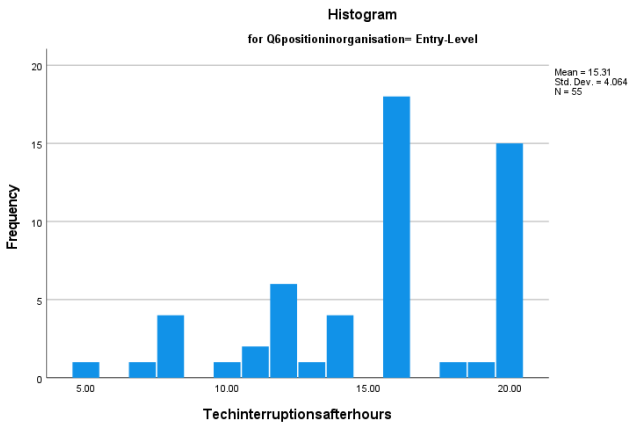

Figure 24:Histogram-TIAH/Entry-level

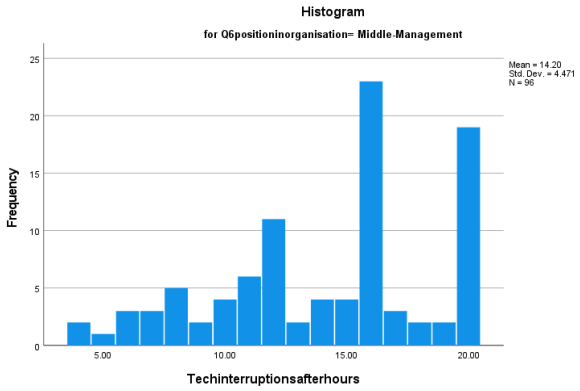

Figure 25:Histogram-TIAH/Middle-Management

The Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test was used. Distributions of scores were not similar for all groups, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. The mean ranks were statistically significantly different between groups, H(3)=33.726[a], p=<.001. Subsequently, pairwise comparisons were performed using Dunn's (1964) procedure with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. This post-hoc analysis revealed statistically significant differences in scores between Senior management and Entry-level (p = .003), and senior-management and non-managerial employees (p = .000). This suggests senior managers are more negatively impacted by TIAH compared to others. Boswell and Olson-Buchanan (2007) state that this can be linked to ambition, or Type A personality traits as they will do what is necessary to succeed, including remaining connected to work. They found a positive correlation between ambition and technology use after-hours in this study.

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.[a,b]	Decision
1	The distribution of Techinterruptionsafterhours is the same across categories of Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation?.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	<.001	Reject the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

Table 52:Kruskal-Wallis test results-TIAH/position

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary

Total N	379
Test Statistic	33.726[a]
Degree Of Freedom	6
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	<.001

a. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

Table 53:Kruskal-Wallis test summary-TIAH/position

Ranks

	Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation?	N	Mean Rank
Techinterruptionsafterhours	Intern	3	248.00
	Graduate-Position	17	139.79
	Entry-Level	55	198.61
	Middle-Management	96	173.08
	Senior-Management	23	97.33
	Non-managerial-employee	184	210.51
	Total	378	

Table 54:Mean ranks-TIAH/position

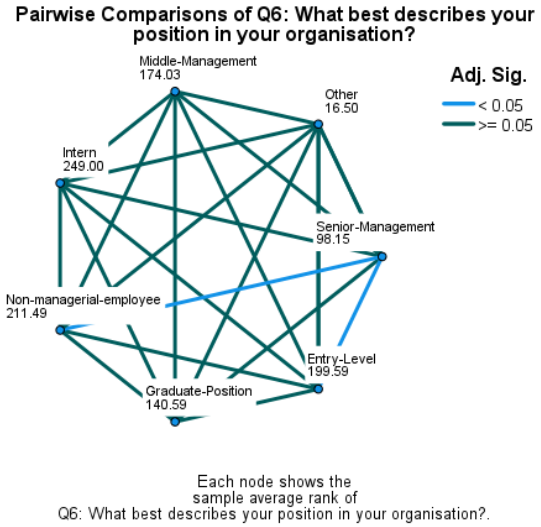

Figure 26:Pairwise Comparisons-TIAH/position

TIAH and Work Location:

The TIAH variable was also tested against work locations of the respondents. As shown by the Shapiro-Wilk test, the data is not normally distributed as p<.05, as confirmed by histograms in Figures 27, 28 and 29.

Tests of Normality

	Q7: Where are your working hours carried out?	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a] Statistic	df	Sig.	Shapiro-Wilk Statistic	df	Sig.
Techinterruptionsafterhours	All within a workplace environment	.164	108	<.001	.923	108	<.001
	All from home	.196	99	<.001	.849	99	<.001
	Both at home and in a workplace environment	.152	172	<.001	.914	172	<.001

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 55:Normality test- TIAH/work location

