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CONSTANT CONNECTIVITY AND BOUNDARY MANAGEMENT BEHAVIORS: THE ROLE OF HUMAN AGENCY

FARVEH FARIVAR[a], FARJAM ESHRAGHIAN[b], NAJMEH HAFEZIEH[c] and DAVID CHENG[d]

[a]Tasmanian School of Business and Economics, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia.
[b]Applied Management Department, Westminster Business School, London, UK.
[c]School of Business and Management, Royal Holloway University of London, London, UK.
[d]Research School of Management, College of Business and Economics, The Australian National University, Canberra, Australia.

Abstract
The surge of remote and hybrid work in the post-pandemic era has reinforced the blurred boundaries between work and nonwork responsibilities. Thus, how people manage the boundaries between work and nonwork domains has become more complicated. This study advances the work of previous studies on constant connectivity by focusing on how employ- ees' perception of constant connectivity might actualize their boundary management behaviors. By adopting affordances for practice perspective, our study focused on contextual fac- tors, including IT/internet policies, informal social norms, and work flexibility, to investigate how these factors could influ- ence employees' perception of constant connectivity. This paper reports a two-phase study. In the first phase, we used sentiment analysis to rank 38 internet use policies of Australian universities, grading their strictness toward ICT/internet use. Next, building on the first phase, we interviewed 28 academ- ics. We identified three perceptions of constant connectivity related to participants' practices, including constant connectiv- ity as a resource for practice, a challenge for practice, and duality for practice. We also found five distinct boundary man- agement behaviors connected to three different perceptions.
Keywords: Work digitalization; constant connectivity; remote working; boundary management; affordances for practice

1. INTRODUCTION

Information and communication technology (ICT) has promoted work digitalization and constant connectivity, accelerating organizations' adop- tion of hybrid working and teleworking (Donnelly & Johns, 2021; Petani & Mengis, 2021). Work digitalization refers to a combination of powerful computing, the adoption of cloud technology, and pervasive connectivity (Venkatraman, 2017). Thus, work has become more digital, flexible, uni- versally networked, and hybrid, with more employers enabling their staff to work remotely at least partially (Gohoungodji et al., 2022). However, constant connectivity disturbs organizational boundaries, specifically blurring the boundaries between work and nonwork domains (Farivar & Richardson, 2021). The nonwork domain refers to any nonwork-related activity, responsibility, and interest outside the work domain (e.g., sports, family, friends, entertainment, etc.) (Voydanoff, 2001). Constant connec- tivity is known as employees' 24/7 access to the workplace through com- munication technology (Wajcman & Rose, 2011). Constant connectivity allows boundary spanning in both directions: connectivity to work during nonwork time and connectivity to nonwork domain during work time (Büchler et al., 2020). For this study, we are concerned with both direc- tions of constant connectivity.

Remote working and ubiquitous access to the internet on smartphones, personal laptops and

work-related computing equipment have led to a mix of nonwork- and work-related internet use during work and non-work time (Farivar, 2015; Lemmer et al., 2023). This mix of nonwork and work-related internet use is especially prevalent in workplaces where computers are the primary tool (Lemmer et al., 2023). As a result, inter- est in how employees manage boundaries between domains has gradually increased (Aljabr et al., 2022). However, how employees perceive con- stant connectivity to actualize boundary management behaviors has received scarce attention (Allen & Martin, 2017; Gardner et al., 2021). Understanding the actualization of constant connectivity is essential for managing boundaries between different roles. Boundary management includes strategies and behaviors employees adopt to separate or integrate roles in their work and nonwork domains.

To understand how employees deal with constant connectivity to man- age boundaries, first, we need to explore how employees perceive con- stant connectivity. Comprehending the perceptual process of perpetual connectivity is a vital stride towards unraveling how technology is being implemented and utilized, particularly in the post-pandemic era, where hybrid work arrangements have blurred boundaries and are widely regarded as the future of work. The flexibility of time and space are two elements of the hybrid model (Gratton, 2021). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, most industries allowed minimal time and space flexibility. However, millions of knowledge workers experienced a sudden shift from being place-constrained to being place-unconstrained, as well as a shift from working synchronously with others to working asynchronously (Gratton, 2021). This sudden implementation of remote work has made it difficult for many individuals to perform their preferred boundary management behaviors. Thus, boundary management must be accurately conceptualized in post-pandemic evolving contexts (Cobb et al., 2022). This study contributes to research and practice by investigating two main questions: (1) How do employees perceive constant connectivity in work and nonwork domains? and (2) How do employees' perceptions of con- stant connectivity shape their boundary management behaviors?

The first question develops our understanding of employees' percep- tions of constant connectivity, which is under-researched. Understanding employees' perceptions of constant connectivity is crucial as constant connectivity relates to high work demands and conflicts between work and nonwork roles, which are among the most significant indicators of employees' health issues (Butts et al., 2015; Cobb et al., 2022). Therefore, mapping these perceptions becomes essential to address and mitigate potential challenges. The second question highlights the interpretation of constant connectivity as an affordance. 'Affordance for practice' approach suggests adopting a technology or artefact can be helpful if users use it appropriately based on their needs/work-related practices and perceptions (Fayard & Weeks, 2014). Most published studies in management journals view employees as passive recipients of technological advancement rather than active players who can react to, contribute to, and shape the future of work meaningfully by using technologies differently. Thus, by explor- ing links between the perception of constant connectivity and boundary management behaviors, we aim to reveal if employees are active players contributing to work digitalization.

To answer the research questions, we adopted an exploratory approach consisting of sentiment analysis and 28 in-depth semi-structured inter- viewees with Australian academics. We selected academics as remote working and temporal-spatial flexibility are

not new in Higher Education.In addition, this knowledge worker group is more experienced in dealing with constant connectivity compared to some industries that recently precipitated into virtual space due to pandemic restrictions. The contri- bution of this study is manifested in two crucial ways. First, we expand the current literature on constant connectivity by drawing on affordance theory (Gibson, 1979). The conceptualization of affordance accentuatesthe role of humans' agency in using technologies and broader social fac- tors (i.e., accepted norms and behaviors in a workplace and workplace policies) that influences the use (Markus & Silver, 2008). Second, weargue that how employees perceive constant connectivity and how their perception shapes boundary management behaviors are vital information to design effective work policies. Balancing work and nonwork roles has become critical and challenging for employees' well-being (Allen & Martin, 2017). Hence, many employers design work practices such as flexible work arrangements (FWAs) and telecommuting to allow employ- ees to blend work and nonwork roles and, in return, promote positive organizational outcomes (e.g., performance, commitment, satisfaction, etc.) and reduce conflicts between employees' work and nonwork respon- sibilities (Capitano et al., 2017).

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Notion of affordances

Affordance theory, originating from ecological psychology, explains how users with specific capabilities and limitations perceive objects and tools and subsequently make decisions on how to use those objects and tools (Gibson, 1979). Although affordances are inherent within the objects and tools, they depend on how users perceive them to trigger intended actions. Cognitive psychologist Donald Norman developed the concept of affordances by highlighting the impact of relational context on shaping affordances. Norman (2013) suggests affordances are "the relationship between properties of the artefacts and capabilities of the users that establishes the way that the artefact would be used" (Norman, 2013, p. 11). This suggests users can use an artefact differently because 1) they might have different perceptions of the artefact and 2) they have differ-ent abilities to use it.