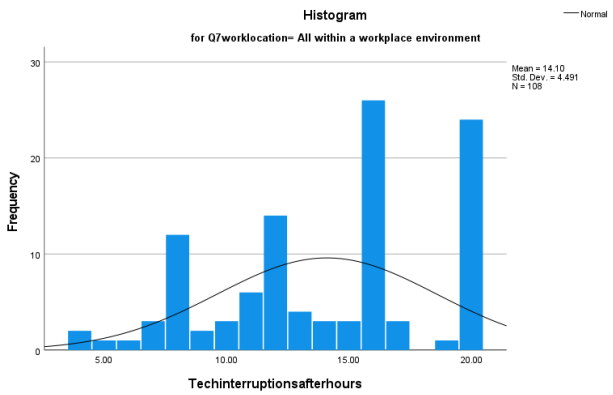

Figure 27:Histogram-TIAH/All within a Workplace environment

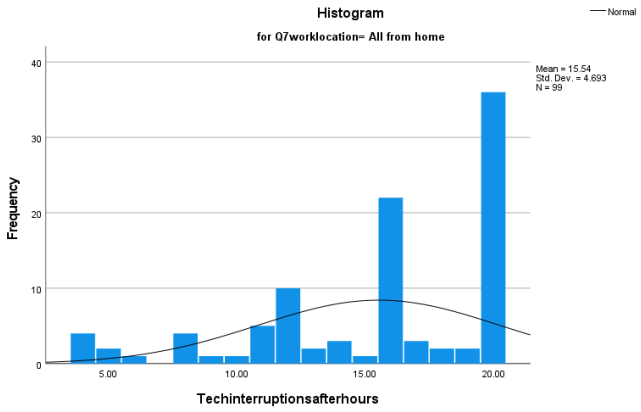

Figure 28:Histogram-TIAH/All from home

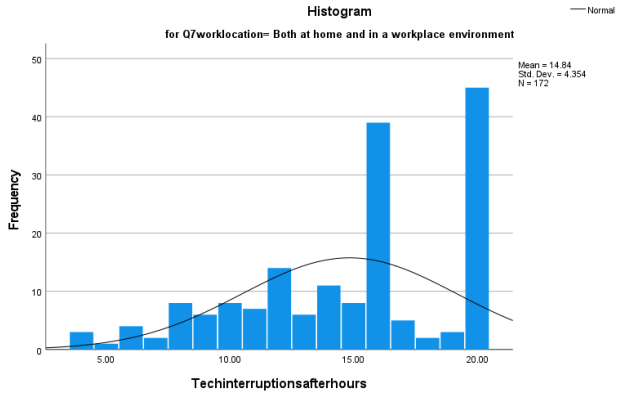

Figure 29:Histogram-TIAH/Both from home and workplace environment

A Kruskal-Wallis H test was run to determine if there were differences in TIAH scores between participants with different working environments. Distributions of scores were similar for all groups, as assessed by visual inspection of a boxplot. Median scores were statistically significantly different between groups, H(3)=6.711[a], p=.035. Pairwise comparisons were performed using Dunn's (1964) procedure with a Bonferroni correction for multiple comparisons. Adjusted p-values are presented. This revealed statistically significant differences in scores between All within a workplace environment (Mdn=15.5) and work from home (Mdn=16) (p=.029) options, but not between any other group combination. This suggests those

working solely within a workplace environment struggle more with TIAH than those working from home, which is surprising based on the literature.

Hypothesis Test Summary

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.[a,b]	Decision
1	The distribution of Techinterruptionsafterhours is the same across categories of Q7: Where are your working hours carried out?.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	.035	Reject the null hypothesis.

a. The significance level is .050.

b. Asymptotic significance is displayed.

Table 56:Kruskal-Wallis Test result-TIAH/work location

Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary

Total N	379
Test Statistic	6.711[a]
Degree Of Freedom	2
Asymptotic Sig.(2-sided test)	.035

a. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

Table 57:Kruskal-Wallis Test Summary-TIAH/work location

Report

Techinterruptionsafterhours

Q7: Where are your working hours carried out?	Median	N
All within a workplace environment	15.5000	108
All from home	16.0000	99
Both at home and in a workplace environment	16.0000	172
Total	16.0000	379

Table 58:Median results-TIAH/work location

Pairwise Comparisons of Q7: Where are your working hours carried out?

Sample 1-Sample 2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj. Sig.[a]
All within a workplace environment-Both at home and in a workplace environment	-16.833	13.213	-1.274	.203	.608
All within a workplace environment-All from home	-38.724	14.974	-2.586	.010	.029
Both at home and in a workplace environment-All from home	21.891	13.577	1.612	.107	.321

Each row tests the null hypothesis that the Sample 1 and Sample 2 distributions are the same. Asymptotic significances (2-sided tests) are displayed. The significance level is .050.

a. Significance values have been adjusted by the Bonferroni correction for multiple tests.

Table 59:Pairwise comparisons-TIAH/work location

TIAH and Children:

The TIAH variable was also tested against the presence of children. As shown by the Shapiro-Wilk test, the data is not normally distributed as p=<.001 for both categories. Visual interpretation of the histograms in Figures 30 and 31 confirmed this.

Tests of Normality

	Q9: Do you have any children and/or child rearing responsibilities?	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Techinterruptionsafterhours	Yes	.163	73	<.001	.925	73	<.001
	No	.166	304	<.001	.896	304	<.001
	4	.260	2	.			

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 60:Normality test-TIAH/children

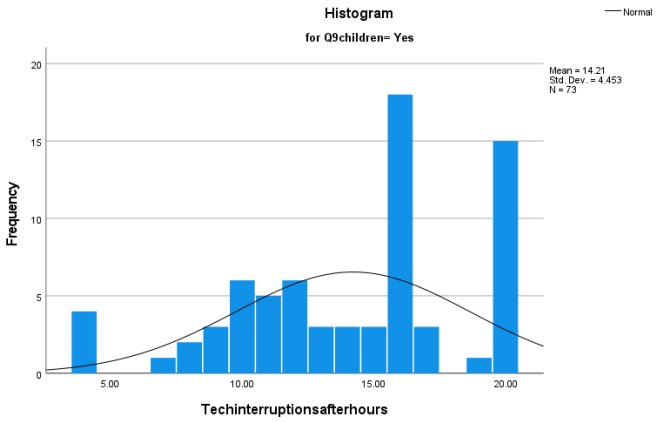

Figure 30:Histogram-TIAH/children

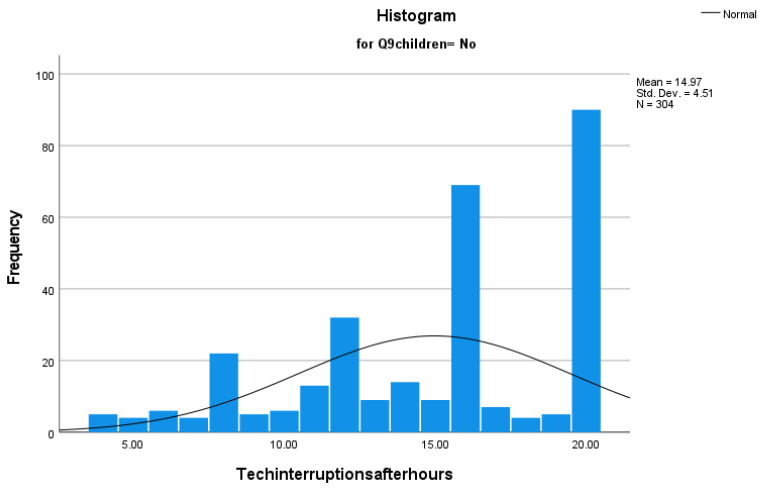

Figure 31:Histogram-TIAH/no children

The Mann-Whitney test was used to determine if there were differences in scores between those with childrearing responsibilities and those with none. Distributions of the scores were not similar, as assessed by visual inspection. Scores for those who answered Yes (mean rank=173.32) and those who answered No (mean rank=192.77) were not statistically significantly different, U=9951.0, z= -1.394, p=.163.

Test Statistics[a]

	Techinterruptionsafterhours
Mann-Whitney U	9951.000
Wilcoxon W	12652.000
Z	-1.394
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.163

a. Grouping Variable: Q9: Do you have any children and/or child rearing responsibilities?