Not only can affordances drive actions, but also, they may restrain actions (Hutchby, 2001). In other words, the affordances of an artefact can also set limits on what it is possible to do "with, around, or via the artefact" (Hutchby, 2001, p. 553). In a nutshell, affordances can provide specific opportunities and enable specific actions but constrain others. Inaddition to the relational nature of affordances, social context (e.g., accepted norms and behaviors in a workplace) and institutional context (e.g., policies and procedures in a workplace) can influence 'users' per- ceptions of affordances (Markus & Silver, 2008).

The embeddedness of digital technologies in employees' work rein- forces constant connectivity. Consequently, constant connectivity and work digitalization have weakened the boundary between work and non- work domains and facilitated the micro and macro transitions such asworking from home, watching nonwork-related videos and online shop- ping at work (Farivar & Richardson, 2021). Thus, affordance theory has become more recognized within the HR field. As the work has become increasingly hybrid in an evolving post-pandemic context, we need to understand how people work in IT-enabled workspaces appropriately (Petani & Mengis, 2021). Therefore, in the context of work digitalization

and affordances, IT and HR have become partners in dealing with mat-ters such as how ICTs, personally owned or company-provided resources may impact outcomes such as performance, commitment, autonomy, workload and well-being. Constant connectivity is not an IT issue but an affordance closely related to HR that needs to be explored and concep- tualized (Doargajudhur & Hosanoo, 2023).
The literature on affordance theory shows this theory covers two approaches: functional and affordances for practice.

2.2. Functional affordances vs. affordances for practice

Researchers adopted the functional affordances approach to explain an artifact's inherent properties, capabilities, and functionalities. This approach revolves around what actions or possibilities the technology enables users to perform based on its design and features. In under- standing functional affordances, the emphasis is on studying the techni- cal aspects of the technology itself and how users interact with these technical capabilities based on their perceptions (Fayard & Weeks, 2014; Zheng & Yu, 2016). This means the functionalities of affordances are considered fixed. The main shortcoming of the functional affordances approach is that this approach ignores the complex relationship between the technology and agent and the 'possibilities' that emerge from specific context (Markus & Silver, 2008; Volkoff & Strong, 2013; Zheng & Yu, 2016). This approach falls short of considering the 'situated mode' of the contexts where the actor engages with the technology to act. Consequently, this is the main reason the functional affordances approach is limited to unravelling possible actions, restraining other actions and channelling behaviors "in a specific direction".
On the other hand, the 'affordances for practice' approach suggests that technology for specific human agents unfolds beyond the subject-object dichotomy (i.e., user-technology). This approach considers the social, cultural, and contextual factors that influence users' percep- tions and interpretations of the technology, shaping how technologies are used in real-world situations (Zheng & Yu, 2016). Human agency is inherently situational and influenced by society, culture and history; thus, technology is socio-material (Orlikowski & Scott, 2008). Considering the interplay between technology and the broader socio-cultural environ- ment, the affordances for practice approach is particularly relevant in investigating how technologies are employed and how users integrate technology into their daily activities, routines, and practices (Fayard & Weeks, 2007, 2014). This approach provides a more detailed narrative of how actions afforded by technology are actualized in different situations. Similar to Fayard and Weeks (2014), we argue adopting a practice-based perspective and acknowledging the social and cultural factors that impact operations in a specific context can shed light on predicting the potential actions and possibilities. As such, this study aimed to explore the con-cept of constant connectivity through the lens of affordances for practice, moving beyond functional affordances. We focused on how constant connectivity impacts boundary management, examining our participants' work-related activities and practices, such as teaching and conducting research.

2.3. Constant connectivity and boundary management

Improvements in mobile technologies as a form of ICT and the ubiqui- tous internet connection have allowed individuals to be connected con- stantly (Mazmanian, 2013; ten Brummelhuis et al., 2021). ICT has facilitated non-traditional work arrangements or so-called 'remote work- ing', 'teleworking', 'flexible work arrangements', and 'hybrid

working' (Donnelly & Johns, 2021). In general, flexible work arrangements (FWAs) refer to arrangements that allow employees to perform their work out-side the confines of a defined space and time (Putnam et al., 2014). The term flexible work includes three types of flexibility—temporal flexibility, or flexibility in when to complete a task; spatial flexibility, or flexibility in where to complete a task; and operational flexibility or flexibility inhow to complete a task (Chen & Fulmer, 2018; Kossek & Lautsch, 2018). Less temporal-spatial segregation means work can be conducted at anytime and place, so employees frequently use their homes as their work locations (Daniel et al., 2018).

FWAs have grown in popularity as organizational studies linked themto a long list of benefits for both employers and employees, includingbetter work-life balance (Kumar et al., 2023), high employee engagement (McNall et al., 2010), less voluntary turnover (Choi, 2020), high job sat- isfaction (Neirotti et al., 2019), employee performance (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2011), high organizational performance and better physical health and fewer somatic symptoms (Shifrin & Michel, 2022). However, adopting FWAs blurs physical and social boundaries (Stopfer & Gosling, 2013). These blurred boundaries obstruct boundary management. Thus, employees face difficulties remaining disconnected from nonwork respon- sibilities and interests during work (Farivar & Richardson, 2021). Wang et al. (2021) study of social media use at work shows that social media use causes interruptions and, thus, decreases work engagement. In addi- tion, since ICTs have enabled constant connectivity, expectations to be accessible anytime and anywhere have increased (Reinke & Gerlach, 2022). The three features of boundaries, including flexibility, permeability, and boundary management preference, justify employees' control over boundaries (Ashforth et al., 2000; Matthews et al., 2014).

Daniel and Sonnentag (2016) conceptualize boundary management asan individual and contextual factor. At the individual level, the employ- ees' boundary management preferences explain employees' boundary management behaviors, while at the contextual level, flexibility (physical boundary) and permeability (psychological boundary) demonstrate con- trol over boundaries. Boundary management preference reflects the importance of human agency in boundary management. This suggests some people prefer to separate their work tasks and personal life (Matthews et al., 2014). Some others might mix them and complete their work tasks in the evening at home to address some nonwork responsi- bilities in the afternoon. Thus, employees and employers independently arrange and rearrange physical and psychological boundaries (Daniel & Sonnentag, 2016). Boundary management seems critical in managing work digitalization, resolving the conflict between work and nonwork roles (Aljabr et al., 2022), reducing the turnover rate (Kossek et al., 2006), and improving employees' well-being (Wepfer et al., 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a radical transition to the virtualenvironment and ever-increasing blurred boundaries that have altered day-to-day work behaviors (Vaziri et al., 2020).

As blurred boundaries can result in different consequences for both employees and employers, developing policies that protect the boundaries seem to become an essential aspect of corporate security policies in recent years. ICT/internet policies stipulate what employees can and can- not do on digital communication platforms such as social media, instant messengers, etc. Internet use policies elucidate the use of filters and fire- walls, monitor employees' online activities, and handle internet abuse. Employers may adopt two approaches to designing ICT/internet policies: deterrence or laissez-faire (Kim, 2018).

The deterrence approach limitsconstant connectivity and internet use at work through strict surveillance and filters. On the contrary, the laissez-faire approach promotes policiesthat boast little to no surveillance of internet use (Kim, 2018).
The presence of strict ICT/internet policy and monitoring practices increases the negative consequences of using these platforms at work and outside the workplace. Restrictive policies that limit personal use of ICTs at work decrease the diffusion and use, but permissive policies are likely correlated with more use of social media communications applications (Bretschneider & Parker, 2016). These policies could direct organizational norms and routines regarding ICT/internet use (Sheer & Rice, 2017). For instance, employees may use instant messengers such as WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger rather than official email accounts as the primary work communication channel if there is no restriction on using public instant messengers in the ICT/internet use policies. However, strategies such as regulating ICT and internet use are a form of top management intervention that can influence organizational users' decisions about using technology, and users' perceptions of the technology drive the behaviors (Liang et al., 2007). Thus, we need to consider the impact of ICT/inter-net use policies to investigate how users' perceptions of constant connec- tivity may impact boundary management behaviors.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted an exploratory qualitative approach to investigate participants' perceptions and behaviors (Bryman & Bell, 2011). We used semi-structured, in-depth interviews to collect data from academics at universities across Australia. We selected academics working in business schools because academic jobs include flexibility. Academic scheduling enables the integration and segmentation of work and nonwork-related roles (Shockley & Allen, 2010). In addition, there are often flexible work- ing policies for academics regarding where and when they work. Thisallows academics to choose how much they want to use flexible work arrangements (Shockley & Allen, 2010).
Furthermore, academic tasks, including teaching, research, and admin- istrative duties, have been digitalized radically, increasing the control over job flexibility (Mazmanian et al., 2013). Research suggests that when employees perceive a high level of control and flexibility over their work, they are more likely to use ICT for work more frequently, even during nonwork hours (Schlachter et al., 2018; Senarathne Tennakoon et al., 2013). Hence, we expected that academics report higher levels of blurred boundaries. We obtained ethical clearance from The Tasmania Social Sciences HREC (H0018138) for this study.

3.1. Sampling process

To select interviewees, first, we mapped the ICT/internet policies of Australian universities on a continuum based on the strictness/looseness of the policies. The aim was to control the impact of ICT/internet poli- cies on employees' perception of constant connectivity. We intended to obtain a mixed sample of interviewees working in universities with strict ICT/internet policies or lenient ICT/internet policies. For mapping the policies, first, we used a computerized technique to collect the ICT/inter- net policies of 38 Australian universities. Using Google Custom Search engine, JSON API, and a custom algorithm developed by Bar-Ilan (2019), Our search scope was limited to websites with "edu.au" domain. Then,we searched for the following keywords "IT policy", "social media policy", "IT governance policy", "IT use policy", "ICT policy", "ICT use policy", "Social

media use policy", "IT acceptable use", "IT Security policy", "Electronic use policy" and "Computing regulations" to extract the ICT/ internet use policies. We used Python programming language and Scrapy library to crawl the universities' webpages and extract policies. We col- lected 80 policy documents from 38 Australian universities for further analysis.

In the next step, we conducted sentiment analysis to estimate the pol- icies' strictness and leniency levels. Sentiment analysis (or opinion min- ing) allows researchers to understand the emotion or sentiment behind comments and text and gain actionable insights. Pattern-based sentiment analysis detects patterns of emotions, opinions, subjectivity, moods, and feelings in textual data (Chen et al., 2012). In recent years, the use of sentiment analysis to classify textual data as a positive, neutral, or nega- tive feeling has increased in management studies and practices (Liu, 2020). Businesses often use this technique to monitor customers' feed- back and understand customers' sentiments and needs. In addition, this technique enables investigators to examine the strictness and leniency of policies. A negative sentiment indicates strict policies, while a positive sentiment implies lenient policies. Policies are textual, so we need to assign numeric values to them to calculate the sentiment score, whichrepresents detects emotions.

The most common method for quantifying a text's sentiments is to use a dictionary of negative, neutral, or positive words to see how many negative and positive words it contains. In addition to the number of words and their type, sentiment algorithms analyze the strength of words and the context in which they are used. For example, the following state- ment, "Some reasonable non-commercial personal use **may** be allowed, but as a privilege and **not a right**, and if that privilege is **abused,** it willbe treated as a **breach** of this Policy." represents a negative sentiment and consequently receives a negative score. In contrast, the following sen- tence, "Debate [on social media] is healthy, but always be sure to do so in a logical and calm manner." indicates a positive emotion and senti- ment, so it receives a positive score. Finally, an example of a neutral sentiment is, "Like all University assets and services, the information and communication technologies in all their various forms should be used in an efficient, lawful and ethical manner.". Algorithms used in sentiment analysis explore the lexicon of words, idioms, and phrases in a document to quantify the sentiment scores between −1 and 1. A score close to −1 signifies a negative sentiment or emotions, while scores close to 1 repre- sent a positive one. A score of zero denotes a neutral sentiment.

Figure 1 shows that the sentiment analysis graded the overall univer- sities' ICT/internet use policies between −0.33 and 0.08. This suggests

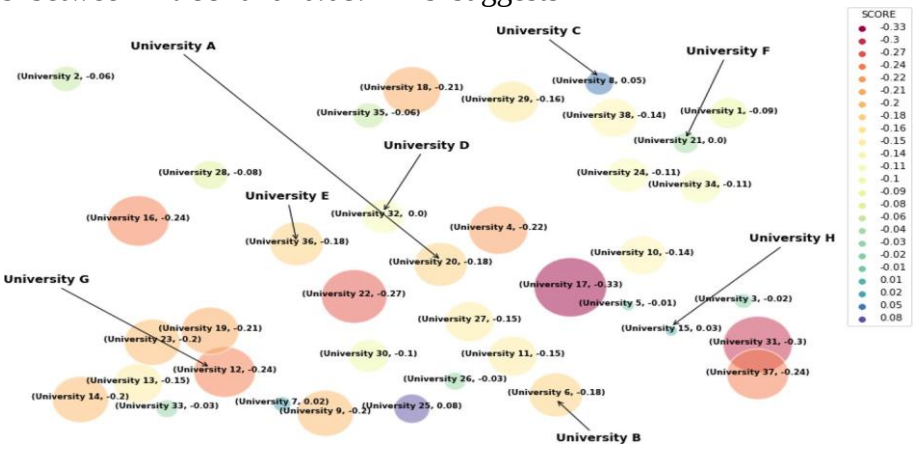

Figure 1. Sampling process (Sentiment analysis).

most Australian universities have strict ICT/internet use policies, and even those with scores above 0 do not have a strong positive attitudetoward ICT/internet use.