Table 61:Mann-Whitney test-TIAH/children

Ranks

	Q9: Do you have any children and/or child rearing responsibilities?	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Techinterruptionsafterhours	Yes	73	173.32	12652.00
	No	304	192.77	58601.00
	Total	377		

Table 62:Mean ranks-TIAH/Children

Correlation between PD and WLC:

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was run to see if there was a correlation between PD and WLC scores. Preliminary analysis showed the relationship to be monotonic with a negative correlation between PD and WLC results, as assessed by visual inspection of a scatterplot. There was a statistically significant, medium negative correlation between the two variables, rs=-.473, p<.001. Thus, we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

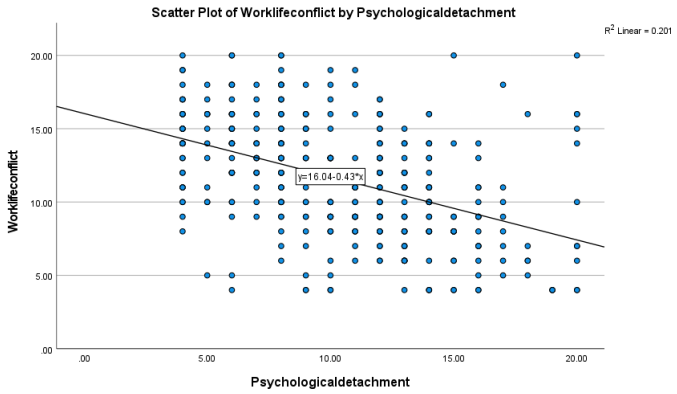

Figure 32:Scatter Plot- PD/WLC

Correlations

			Psychologicaldetachment	Worklifeconflict
Spearman's rho	Psychologicaldetachment	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.473**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<.001
		N	379	379
	Worklifeconflict	Correlation Coefficient	-.473**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.
		N	379	379

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 63:Spearman's correlation results-PD/WLC

Spearman's correlation between PD and TIAH:

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was run to assess the relationship between PD and TIAH. Preliminary analysis showed the relationship to be monotonic with a negative correlation between PD and TIAH results, as assessed by visual inspection of a scatterplot. There was a statistically significant, medium negative correlation between the two variables, rs = -.467, p < .001. Thus, we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

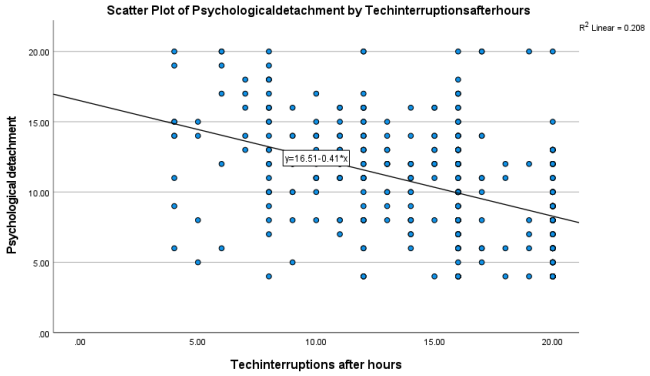

Figure 33:Scatter Plot-PD/TIAH

Correlations

			Psychologicaldetachment	Techinterruptionsafterhours
Spearman's rho	Psychologicaldetachment	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.467**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<.001
		N	379	379
	Techinterruptionsafterhours	Correlation Coefficient	-.467**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.
		N	379	379

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 64:Spearman's correlation-PD/TIAH

Spearman's Correlation of WLC and TIAH:

A Spearman's rank-order correlation was run to assess the relationship between WLC and TIAH. Preliminary analysis showed the relationship to be monotonic with a positive correlation between WLC and TIAH results, as assessed by visual inspection of a scatterplot. There was a statistically significant, medium positive correlation between the two variables, rs=.543, p<.001. Thus, we can reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis. A similar correlation was found in Boswell and Olson-Buchanan's (2007) study.

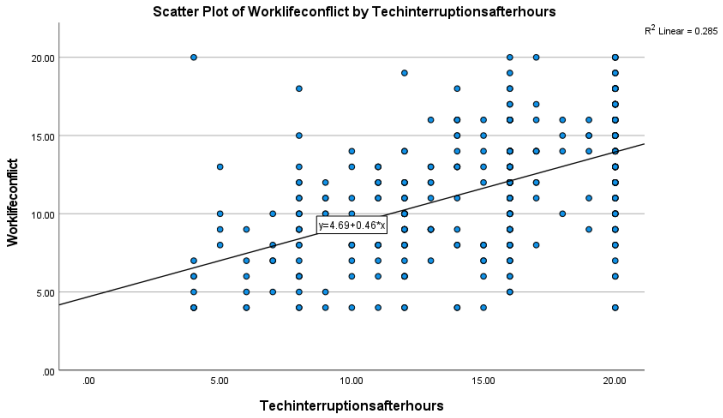

Figure 34:Scatter Plot-WLC/TIAH

Correlations

			Worklifeconflict	Techinterruptionsafterhours
Spearman's rho	Worklifeconflict	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.543**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	<.001
		N	379	379
	Techinterruptionsafterhours	Correlation Coefficient	.543**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.
		N	379	379

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 65:Spearman's Correlation: WLC/TIAH

Chapter 6: Discussion

6.1 Introduction:

This chapter will delve deeper into the findings described in Chapter 5 and discuss the most significant results in light of the literature review.

6.2 Hypothesis 1: **Millennial workers report low levels of awareness of the Code of Practice and their employers have responded inadequately to its introduction**

It was hypothesised that this group would report low levels of awareness of the Code of Practice. Although the majority reported awareness, they were not informed by their employers. Thus, many respondents must have heard about the Code through the media, word of mouth or elsewhere. As hypothesised, employers have not taken sufficient action to implement the Code's recommendations, with the majority stating that their employers never made them aware of the Code or implemented any new policies in response to it. 45.9% even stated that their employers do not promote tools like 'Out of Office' alerts on emails to discourage out of hours contact. The lack of action amongst employers may be due to a genuine lack of awareness of the Code's existence, as it was only introduced in April 2021. It is possible that its introduction was overlooked, as it coincided with the Covid-19 pandemic when organisations may have been prioritising more urgent matters. Alternatively, as the respondents overall did not report significant difficulties with switching off, perhaps employers do not see it as an issue affecting their employees, so they do not feel the need to alter the existing situation.

Interestingly, most respondents think the Right to Disconnect should be protected by legislation, even though most do not currently struggle with switching off. The Code was criticised upon its introduction by employee representatives due to it not being legally enforceable. As discussed within Chapter 2, there are a range of legislative approaches that can be taken, but it is important to ensure any potential legislation simultaneously protects the flexibility brought by technology and flexible working. As discussed by Von Bergen *et al.* (2019), introducing legislation that impacts every organisation identically may bring its own issues. If Ireland made it illegal to contact

workers out of hours like Portugal has done, this would likely cause difficulties for workers working with colleagues from different time zones, and employers may also be less likely to allow workers to work flexible hours. If further research was to be carried out, a qualitative research method could focus on this question to discover why this group believes legislative protection is preferable, and what exactly they believe should be included within the legislation.

6.3 Hypothesis 2: Millennial employees in Ireland report difficulties in switching off and high work life conflict levels

Based on the existing literature, it was thought that working millennials in Ireland would report significant levels of work-life conflict and would struggle to switch off after work hours, due to increased usage of work-related technology and working remotely. However, the null hypothesis was retained as the median score for the PD scale's responses was 10, with scores that ranged from 4 to 20, where a score of 20 indicates great difficulty with switching off. Similarly, the median score for the WLC scale was 12, and the histogram in Figure 14 showed that the scores were clustered largely in the middle, suggesting the respondents generally do not experience particularly high or low levels of WLC. Whether this can be partially explained by generational differences is unclear. Buzza's (2017) research suggested that behaviour of millennial employees may differ from other generations in the workforce, as they prioritise work-life balance and tend to be unwilling to compromise on this. Thus, perhaps millennials in Ireland behave similarly, and can switch off effectively as they are prioritising their work-life balance. However, further research concentrating on other generations is needed in order to compare findings. Yet, it seems fair to assume that the Code's introduction has not contributed to the respondents' psychological detachment or work-life conflict perceptions, as it appears that their employers have done very little to promote it.

As the alternative hypothesis stated, there was a statistically significant correlation between psychological detachment and work life conflict scores, although it was not especially strong. Although this established correlation and not causation, it suggests that the millennials struggling to switch off are also experiencing higher levels of work-life conflict. This seems logical considering being constantly troubled with

work-related thoughts after hours is bound to impact how one views the boundaries between their work and personal lives. Although the Code of Practice applies to all employees equally, the findings indicate that having trouble with switching off and the associated higher work-life conflict levels is not a problem impacting all millennial employees equally. Therefore, if a HR department is trying to encourage switching off and a better work life balance amongst employees, they should keep in mind that certain types of employees will likely need more support compared to others. Interestingly, gender and employment sector had no significant impact on responses relating to psychological detachment. This differs from the literature as Mellner's (2016) study found that men are statistically more likely to disconnect. Similarly, it was suggested that certain industries may affect an employee's ability to disconnect as certain periods in industries can be busier or more stressful (Sonnentag, 2011). In addition, certain industries have better reputations for promoting work-life balance, so the lack of statistical significance here was surprising.

The findings suggest that millennials in entry-level positions are better at switching off than those in senior management positions, or even compared to non-managerial employees. This was expected given that entry-level positions are typically associated with less responsibility and pay. Similar results were found for the WLC variable, in which senior managers experienced statistically significant higher levels of WLC compared to entry-level and non-managerial employees. Shurak *et al.*'s (2021) study found that higher ambition levels correlated to higher WLC and poorer ability to switch off, which could be a factor here as senior managers are presumably quite ambitious about their careers considering they have climbed the ladder to this extent. This suggests that HR departments should be offering additional support to senior managers to assist them in switching off and better work-life balance. However, the success of such attempts may depend largely on the organisational culture. If senior managers believe there are silent expectations for them to meet certain targets or tackle work-related problems while off the clock, it is unlikely that a Right to Disconnect policy will alleviate the pressure. Given the increased responsibility associated with being a senior manager, they may also be suffering from higher workloads compared to other employees, which can make it more difficult to switch off (Sonnentag, 2011). It is also worth considering that senior

managers may be more likely to have Type A personalities and may be the type of person who simply does not want to switch off (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007). The range of potential explanations for this indicate that this finding could benefit from further qualitative studies, such as interviews with senior managers only to uncover their perceptions of why they are struggling with switching off and work-life conflict.

Interestingly, the findings suggest that those working from home are better at switching off than those working within an office. This was not anticipated since a main reason for the Code of Practice's introduction was the increase in remote or hybrid working. In addition, it was thought that working in a space that one also lives in would contribute to boundary crossing, as it could be more difficult to forget about work when one never leaves that environment. Sonnentag (2012) believed it cannot be assumed that homes are places of relaxation if one is also working from home, although she stressed that further research on this was needed. Likewise, those working from home full-time had statistically significantly higher WLC scores compared to those working full-time in a workplace environment. One potential explanation for this is that those working from home have no commute so they may have more time to unwind from work, and can spend more time on activities they enjoy, which enables them to disconnect, which was supported in Mellner *et al.*'s (2016) study. Also, perhaps those working from home do not experience as much pressure from their superiors to be constantly available, as they are not speaking face to face daily. In addition, respondents working from home were not asked about the type of workspace they use at home. For example, perhaps responses would differ between employees using a desk in their bedroom to work from versus those with a dedicated home office space. A further qualitative study could focus solely on those working from home to explore why exactly they report being more successful at disconnecting. If this finding can be replicated in further studies, it may interest employees considering a switch to working from home for well-being purposes, as it may support them with switching off.

Based on the literature, it was anticipated that respondents with children would find it easier to switch off than those without children as individuals with children must dedicate a certain amount of time to their children after the workday ends and may have more distractions than a childfree individual ((Sonnentag and Kruel, 2006).

However, it was found that respondents without children were more successful at switching off than those with children. This was an unexpected finding. Perhaps this could be explained by the many responsibilities that parents may experience as they attempt to juggle their work-lives, childcare, school-related issues and general parenting at once, and consequently may find it more difficult to construct clear boundaries in their minds.

6.4 Hypothesis 3: This group perceives a negative influence of work-related mobile technologies on their lives outside of work

It was anticipated that the respondents would struggle with work-related mobile technologies after hours, based on the literature which described several associated negative impacts of receiving such interruptions. The null hypothesis is retained as many respondents did not report negative effects from TIAH. This could potentially be partially explained by the fact that the respondents were millennials, as this generation tends to have a more positive relationship with technology compared to other generations, as they grew up in a time when the use of mobile technology was a societal norm. The comfort this generation feels around using technology could be a potential explanation for why the respondents generally did not report feeling pressured by TIAH. As discovered by Bannon *et al.* (2011), 83% of their participants reported always having their phone with them, so millennial employees possibly do not see responding to emails or text messages after-hours as something that causes distress.