Based on the sentiment analysis results, we selected eight universities (A with a sentiment score of −0.18, B with a sentiment score of −0.18,C with a sentiment score of 0.05, D with a sentiment score of 0, E with a sentiment score of −0.18, G with sentiment score of − 0.24, and H with a sentiment score of 0.03). The rationale for selecting theses univer- sities was to include universities with lenient, neutral and strict ICTs/internet use policies in our sample. We explored the web pages of Business Schools at these universities and then sent interview invitationsto 167 full-time academic staff. We excluded casual/part-time staff and research fellow academics as this group has limited flexibility in their work arrangements. In total, 28 accepted the invitation and were inter- viewed, as shown in Table 1. Twenty-eight semi-structured interviews were conducted in 2019 and 2020. Interviews lasted 25–60 min. In addition to following a prepared interview guideline, we adopted a flexible approach to improvise in the case of incomplete answers and use leading questions whenever neces- sary. The interviews were composed of three sections. In the first sec- tion, participants were asked to describe how they use ICTs for work and nonwork purposes by answering several questions. The second part was allocated to factors influencing their boundarymanagement behaviors and their use of ICTs at work and in nonwork domains. Some examples are “Have you felt that there are specific norms about ICT use in your school?”, “Are there any political, cultural,

Table 1. Participants’ information.

No.	Identifier	University	University sentiment toward ICT/ internet use	Interviewee role	Gender	Years at the institution	Perception of Constant Connectivity
1	Int1.A	University A	Negative	Senior lecturer	Male	15	Resource
2	Int2.A	University A	Negative	Senior lecturer	Male	11	Resource
3	Int3.A	University A	Negative	Lecturer	Female	2	Duality
4	Int4.B	University B	Negative	Senior Lecturer	Male	9	Challenge
5	Int5.B	University B	Negative	Senior Lecturer	Male	13	Challenge
6	Int6.B	University B	Negative	Lecturer	Male	2	Resource
7	Int7.B	University B	Negative	Associate Professor	Female	6	Challenge
8	Int8.B	University B	Negative	Lecturer	Male	16	Challenge
9	Int9.C	University C	Positive	Lecturer	Male	2	Resource
10	Int10.C	University C	Positive	Senior Lecturer	Male	11	Challenge
11	Int11.C	University C	Positive	Lecturer	Female	3	Resource
12	Int12.C	University C	Positive	Lecturer	Female	1	Duality
13	Int13.D	University D	Neutral	Lecturer	Female	2	Resource
14	Int14.D	University D	Neutral	Senior Lecturer	Female	2	Duality
15	Int15.D	University D	Neutral	Senior Lecturer	Male	3	Duality
16	Int16.D	University D	Neutral	Lecturer	Female	3	Challenge
17	Int17.D	University D	Neutral	Senior Lecturer	Female	9	Challenge
18	Int18.D	University D	Neutral	Lecturer	Female	2	Duality
19	Int19.D	University D	Neutral	Lecturer	Female	2	Resource
20	Int20.E	University E	Negative	Lecturer	Male	3	Duality
21	Int21.E	University E	Negative	Lecturer	Female	3	Challenge
22	Int22.E	University E	Negative	Senior Lecturer	Female	15	Resource
23	Int23.E	University E	Negative	Senior Lecturer	Female	16	Resource
24	Int24.E	University E	Negative	Lecturer	Female	4	Duality
25	Int25.F	University F	Neutral	Associate Professor	Male	16	Resource

26	Int26.G	University G	Negative	Lecturer	Female	6	Resource
27	Int27.G	University G	Negative	Senior Lecturer	Female	13	Resource
28	Int28.H	University H	Positive	Associate Professor	Male	10	Duality

institutional or philosophical barriers to using ICT at work?" and "Did you have any training or receive any specific email or announcement about the internet and social media use policies at your university?", Finally, we requested participants explain their experience with remoteworking and their strategies to deal with constant connectivity (see Appendix).

3.2. Data analysis approach

A professional service transcribed the recorded interviewees, and two researchers checked the accuracy of the transcriptions. We used thematic analysis and pattern coding to address the research questions. We adopted Miles et al. (2014) approach to analyze interviewees in-depth. For this purpose, the coding process was iterative (Miles et al., 2014). We conducted the interviews and analyzed the data simultaneously to revise the questions and the literature review. We started the coding process by focusing on whether academics were aware of the ICT/internet policies at their workplace, how they perceived constant connectivity, and which communication technologies they used at work. The iterative coding

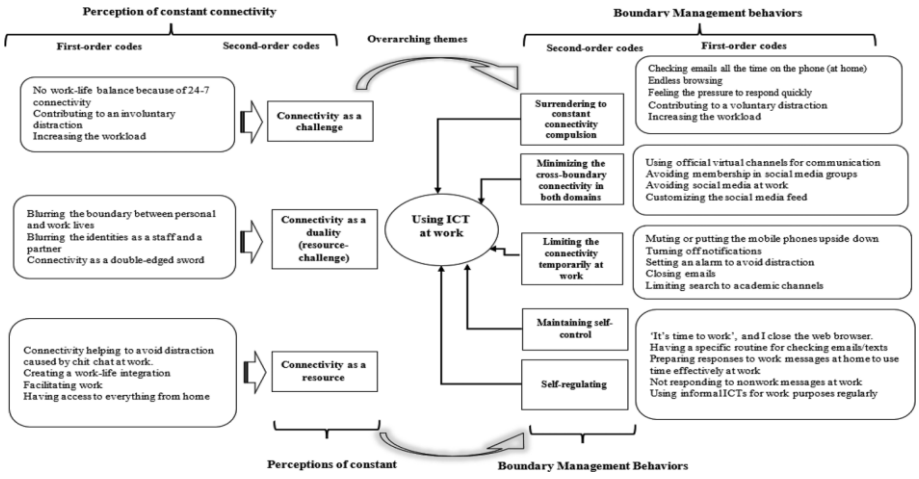

Figure 2. Constant connectivity and boundary management behavior.

approach and constant comparison between the emerging codes help researchers identify the differences and similarities. Then, we applied pattern coding for the second-order analysis (Miles et al., 2014) to iden- tify the conceptual patterns in our data and understand the dynamics between these factors. We used extensive memo writing alongside pattern coding to increase the validity of our findings. The coding structure is displayed in Figure 2.

3.3. Trustworthiness

In qualitative studies, validity and reliability are discussed under trust- worthiness, explaining credibility, dependability, conformability, and transferability (Elo et al., 2014). Credibility is considered internal validity and consistency, which shows how well data is collected. Several methods can be adopted to increase the credibility of qualitative studies, including prolonged engagement with participants, persistent observation in the field, using peer researchers, negative case analysis, researcher reflexivity, and participant checks

(Morrow, 2005). Following Cho and Trent (2006) suggestion, we used the lens of researchers and participants to improve the credibility of our data. Thus, we emphasized documenting the pro- cess and protocols during the interviews as the interviewer took addi- tional notes while the interviewees verbalized their thoughts. The self-awareness of the researcher was also essential to improving the cred- ibility of the data (Elo et al., 2014). Thus, two researchers (peer-researchers technique) analyzed the first five interviewees as pre-interviews to determine whether the interview questions were suitable for obtaining rich data regarding our research questions. Then, we continued to col-lect data. Regarding the participants' lens, we adhered to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) suggestion and allowed interviewees to change or elab- orate on their verbal comments after every interview. It gave them oppor- tunities to reword or clarify their responses. The sampling strategy is another method to justify the credibility of the data. In this study, asexplained above, we used sentiment analysis to increase the thoroughnessof our data. Thoroughness is a validity criterion in qualitative studies that refers to the adequacy of the data (Elo et al., 2014). To achieveconformability, which refers to the extent to which other researchers can confirm the results of a study, we asked an external auditor who was not part of the research team to analyze ten transcripts (one-third of the whole data). The cross-check between the external auditor's findings and our interpretation of the data showed that our findings were valid. Finally, transferability dimensions emphasize the stability of findings over time and whether the results are transferable to other contexts (Nowell et al., 2017). The transferability of the results depends on transparency. Thus, we reported direct quotes from transcriptions to increase transparency.