However, there was a slight negative correlation between TIAH and PD as hypothesised. This showed that the higher the TIAH score was, the lower the PD score tended to be. This was the expected result based on the literature as it was assumed that work-related communications received after-hours would remind the individual of work, and therefore make it more difficult to switch off. Likewise, there was a slight positive correlation between TIAH and WLC, suggesting that respondents who reported more negative influences from TIAH were also experiencing high levels of work-life conflict. These correlations demonstrate how important it is for organisations to have a formal technology policy in place to protect employees struggling with TIAH. The Code of Practice also recommends this, as the Right to Disconnect policy ought to include guidance on when it is

acceptable and unacceptable to contact colleagues after-hours (WRC, 2021). It is interesting that work-related technology interruptions did not pose more of a challenge to the respondents, considering nearly half of the respondent's organisations do not even encourage employees to use simple tools like Out of Office alerts on emails. However, perhaps the organisational culture is such that after-hours communication is rarely required. Conversely, perhaps it is so frequent that employees are accustomed to it and no longer feel any negative consequences.

Women reported more negative effects from TIAH compared to men, but there was no statistically significant difference between responses from those with children and those without. This could potentially be explained by women typically taking on more domestic duties compared to men, so they may find work-related interruptions after-hours to be overwhelming as a result. This differed from those in Waller and Ragsdell's (2012) study, where employees without children were happier to check their email after-hours and deal with work-related issues as they wished to appear dedicated by doing so and were able to due to having less commitments.

The statistically significant differences in scores of senior managers compared to entry-level and non-managerial employees suggested that senior managers experience more negative effects of TIAH compared to these other employees. This could potentially be explained by the fact that senior managers may receive more interruptions than other employees, as many employees go to senior managers for assistance or advice on challenging issues. Similarly, perhaps senior managers are receiving more complex queries that take more time to resolve compared to other employees, which can take up more of their free time and cause more distress. The difference in scores do not necessarily mean that senior managers receive any more technological interruptions, but instead that they report being overloaded, rushed, busier and experiencing more pressure as a result. These findings support those in Waller and Ragsdell's (2012) qualitative study, in which senior employees reported checking emails and working after-hours more than other employees surveyed. However, just as employees in McDowall and Kinman's (2017) study disliked initiatives like email-free Fridays as it increased their workload on other days, restricting after-hours communication for senior managers could also have unintended consequences, as it seems likely that the queries they are encountering

after-hours would pile up and leave them feeling overworked the following day in the workplace.

The results also suggest that those working in traditional workplace environments experience more negative effects of TIAH compared to those working from home. This is an interesting finding, but it aligns with the previously discussed findings that this group also seem better at switching off with lower work life conflict levels. Further research could be conducted to investigate potential reasons for this. Perhaps this group is also experiencing higher levels of life-to work conflict. As they are working from home, their working days may be interrupted by personal matters, whether this be collecting children from school or other emergency family issues. Therefore, this group may find themselves feeling less distressed by work-related interruptions after hours as they have become accustomed to work and home lives intertwining in a way that allows them to balance their work and personal responsibilities.

Chapter 7: Conclusions and Recommendations for CIPD

The Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect was introduced to respond to changes in how and where we work, primarily the growth of flexible working and technological innovations which enables employers to communicate with employees at any time. Thus, although measuring awareness of the Code amongst millennial employees in Ireland was a key objective of this study, there was little point in assessing this without also investigating whether switching off and technological interruptions after hours were genuine issues for this cohort.

There had been extensive research carried out on switching off, and the associated consequences for employee's personal and work lives if they are unable to strike the right balance between these two domains or if their organisational culture encourages constant availability. However, very little research had been conducted in an Irish context or focusing specifically on millennials in the workplace. In addition, the Code of Practice was only introduced in April 2021 so the results of this study provide some initial insights into the extent of its success. The Code aimed to advise employers and employees on facilitating switching off in changing times, assist employees who believe their after-hours work is compulsory and to help employers create and implement their own policies on disconnecting (WRC, 2021). The results indicate that the majority of Irish employers have not even acknowledged the Code's existence, let al.one implement a policy on disconnecting.

The findings from this study could be helpful for HR departments within organisations as it indicates what type of employee is more likely to be experiencing poor psychological detachment or struggling with high WLC levels, most notably senior management and those working from the office. Replacing an employee is an expensive task, including the costs of recruitment, training the replacement employee and administration costs (CIPD, 2021). The average cost in Ireland stands at €13,100 (Woods, 2018). Given the high cost of replacing an employee, it is in a HR team's interest to try to retain good employees, and to prevent them becoming burned out and unproductive. Along with informing employees about their right to disconnect, organisations should also be alert to signs that the employee is suffering from stress

due to the inability to switch off, high work-life conflict levels or otherwise. The CIPD (2021b) illustrate several indicators that an employee is suffering from stress or extreme work-related pressure. These signs range from worsening work performance and motivation, moodiness, antagonistic behaviour or physical illness including fatigue. As mentioned prior, it seems to be senior managers and those working from traditional workplace environments that report struggling most with these issues.

Upon reflection of the findings, some recommendations for further research can be found.

While this study gathered data that could be used to make inferences about the significant numbers of millennial workers in Ireland, it may be more insightful to focus on one hierarchical position within the organisation or working location if further research was conducted. This quantitative study could also be replicated on Generation X or Generation Z, to gain a wider understanding of how the entire workforce manages switching off and to compare with the findings from millennials. Also, more in-depth knowledge could be achieved using qualitative research methods. A series of interviews with employees may enable wider insights into what specifically prevents them from switching off, or what they find most effective for facilitating switching off.

It seems fair to say that employers in Ireland are failing to effectively communicate the Code of Practice to their employees. Although the majority were aware of the Code's existence, very few had been informed by their employer, and most organisations have not introduced any new policies. The Code recommends that employers consult with employees or their representatives to build a Right to Disconnect policy. There is even a sample policy within the Code itself which employers could use. Discussions need to take place with employers from a range of employment sectors to see why organisations are failing to implement the Code's recommendations. Perhaps Ireland's low trade union membership levels of 28% (Geary and Belizon, 2022) is partially to blame for the slow uptake of the Code's recommendations. Without a trade union in the workplace to initiate conversations about creating an appropriate policy, employers may not feel that it is an urgent priority if the employees have also not engaged with them to demand a policy.

The findings should also demonstrate to the WRC and the Irish government that the Code of Practice has not been implemented in most workplaces, contrary to their intentions. It also indicates that most millennial employees wish for the Right to Disconnect to be legislated for, which would provide them with further protection. In addition, some employees were unsure about whether their employer had informed them of the Code's introduction or did not know what kind of tools the organisation encourages them to use to promote switching off. This should highlight to employers and HR teams who have tried to provide information about the Code to employees that their communication strategies may need revised.