4. Findings

The primary practices in higher education are teaching and research. Analyses showed that our interviewees' interaction with constant connec- tivity created several possibilities for their practices (teaching andresearch), such as collaboration and teamwork, promotion and publicity, continuous access, concentration versus distraction, student support, and spatial and temporal flexibility.

4.1. Perceptions of constant connectivity for practice

Our interviewees viewed constant connectivity in different ways, includ- ing i) constant connectivity as a resource for practice, ii) constant con- nectivity as a challenge for practice, and iii) constant connectivity as a duality of resource-challenge for practice.

4.1.1. Constant connectivity as a resource for practice

The first group perceived constant connectivity as a resource that empow- ered them and contributed to performing their teaching and research practices. Our analysis shows that constant connectivity was perceived as a resource for several reasons. First, some interviewees argued that constant connectivity facilitated spatial and temporal flexibility as one of the main dimensions of their teaching and research practices since they could access resources available on campuses (e.g., library resources, recording facilities, and journal subscriptions) on weekends through Universities' virtual private networks (VPN). For example, one partici- pant explains how ubiquitous connectivity allowed her to mark students' reports over holidays and support her PhD students during weekends:

During the [holiday] periods when there's a lot of marking and lots of…I've gota couple of PhD students I'm supervising…and if there's anything important with them, I do use weekends to work on that as well. (Int22.E, Female, Senior Lecturer)

Collaboration and teamwork emerged from our analyses as a crucial dimension of research practice. Among the various aspects discussed, interviewees highlighted that benefiting from constant connectivity to expand professional networks is a necessary and fundamental step in developing research practice.

You build collaboration, build networking, which at the end of the day will benefit what you're doing. (Int13.D, Female, Lecturer)

Regarding research practice, analyses also revealed interviewees use constant connectivity to establish multidisciplinary teams, amplify research impact, and increase opportunities for securing research grants.

… looking for a social scientist to team up with a project group that wanted to write a tender. (Int26.G, Female, Lecturer)

More importantly, collaborations with scholars living in other cities or continents were a major challenge without constant connectivity and ICT.

I have access to them [instant messengers] on my desktop…I find it useful for connecting to collaborators on a daily basis. (Int1.A, Male, Senior Lecturer).

In addition, our interviewees emphasized that actively disseminating their work and promoting their research findings played a crucial role in the research practice that became possible through constant connectivity:

If I'm gatekeeping research participants, I'll spread the news about my research project through my networks. You know, friends first. (Int19.D, Female, Lecturer)

Consequently, our participants discovered that constant connectivity through the use of social networking platforms is essential for promoting their research and institutions and fostering external collaborations.
Our interviewees also found constant connectivity in the form of using social networking platforms is necessary to promote their research and institutions and entice external collaborations:

These platforms create an opportunity for you to promote…your research. Promote your institution…also to let other people know what type of work you're doing, what type of research you're doing…and also to enable you to link up with other scholars, other researchers. (Int13.D, Female, Lecturer)

This group of interviewees pointed out that "short-term distraction" would be productive for research and teaching practices. For example, after a rela-tively long time of sitting in front of the screen, reading academic papers or even looking for teaching materials, a moment of diversion from the main work could positively impact their research and teaching endeavours:

It happened to me quite a lot when I'm just getting into something and it's… really…not useful, nonsense. And I don't know why I'm sitting there, continuing to read it…but um…I need some sort of a distraction. (Int6.B, Male, Lecturer)

Therefore, they perceived constant connectivity as a resource for teach- ing and research

practices. It allowed them to energize and freshen their minds by spending time on nonwork-related online activities (e.g., social media or gaming platforms). The constant connectivity afforded them to take short breaks and decrease their stress level, as indicated by the following interviewees:

It's definitely a time-out. It's a time when my brain can…not have to think. Quite often, I get…like it's humorous what I look at. (Int26.G, Female, Lecturer)

I see it more as a positive. If these platforms are there and you're at work, youdon't feel like doing something and you just need something to get over it, social media is a very good platform to get through that. It's a good way to de-stress for ten to twenty minutes. (Int13.D, Female, Lecturer)

Interviewees who perceived constant connectivity as a resource did not perceive digital distraction as an intrusion to their teaching and research practices. On the contrary, they felt constant connectivity empowered them to alleviate stress and boredom. This result is consistent with Farivar et al. (2022) findings that all digital distractions do not lead to negative consequences.

Additionally, this group saw continuous access to scholarly materials and their workplace as a necessary dimension of their research and teaching prac-tices. Therefore, they did not perceive constant connectivity to the workplace as a negative aspect of digitalization. An interviewee provided a good exam-ple when she explained her remote access to teaching materials during the weekend helped her organize her lectures on Monday and put her mind at ease without damaging her work-life balance.

4.1.2. Constant connectivity as a challenge for practice

The second group of interviewees held a markedly distinct perspective on constant connectivity, as they did not consider 'promotion and publicity,' 'short-term distraction,' and 'continuous access' as fundamental dimensions of their teaching and research practices. They admitted that controlling connectivity was challenging for their teaching and research practices. The analysis revealed that the second group preferred a more selective and traditional approach to connectivity as they perceived unre- stricted/unlimited constant connectivity. For example, the following inter- viewee considered 'short attention span' and 'involuntary distraction':

I think you get distracted a bit more easily…just when you do work…I think it's one of those problems that people have relatively short attention spans. (Int7.B, Female, Associate Professor).

Another interviewee noted that 'continuous access to' a wide range of scholarly materials was not necessary for her research practice. When she intended to work, such access could interrupt her work fellow and leadto involuntary distraction:

I'll type in what I'm looking for and I'll get distracted by all the other articles. So…I do that…if I'm doing my research, it happens a fair bit. (Int21.E, Female, Lecturer)

Hence, constant connectivity, which enabled continuous access, wasperceived as a challenge to their research and teaching practices. In this group, interviewees emphasized the importance of 'student support', par- ticularly addressing students' queries, as a critical aspect of their teaching practice. However, they were unhappy about how constant

connectivity resulted in a new possibility of receiving students' emails anytime and being expected to support students beyond regular working hours.

The assessment is due at 11:59 pm…I'm getting students emailing me at the last minute needing an extension, or they can't submit, or they submitted the wrong file, or I can't see the article, so…we get bombarded so often…. You need to respond to that. (Int8.B, Male, Lecturer)

Furthermore, another interviewee explained constant connectivity raised her colleagues' and students' expectations unrealistically due to the possibility of being available and accessible even after working hours. Consequently, these raised expectations resulted in intensified work pres- sure, work-life conflict, and an unpleasant extra workload:

There's an unspoken expectation that you need to respond. Both from the staff as well as students. I think it's students more so…the rise in demand…and a lot of unrealistic expectations…it's interesting when senior management says, 'we need to keep work-life balance', but certain expectations don't allow us to keep work-life balance. (Int16.D, Female, Lecturer). This group also perceived constant connectivity created a new possi- bility as raising the expectations regarding student support led to 'involuntary distraction', which might potentially exert adverse effects on their teaching practice: I always get distracted with emails …When I see a notification, I think 'what is this person after?'. It's not just on one computer; it's on my phone as well…I do respond to emails…in fact, I respond to so many emails…one of my units at the moment has over 300 students enrolled. Across locally and offshore. And I'm being bombarded with students enquiring for extensions. (Int8.B, Male, Lecturer) One interviewee believed that the availability of constant connectivity was so powerful and irresistible that it would be uncontrollable in con- temporary work arrangements. Even if I try to switch off the phone, I'll still want to go and check…I can't help it. (Int5.B, Male, Senior Lecturer).