7.1 Recommendations:

1. The WRC prepared the Code of Practice upon the request of the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Although many respondents of this study did not report poor psychological detachment, there was still a correlation found between poor psychological detachment and higher levels of work-life conflict. This demonstrates that there are employees in Ireland struggling with this issue despite the Code being introduced to prevent this. The Minister should engage in consultation with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, or with individual trade unions, to gather a range of opinions on why they believe employers have not taken the Code of Practice on board. Is it intentional neglect or has the Code's introduction simply gone under the radar?
2. Employers, both large and SMEs, ought to be encouraged to participate in one of IBEC Academy's workshops on the Right to Disconnect. This is only one session and takes place online, so there should be no accessibility issues for smaller employers who may not wish to travel to Dublin to participate. This session costs €205 for Ibec members, and €226 for non-members, so the price is also accessible. The course is targeted at managers and HR members and aims to educate on everything about the Code-its purpose, the steps that the employer ought to be taking and what ought to be included in the organisation's own Right to Disconnect policy. IBEC runs these type of information programmes regularly, with the next available date for the Right

to Disconnect programme taking place on 13th September and can be easily booked online on the Ibec Academy website (IBEC, 2022).

3. Given the popularity amongst respondents for legislating for a Right to Disconnect, further research should be done to reaffirm these results. This could be done via a Red C poll. For a 1000 person sample size, this would cost €595 per question, or 945 for a 3000 person sample size. While this study focused on millennials only, the Red C poll could gather opinions from all ages, genders, counties etc. This could be carried out very quickly, as Red C run their surveys a minimum of twice per month (REDC, 2022). If the Red C results also demonstrate support for legislating for a Right to Disconnect, the government should obtain expert guidance on how this could best be achieved. Unfortunately for employees in Ireland, the process of a bill becoming law can be a time-consuming process. Prior to the bill coming before the Dail, a consultation process typically takes place with relevant stakeholders, before undergoing inspection by an Oireachtas Committee. This can be a lengthy process. For example, consultations with relevant representatives were held in November 2018 for the Gender Pay Gap Information bill, but suggestions were not made until February 2019 (Oireachtas.ie, 2020). The Bill then must pass through 5 steps in Dail Eireann and the Seanad before it can be enacted. Therefore, although most respondents would like to see the right to disconnect legislated for, the timeframe for this to occur is lengthy.

7.2 CIPD Personal Learning Statement:

Having worked fully remote throughout the Covid 19 pandemic, I found myself regularly finishing work-related tasks after the working hours set out in my contract of employment had concluded. I felt like this impacted on my work-life balance and caused stress at times. When I started researching this topic further as a potential dissertation topic, I was surprised to see that a Code of Practice had been introduced in Ireland to combat this as I had not been told about it in the course of my employment, nor did I think it was particularly well reported on by the media. I was curious as to whether other employees in Ireland felt similarly. I have greatly enjoyed investigating this further during my research. I have no doubt that this research will help me in future employment as well as expanding my HR knowledge

overall. I did not carry out any dissertation during my undergraduate degree, so this was a great opportunity to expand my research skills, especially from a data analysis point of view as I had no prior experience with this.

References:

Agunloye, O.A. (2019) 'Ethics in academic research and scholarship: An elucidation of

the principles and applications', *Journal of Global Education and Research'*, 3(2), pp. 168-80.

Ajibade Adisa, T., Gbadamosi, G. and Osabutey, E.L.C. (2017) 'What happened to the border? The role of mobile information technology devices on employees' work-life balance', *Personnel Review*, 46(8), pp. 1651-71.

Barber, L.K., Conlin, A.L. and Santuzzi, A.M. (2019) 'Workplace Telepressure and Work Life Balance Outcomes: The Role of Work Recovery Experience', *Stress and Health*, 35(3), pp. 350-62.

BBC. (2021) *Portugal bans bosses texting staff after-hours.* Available at: https://www.bbc.com/news/business-59263300 [Accessed 23 May 2022].

Bell, M., Lasek-Market, M., Eustace, A. and Pahlen, T. (2021) *A Right to Disconnect: Irish and European Legal Perspectives.* Available at: https://www.tcd.ie/law/2020.21/Final%20RTD%20report.pdf [Accessed 12 January 2021].

Boswell, W.R. and Olson-Buchanan, J. (2007) 'The Use of Communication Technologies After Hours: The Role of Work Attitudes and Work-Life Conflict', *Journal of Management*, 33(4), pp. 592-610.

Buzza, J.S. (2017) 'Are You Living to Work or Working to Live? What Millennials Want in the Workplace', Journal of *Human Resources Management and Labor Studies*, 5(2), pp. 15-20.

Calk, R. and Patrick, A. (2017) 'Millennials through the Looking Glass: Workplace Motivating Factors', *The Journal of Business Inquiry*, 16(2), pp. 131-9.

CSO (2022) Census of Population 2016 - Profile 3 An Age Profile of Ireland. Available at: https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-cp3oy/cp3/assr/ [Accessed 18 July 2022].

Chesley, N. (2014) 'Information and communication technology use, work intensification and employee strain and distress', *Work, employment and society*, 28(4), 589-610.

Cijan, A., Jenic, L., Lamovsek, A. and Stemberger, J. (2019) 'How Digitalization changes the workplace', *Dynamic Relationships Management Journal*, 8(1), pp. 3-12.

CIPD (2021a) *Employee Turnover and Retention*. Available at: https://www.cipd.ie/news-resources/practical-guidance/factsheets/turnover-retention#gref [Accessed 25 July 2022].

CIPD (2021b) *Stress in the workplace*. Available at: https://www.cipd.ie/news-resources/practical-guidance/factsheets/workplace-stress#gref [Accessed 28 July 2022].

Crotty, M. (1998) *The Foundations of Social Research*. London: Sage.

Deal, J.J., Altman, D.G. and Rogelberg, S.G. (2010) 'Millennials at work: What we know and what we need to do (if anything)', *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 25(2), pp. 191-99.

Deloitte (2020) *Deloitte Millennial Survey 2020: An Irish perspective*. Available at: https://www2.deloitte.com/ie/en/pages/consulting/articles/millennial-survey.html [Accessed 19 January 2022].

Deloitte (2014) Big demands and high expectations: The Deloitte Millennial Survey. Available at: https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/gx-dttl-2014-millennial-survey-report.pdf [Accessed 25 May 2022].

Derks, D., Van Duin, D., Tims, M. and Bakker, A.B. (2014) 'Smartphone use and work–home interference: The moderating role of social norms and employee work engagement', *The British Psychological Society*, 88(1), pp. 155-77.

Eurostat (2017) *Which sector is the main employer in the EU Member States?* Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/DDN-20171024-1 [Accessed 9 June 2022].

Geary, J. and Belizon, M. (2022) *Employee voice in Ireland, First findings from*

the UCD Working in Ireland Survey, 2021. Dublin: College of Business, University College Dublin.

Germeys, L. and De Gieter, S. (2017) 'Psychological Detachment Mediating the Daily Relationship between Workload and Marital Satisfaction', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 7(2036), pp. 1-14.

Ghasemi, A. (2012) 'Normality Tests for Statistical Analysis: A Guide for Non-Statisticians', *International Journal of Endocrinology Metabolism*, 10(2), pp. 486-489.

Grant, A. (2019) *Switching off the 'always on' workplace culture*. Available at: https://www.peoplemanagement.co.uk/article/1741350/switching-off-always-on-workplace-culture [Accessed 21 May 2022].

Gutek, B. A., Searle, S., & Klepa, L. (1991) Rational versus gender role explanations for work-family conflict, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 76, pp. 560-568.

IBEC (2022) *The Right to Disconnect*. Available at: https://www.ibecacademy.ie/course-detail/the-right-to-disconnect/?id=321 [Accessed 18 July 2022].

Johnson, B., and Christensen, L. (2008) *Educational research: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed approaches*. 3rd edn. Sage: California.

Lazauskaite-Zabielske, J., Urbanaviciute, I. and Ziedelis, A. (2022) 'Pressed to overwork to exhaustion? The role of psychological detachment and exhaustion in the context of teleworking', *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, pp. 1-18.

Liran, A. and Pascal, M. (2022) *Switching Off the Always-On Culture*. Available at: https://www.europeanbusinessreview.com/switching-off-the-always-on-culture/ [Accessed 1 August 2022].

McCarthy, A., O'Connor, N., O'Siochain, O. and Frost, D. (2022) *Remote Working in Ireland - Survey Report.* Galway: NUI Galway Whitaker Institute & Western Development Commission.

McDaniel, B.T., O'Connor, K. and Drouin, M. (2021) 'Work-related technoference at home and feelings of work spillover, overload, life satisfaction and job satisfaction', *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 14(5), pp. 526-41.

McDowall, A. and Kinman, G. (2017) 'The new nowhere land? A research and practice agenda for the "always on" culture', *Journal of Organizational Effectiveness: People and Performance*, 4(3), pp. 256-66.

Mellner, C., Kecklund, G., Kompier, M., Sariaslan, A. and Aronsson, G. (2016) 'Boundaryless Work, Psychological Detachment and Sleep: Does Working 'Anytime – Anywhere' Equal Employees Are 'Always on'?', *New Ways of Working Practices (Advanced Series in Management)*, 16, pp. 29-47.

Mellner, C. (2016) 'After-hours availability expectations, work-related smartphone use during

leisure, and psychological detachment', *International Journal of Workplace Health Management*, 9(2), pp. 146-64.

Nnambooze, B.E. and Parumasur, S.B. (2016) 'Understanding the Multigenerational workforce: Are the Generations significantly different or similar?', Corporate Ownership and Control, 13(2), pp. 224-37.

O'Regan, E. (2022) 'Teachers seek right to disconnect as out-of-hours contact becomes 'constant'', *Irish Examiner,* 20 April. Available at: https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/teachers-seek-right-to-disconnect-as-out-of-hours-contact-becomes-constant_arid-40855325.html [Accessed 24 May 2022].

O'Donovan, B. (2022) *Government warns of 'difficult' public sector pay talks ahead*. Available at: https://www.rte.ie/news/business/2022/0505/1296369-senior-civil-servants/ [Accessed 8 May 2022].

Oireachtas.ie. (2020) How laws are made. Available at: https://www.oireachtas.ie/en/visit-and-learn/how-parliament-works/how-laws-are-made/ [Accessed 21 July 2022].

Park, Y., Fritz, C. and Jex, S.M. (2011) 'Relationships Between Work-Home Segmentation and Psychological Detachment From Work: The Role of Communication Technology Use at Home', *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology,* 16(4), pp. 457-67.

Philip, J., Najmi, H., Orudzheva, L. and Struckell, E. (2017) 'Work life overlap in the millennial generation: The role of ubiquitous technology', *Journal of Strategic Innovation and Sustainability*, 12(1), pp. 80-98.

Quinlan, C. (2011) *Business research methods*. Hampshire: Cengage Learning.

Razali, N.M. and Bee Wah, Y. (2011) 'Power comparisons of Shapiro-Wilk, Kolmogorov-Smirnov, Lilliefors and Anderson-Darling tests', *Journal of Statistical Modelling and Analysis*, 2(1), pp. 21-33.

REDC (2022) Redline Online Omnibus Services. Available at: https://www.redcresearch.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/RED-Line-Online-Omnibus-Services-Ireland-UK-Brochure-Jan-Sep-2022.pdf [Accessed 10 August 2022].

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2009) *Research methods for business students.* 5th edn. Essex: Prentice Hall.

Saunders, M. Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2016) *Research methods for business students.* 7th edn. Edinburgh: Pearson.

Shurak, H.H., Malinen, S., Naswall, K. and Kuntz, J.C. (2018) 'Employee wellbeing: The role of psychological detachment on the relationship between engagement and work–life conflict', *Economic and Industrial Democracy*, 42(1), pp. 116-141.

Sonnentag, S., Kuttler, I. and Fritz, C. (2010) 'Job stressors, emotional exhaustion, and need for recovery: A multi-source study on the benefits of psychological detachment', *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 76, pp. 355-65.

Sonnentag, S. (2012) 'Psychological Detachment from Work During Leisure Time: The Benefits of Mentally Disengaging from Work', *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 21(2), pp. 114-8.

Sonnentag, S. (2011) 'Recovery from fatigue: The role of psychological detachment', in Ackerman, P.L. (ed.) *Cognitive fatigue: Multidisciplinary perspectives on current research and future applications.* Gale: Cengage Learning, pp. 254-72.

Sonnentag, S., & Fritz, C. (2007). The Recovery Experience Questionnaire: Development and validation of a measure for assessing recuperation and unwinding from work. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 12(3), pp. 204-221.

Sonnentag, S. and Kruel, U. (2006) 'Psychological detachment from work during off-job time: The role of job stressors, job involvement, and recovery-related self-efficacy', *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 15(2), pp. 197-217.

Sonnentag, S. and Bayer, U. (2005) 'Switching Off Mentally: Predictors and Consequences of Psychological Detachment From Work During Off-Job Time', *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 10(4), pp. 393-414.

Stockemer, D. (2019) *Quantitative Methods for the Social Sciences: A Practical Introduction with Examples in SPSS and Stata*. Ottowa: Springer.