In contrast to the first group, the second group did not view promo-tion and publicity as favorable. While the first group considered using connectivity to promote their work constantly as beneficial and crucial for forming collaborations, the second group did not attach the same significance to this aspect. Instead, they expressed concerns that other scholars sharing their research and achievements could create unneces-sary pressure for them. As social media as a form of constant connectiv-ity provided a platform for other researchers to promote their work, this is another reason that this group found constant connectivity a challenge for their practices. I just feel that there is more work to do, and sometimes it could create some… anxiety…So, when I see what other people are doing, and I see that I think…oh…I haven't done that…do I need to do that? (Int17.D, Female, Senior Lecturer).

4.1.3. Constant connectivity as a duality for practice

The third group's perspective on constant connectivity for their teaching and research practices lies at the intersection of the first group's positive perceptions and the second group's negative ones, blurring the boundary that separates these contrasting viewpoints. This group had a positive view toward spatial and temporal flexibility (i.e., remote work and working out of hours) caused by constant connec- tivity. Thus, they perceived constant connectivity as a resource for teach- ing and research practices.

It helps me! Because I don't have to go to work every day. Technology helps me to do my job from home. I only have to be at university when I am teaching. Sometimes I take my laptop…do a few hours…it also helps my mental health… But it doesn't mean that I'm unhappy with that…if an email comes in at 9 pm, I still have to answer. (Int3.A, Female, Lecturer) However, unlike the first group and similar to the second group, they did not appreciate the distraction enabled by the constant connectivity.For example, the following interviewee chose to work from home when- ever it was possible to avoid any distraction:

There are still colleagues…they want to talk and catch up and drop in…these can break some workflow for me. So, to avoid those distractions I work from home. (Int28.H, Male, Associate Professor)

This group argued constant connectivity metaphorically resembled a"double-edged sword". While it empowered them to benefit from spatial and temporal flexibility of teaching and research practices, constant con- nectivity increased digital distraction and needed extra effort to be man- aged carefully. Some members of this group leaned toward the enabling aspects of constant connectivity (as a resource for practice). In contrast, others highlighted its contributions to intensifying the challenging dimen- sions of their practice. However, all confirmed both the dark and bright sides of constant connectivity. For instance, the following participant points out how constant connectivity provided the opportunity for her to work remotely while it contributed to her involuntary distraction:

I'm pretty sure that social media is nothing new in terms of distraction; that's my opinion. But for work-life balance, it's more because I can easily access my work from home because it's all cloud-based. ((Int12.C, Female, Lecturer)

Likewise, another interviewee acknowledged the positive impact of constant connectivity on the promotion and publicity aspect of his research practice. However, he also recognized the potential challenge of involuntary distractions that could arise from spending time on social media. You may see posts on social media about things that you're researching or fromother researchers, so you want to find out more about that. It can be helpful, and it definitely can be distracting. (Int2.A, Male, Senior Lecturer).

Based on the duality perception, constant connectivity blurs the boundaries between nonwork and work domains by facilitating flexibility in teaching and research practices. This has both positive and negative consequences for this group. On one side, constant connectivity enhances self-promotion as a crucial aspect of their research practice. On the other side, it risks privacy preservation in their personal lives. They arguedthat the work-related use of social media could have increased users' visibility to potential recruiters and other universities. Still, they also had concerns about the privacy of posts, as stated in the following quote:

Whenever I use social media, I kind of use it from the perspective that anything I post online could potentially be seen by a recruiter, or…it needs to be suitable for a job interview, or else I don't post it online…I assume that everything I post online is public. Even if it's behind privacy settings…It's more of a…not so much…my university would…not like it…it's more that I just assume that nothing online is private…data could be accessed. (Int15.D, Male, Lecturer)

Another duality angle suggests that constant connectivity facilitated engagement with the community, which could have led to collaboration as an essential aspect of the research practice. However, maintaining the profiles and posts is time-consuming and requires much effort, which could be spent on the research practice.

You need to be this superhero where you have that public profile, and you're also writing and also engaging with community. You're doing all these things, and you've also got your career…actually maintaining your profile on social media…I see that as part of our job. (Int18.D, Female, Lecturer)

4.2. Boundary management behaviors

After sorting employees' perceptions into three groups, we explored the quotes to uncover if each group reported different boundary manage- ment behaviors. We found that workplace social norms shape employees' boundary management behaviors, the flexible nature of work, the sense of digital surveillance, and employees' perception of constant connectivity.

4.2.1. Actualization of constant connectivity as a resource for practice atwork

As Figure 2 shows, participants who perceived constant connectivity as a resource for their teaching and research practices reported two boundary management behaviors to benefit from constant connectivity at work i) maintaining self-control or self-policing and ii) self-regulating. By refer- ring to 'self-policing' and 'self-control', the interviewees made a conscious decision. They developed a stable framework to manage unintended/ uninvited digital distractions caused by constant connectivity at work. This point is reflected in the following quotes:

I restrict myself. Self-policing! You know? You internalize it. (Int20.E, Male, Lecturer)

They [digital communication technologies] are a little distracting, but I can also control myself and ignore them if I'm doing something that needs all my atten- tion…I do tend to reply pretty promptly to stuff. (Int19.D, Female, Lecturer)

This group of participants also stressed that although constant connec- tivity could be a source of digital distraction to perform their teaching and research practices, they managed it without issue. In addition to self-policing, their boundary management behavior included self-regulating how to use emails, social media platforms, and online academic chan- nels. Self-regulation is the ability to follow internally planned actions without external support or reward (VandeWalle et al., 1999). Self-regulation is an adaptive capacity demonstrating the ability to con- trol thoughts, emotions, and actions (Orhan et al., 2021).

With emails, I decide when and where to respond to them. For example, I knewwe have a meeting, so I put a notification up, but if I don't know who send an email to me, I will ignore it…I've learned to manage them because if you don't,it's distracting, and you just can't get through your work. (Int22.E, Female, Senior Lecturer)

Similarly, another interviewee explains how she responded to emails to manage the digital distraction:

What often happens is I'll try to be a bit…it's a weird way of doing it…but I pre-answer some emails to be sent out first thing on Monday… I tend to have a very specific work task…and it would usually be…what I try to do is not look at the email. (Int23.E, Female, Senior Lecturer)

We also found that interviewees who saw constant connectivity as a resource for practice tended to use both official and public ICT technol- ogies at work more frequently and effectively. For example, they used instant messengers for board meetings and communications, social media for reducing stress and increasing productivity, instant messengers over official emails for daily work-related communications at work unless a recorded copy or email trail was required, social media for self-promotion and networking with scholars and collaborators around the world. In other words, they instead use informal, public, and popular ICT channels than their employers' official ICT channels. Finally, this group of inter- viewees had a favourable view regarding digital surveillance and viewed ICT/internet use policies as cybersecurity tools.