Uttley, J. (2019) 'Power Analysis, Sample Size, and Assessment of Statistical Assumptions—Improving the Evidential Value of Lighting Research', *The Journal of the Illuminating Engineering Society*, 15(2-3), pp. 143-162.

Von Bergen, C.W. and Bressler, M.S. (2019) 'Work, Non-Work Boundaries and the Right to Disconnect', *The Journal of Applied Business and Economics*, 21(2), pp. 51-69.

Waller, A.D. and Ragsdell, G. (2012) 'The impact of e-mail on work-life balance', *Aslib Proceedings,* 64(2), pp. 154-77.

Woods, K. (2018) *As Ireland's talent war rumbles on, the cost of replacing staff has doubled*. Available at: https://fora.ie/staff-retention-ireland-4-4241184-Sep2018/ [Accessed 10 August 2022].

Wootton, R., Cox, A.L. and Collins, E.M. (2015) 'Out of Work, Out of Mind? Smartphone Use and Work-Life Boundaries', *International Journal of Mobile Human Computer Interaction*, 7(3), pp. 66-77.

Workplace Relations Commission (2021) *Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the right to disconnect*. Available at: https://www.workplacerelations.ie/en/what_you_should_know/codes_practice/code-of-practice-for-employers-and-employees-on-the-right-to-disconnect.pdf [Accessed 13 January 2021].

Von Bergen, C.W., Bressler, M.S. and Proctor, T.L. (2019) 'On the Grid 24/7/365 and the Right to Disconnect', *Employee Relations Law Journal*, 45(2), pp. 1-17.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Research questionnaire

Millennials (1980-1996) and the Right to Disconnect

Section 1:

Hi,

Thank you for considering participating in this research project. The purpose of this document is to explain to you what the work is about and what your participation would involve, so as to enable you to make an informed choice.

You are eligible to participate if you are a 'millennial', meaning you were born between 1980 and 1996, and if you currently work in Ireland. The survey should not take more than 3-4 minutes to complete.

This study is being conducted as part of a Masters dissertation for the MA in Human Resource Management at National College of Ireland. It seeks to examine how millennial employees working in Ireland switch off after work and any impact this has on work-life conflict, as well as examining awareness of the Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect. Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to complete a questionnaire, which will include items on switching off, work-life conflict and the Code of Practice.

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. There is no obligation to participate, and you can decide to withdraw from the study at any time. All information you provide will be confidential and your anonymity will be protected. IP addresses will not be collected at any point, meaning the data you provide cannot be traced back to you.

You maintain the right to withdraw from the study at any stage up to the point of data submission. At this point your data will be collated with that of other participants and can no longer be retracted.

The data collected will be kept anonymous and confidential. The survey does not require any identifiable, personal information (eg name, email address). The data collected will be used for quantitative analysis on the research topic mentioned

above. Data will only be used for the purpose of this study. The data will be held only on a password protected computer, to which only the researcher can access.

Researcher: Tara Gallagher Finn

Email: x21134634@student.ncirl.ie

If you have any queries regarding the study or your participation, please contact the email address above.

If you agree to take part in this study, please complete the consent section below.

Thank you.

Section 2: Millennials and the Right to Disconnect

Do you consent to participate in this study? Yes/No

Section 3: Demographics

Q1: What is your year of birth?

Q2: What is your gender identity? Man/Woman/Non-binary/Other/Prefer not to say

Q3: Do you work in Ireland? Yes/No

Q4: Do you work Full-time or Part-time? Full-Time/Part-time

Q5: Which of the following categories best describes the industry you work in? Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing/ Industry (except construction)/ Construction/ Wholesale & Retail Trade, transport, accommodation & food/ Information & communication/ Financial and insurance activities/ Professional, scientific & technical activities/ Public administration, defence, education, human health, social work/ Arts, entertainment & recreation/ Other

Q6: What best describes your position in your organisation? Intern/Graduate Position/Entry-level/Middle management/Senior management/Non-managerial employee/Other

Q7: Where are your working hours carried out? All within a workplace environment/ All from home/ Both at home and in a workplace environment

Q8: If you answered that you work both at home and in a workplace environment in Question 7, do you work from home: 1 day per week/2 days per week/ 3 days per week/ 4 days per week/ 5 days per week/ Not applicable

Q9: Do you have any children and/or child rearing responsibilities? Yes/No/Prefer not to say

Section 4: Switching off from work

This section will ask you questions on how you find the process of switching off from work when you are off the clock. It will also ask questions to determine how this affects your personal life.

Q10: When you have a free evening after work

- I forget about work
- I don't think about work at all
- I distance myself from my work
- I get a break from the demands of work

Q11: Please answer how much you agree with the statements below (on a scale of Strongly disagree to strongly agree

- After work, I come home too tired to do some of the things I'd like to do
- On the job, I have so much work to do that it takes away from my personal interests
- My family/friends dislike how often I am preoccupied with my work while I am at home
- My work takes up time that I'd like to spend with family/friends

Section 5: Technology Interruptions after hours

These questions will measure to what extent work-related interruptions from mobile technologies affect your life after your workday has ended. 'Mobile technologies' for the purpose of this section includes work-related emails, SMS messages, and other notifications.

Q12: After regular working hours, I feel:

- overloaded because I receive more interruptions from mobile technologies than I can process.
- rushed due to frequent interruptions from mobile technologies.
- busier because I must handle interruptions from mobile technologies.
- pressure due to interruptions from mobile technologies.

Section 6: The Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect

This Code of Practice was introduced in Ireland in April 2021. The Code stipulates that employees have the right to not customarily work outside their normal working hours, and that they cannot be punished for refusing to do so. It aims to promote clear boundaries between work life and home life. Therefore, it aims to help employees 'switch off' after work, or disconnect so that they can focus on their personal lives.

The right to disconnect in the Code of Practice is not binding in law.

Q13: Were you aware that this Code of Practice was introduced? Yes/No

Q14: Did your employer make you aware of the Code of Practice at any point? Yes/No/Unsure

Q15: Has your employer implemented any new policies relating to after-hours work or 'switching off' since April 2021? Yes/No/Unsure

Q16: Do you feel like you now spend more, less or the same amount of time on work-related tasks after the workday has ended since the Code of Practice was introduced in April 2021? More time/Less time/ Same amount of time

Q17: The Code of Practice recommends the use of tools such as 'Out of Office' alerts to remind employees that they are not required to answer emails out of hours. Does your organisation encourage employees to use such tools? Yes/No/Unsure

Q18: Do you think the Right to Disconnect should be protected by legislation? Yes/No/Unsure

Thank you for your participation.

The information you have provided will remain confidential and anonymised.