We had an attack a few months ago. It was on the news. Have you heard about it? It was horrible. Universities must have strong firewalls and internet use poli- cies. (Int2.A, Male, Senior Lecturer)

4.2.2. Actualization of constant connectivity as a challenge for practice atwork

Unlike the first group, participants who perceived constant connectivity as a challenge for their teaching and research practices reported suffering from guilt due to using ICT for nonwork-related purposes at work (Lim, 2002), which we call 'surrendering to constant connectivity compulsion'. The analyses suggest that this group failed to control and manage ICT/ internet use in both domains. For example, one interviewee explains how she got trapped in doing another task while marking students' assignments: It's very difficult to control. Because of all of this…intelligence, they pop up things [during the search for teaching materials] that you might be interested in. And it's really difficult to resist clicking on it. (Int16.D, Female, Lecturer)

Then, she explained that the source of the issue could be poor time management, as academics might end up juggling different tasks while using technology. In other words, she suggested constant connectivity could interfere with task prioritization; therefore, a challenge for her teaching practice: I think it's also time management…A couple of times I was checking some stu- dent references…and it was leading on to a very interesting topic. I thought that I could use them as a case study in my teaching! So, my task was supposed to be marking the assignment, but I ended up looking for teaching materials for updat-ing my lectures! (Int16.D, Female, Lecturer)

One interviewee explains this pressure as an urge to respond to mes- sages, as ignoring them will not solve the problem of needing to respond.

Especially on instant messenger. You feel like you need to respond…even if you don't. It's still hanging there. Like, oh, there's something I need to respond to. (Int16.D, Female, Lecturer) A similar sentiment came from interviewees who admitted checking work-related emails during non-working hours due to pressure from informal workplace norms.

I always check my work emails at home when I see a notification. I feel I have to respond

immediately …These days, it is expected to answer emails quickly. (Int4.B, Male, Senior Lecturer) The analysis confirms that this group's negative perception of constant connectivity and the actions adopted to actualize the perception led to a conservative use of ICT compared to the first group. For example, they preferred more official channels designated by their universities, such as official emails for correspondence and WebEx for meetings. In other words, the second boundary management behavior was 'minimizing the connectivity at work'. We also found that this group had an unfavourable opinion of digital workplace surveillance. This group of interviewees highlighted their scepticism regarding freedom of speech on the internet and the potential negative consequences that could arise in their work-place if they shared their honest opinions online. Due to not valuing the dimensions of teaching and research practices being facilitated by con- stant connectivity, such as flexibility and promotion, and having a nega- tive perception of constant connectivity, this group of participants preferred to avoid the digital environment entirely or had severe difficul- ties managing it. Although most of them were present on social media, they were neither active nor producing any meaningful content, as indi- cated by this interviewee:

Part of the reason why I haven't engaged with LinkedIn or Twitter as much is beside the fact that I don't really understand Twitter, but it's how…like…my employer might not like what I post. And, as a result, what will they do to me because I shared something they don't like? (Int21.E, Female, Lecturer)

4.2.3. Actualization of constant connectivity as a duality for practice at work The data analysis also identified two specific boundary management behaviors adopted by members of the third group to actualize their per- ception of constant connectivity for teaching and research practices at work (see Figure 2). This group believed that constant connectivity pos- itively contributed to some dimensions of their teaching and research practices. However, they also acknowledged that constant connectivity was the source of the digital intrusion, such as 'involuntary distraction' that could hinder the performance of their research and teaching prac-tices. Thus, they adopted several behaviors and temporary solutions to take advantage of what they call 'positive aspects of constant connectivity for their practices but limit internet use at work. They adopted tactics including muting notifications, putting mobile phones upside down, and avoiding reading emails and text messages during work. To avoid [answering instant messages]. I set a 45-minute alarm in the phone, and in that time, I do not touch my phone. That's what I try to do…The point is, that I cannot see my phone, so…It's upside down and on mute. Because I know that I will get distracted. (Int3.A, Female, Lecturer)

I've actually turned off all alerts, so I might go into social media accounts once or twice a day…It's my decision. And I've done that deliberately because it was just 'Bing! Bing!' all day long, and I wasn't getting any work done. (Int18.D, Female, Lecturer)

To help address the perceived challenges, they also adopted specific boundary management behaviors to use informal ICTs for work-related activities at work: using social media platforms (e.g., LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter) to engage with students and collaborators, using social media to self-promote their research, and using instant messengers (e.g., WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger) to send work-related messages to their colleagues.

In LinkedIn we have a group. I'm a member…receive some updates, we can also post

things about our school there…being a member of the tutor LinkedIn…it is recommended. They expect students to be engaging with you. (Int3.A, F, Lecturer)

I use Twitter, um…and…so…and LinkedIn. So…I use them…from a professional or networking thing… It's mostly like, academic-related stuff. Or it's promoting things that I'm doing or talking about what I'm doing in the classroom. (Int18.D,F, Lecturer)

As the quotes above show, interviewees who perceived constant con- nectivity as a duality for their teaching and research practices still tried to benefit from the positive side of constant connectivity for practice but believed the adverse effects of it for practice must be managed and con- trolled. This group also viewed digital surveillance as compelling and legitimate if universities focused on cyber security and protecting employ- ers' as well as employees' identity/image.

I understand universities need firewalls and monitoring mechanisms to protect information and their image; looking after protecting employees is also important. There should be some training to enhance our skills to deal with nasty messages or comments by students or anyone. (Int21.E, Female, Senior Lecturer)

5. DISCUSSION

Digitalization has enhanced work flexibility and blurred the boundary between work and nonwork activities. Constant connectivity is an affor- dance created by work digitalization in the twenty first century that has led to spanning boundaries of work and nonwork to incorporate aspects of the other domain. Research to date has provided many insights into the impact of digital technologies on work arrangements and work-life boundaries (Aljabr et al., 2022; Farivar et al., 2022; Gardner et al., 2021). Moreover, the extant literature on affordances (Markus & Silver, 2008) has also emphasized the role of human agency in materializing and using technology. However, there is still a limited understanding of how per- ceptions of constant connectivity for specific (work) practices might shape or realize boundary management behaviors. This is what we exam- ined in this paper. In particular, adopting the lens of affordance for prac- tice, we aimed to foreground the active role that knowledge workers play in how they perceive constant connectivity for practice and how their perceptions lead to boundary management behaviors. Table 2 summarises our findings.

5.1. Actualizing boundary management behaviors

This study found that knowledge workers perceive constant connectivity as a resource for practice, a challenge for practice, or a duality of resource-challenge for practice. As Table 2 shows, we also showed that each perception drives different boundary management behaviors. Thus, this research contributes to the body of knowledge by considering the active role of knowledge workers (human agency) in managing the blurred boundaries of work and nonwork and theoretically explaining how knowl- edge workers act on their perceptions of constant connectivity for practice (Fayard & Weeks, 2014; Markus & Silver, 2008; Zheng & Yu, 2016).

Table 2. Summary of findings.

Perceptions of constant connectivity	Boundary management Behaviors	Example

As a resource	Maintaining self-control orself-policing	"I restrict myself. Self-policing! You know? You internalize it."
	self-regulating	"With emails, I decide when and where to respond to them. For example, I knew we have a meeting, so Iput a notification up, but if I don't know who send an email to me, I will ignore it."
As a challenge	Surrendering to the constant connectivity compulsion	"It's very difficult to control. Because of all of this… intelligence…they pop up things [during the search for teaching materials] that you might be interested in. And it's really difficult to resist clicking on it."
	Minimizing the connectivity at work	"I was too naïve…I thought my laptop was mine, and my emails were private. But I learnt it in the hardestway; employers read our emails. I lost my previous job because I emailed a colleague and wrote my real opinion about our manager… After that, I've never used university emails to talk with my colleagues. Everything that I do on this laptop is totally work-related" (Int10.C, Male, Senior Lecturer)
As a duality	Limiting the connectivity temporarily at work	" I turn my cellphone so I can't see its screen and notifications when I am working on my research. Icheck messengers during lunch" (Int24.E, Female, Lecturer)
	Limiting the cross-boundary connectivity in both domains	"I log off from university email when I am at home…I only check university emails at work" (Int12.C , Female Lecturer)

We uncovered that 'limiting connectivity temporarily' and 'limiting the cross-boundary connectivity in both domains' are mainly adopted by knowl- edge workers who see constant connectivity as a duality (resource-challenge) for their work practices. Through these behaviors, these knowledge workers try to balance the benefits and challenges of constant connectivity for per- forming their work practices by adjusting the boundaries and integration without creating a disconnection between domains.

Moreover, 'maintaining self-control' and 'self-regulating' are chosen by knowledge workers who perceive constant connectivity as a resource for practice, while 'surrendering to the constant connectivity compulsion' and 'minimizing connectivity at work' occurs among knowledge workers who view constant connectivity as a challenge for practice. Our findings support Farivar et al. (2022) conceptualization of digital intrusion versus digital distraction. We found that not all digital distractions driven by constant connectivity led to perceptions of its negative impact on work practices. Employees who perceived constant connectivity as a resourcefor practice used digital distraction as a coping mechanism to take short breaks and refresh their minds, which would positively contribute to their work.

On the contrary, if employees viewed constant connectivity as a chal- lenge for practice, they reactively tried to avoid and minimize ICT use or surrendered to the force of constant connectivity, in some cases, to avoid the resulting pressure. They also experienced digital intrusion that could negatively impact their performance in both work and nonwork domains. As a result of such experiences, knowledge workers could exer- cise some level of control over boundaries (Matthews et al., 2014).

5.2. The role of ICT/internet policies and norms

Our findings confirm that knowledge workers do not necessarily pay attention to organizational ICT/internet use policies when deciding how to actualize their perception of constant connectivity for practice except when the negative consequences of using

ICTs is severe, such as losing the job for expressing opinions freely on social media. Further, employ- ees are more likely to rely on their intuition, informal norms, and com- mon sense of restriction on constant connectivity and use of ICTs. However, their perception of constant connectivity for practice forms different opinions about ICT/internet use policies. We found that employ- ees who viewed constant connectivity as a resource for practice were more likely to focus on positive aspects of ICT/internet use policies, like their strong impact on cyber security. On the contrary, employees who perceived constant connectivity as a challenge for practice concentrated on negative and limiting aspects of ICT/internet use policies. They were concerned that their participation in the virtual world would conflict with their employers and negatively impact how they perform their work practices. Finally, employees who assessed constant connectivity as a duality of resource-challenge for practice believed ICT/internet use poli- cies should protect employers and employees.

Gadeyne et al. (2018) quantitative results show employees might per- ceive constant connectivity as social pressure to be always available and connected to work. Similarly, our findings highlighted the role of social norms rather than ICT/internet policies in forming boundary management behaviors. For instance, several interviewees indicated that once they receive notifications related to students' emails or texts, they feel an urgency to read and respond to students because it is a norm in their organiza- tional culture. Due to this social pressure, they preferred to set up their work emails on their phones and check their work emails after working hours and on weekends. Nonetheless, in our case, despite the policy doc- uments being transparent and having strict language, the knowledge work- ers did not consider these policies on how to use technology.

5.3. Theoretical contributions

This study makes two main contributions to the literature. First, it con- tributes to the work-life literature by analyzing how knowledge workers manage work flexibility and the blurred boundaries between work and nonwork regardless of digital interruptions. Our findings confirmed boundary management behaviors are formed based on the employees' perceptions of constant connectivity for practice. By considering the affordances for the practice approach, this study investigates the new possibilities caused by constant connectivity instead of focusing on tech-nical features. For example, when constant connectivity was adopted in the Education sector to facilitate teaching practices, no one considered the possibility of how it might result in distraction. Our findings show that constant connectivity can be a distraction, depending on how users use it in their practices.

The results show that one of the most adopted strategies for constant connectivity was actively self-regulating to take advantage of constant connectivity as a resource for practice and fulfil work and nonwork responsibilities. Our findings about the impact of self-regulation on man- aging constant connectivity provide new insights into Orhan et al. (2021) research. Orhan and his colleagues found that digital distractions deplete employees' self-regulation power and break down self-control. On the contrary, we found that employees who consider constant connectivity a resource for practice use self-regulation and self-control to manage the dark side of constant connectivity, like digital distractions. Therefore, boundary management behavior is not just about separating the work and nonwork domains but rather about how knowledge workers initiate strategies to manage

the blurredness of these domains.
Second, our study contributes to the recent discussions in human resource management regarding the need for a more focused approach to understanding how technology is embedded in organizations and employees' work practices (Petani & Mengis, 2021). In this respect, we respond to this call by taking up an affordance for practice perspective and considering the role of human agency in perceiving and actualizing affordances of digital technologies used for work and nonwork purposes in either domain. Our study found that neither technological features nor organizational policies determine how employees use digital technol- ogies. The three perceptions of constant connectivity for practice and their associated boundary management behaviors demonstrate that the individual user's agency plays a crucial role in technology enactment.
Third, this study found that social norms could be more critical than ICT/internet use policies in forming employees' perception of constant connectivity. We found no connection between employees' perception of constant connectivity for practice and the level of strictness/leniency in ICT/internet use policies. We had mixed participants in each group working in universities with negative, neutral, and positive sentiments toward ICT/internet use at the workplace. This study shows that the organizational context as the social setting plays a crucial role in employ- ees' perceptions of constant connectivity, which consequently shapes boundary management behaviors. The organizational context in our study includes social norms at work as well as work flexibility.

5.4. Practical implications

Our findings have practical implications to help managers and leaders deal with the negative aspects of constant connectivity for practice. These find- ings are arguably even more relevant following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has produced a surge of remote working and made the work and nonwork boundaries even more blurred. First and foremost, our study suggests that the availability of ICT/internet use poli- cies is not as effective in controlling and managing ICT use at work as organizations envisage. On the contrary, behavioral/social norms at the workplace and how employees perceive constant connectivity are critical in controlling ICT use. Therefore, organizations need to study ICT-related social/behavioral norms in the workplace as well as how their employees perceive constant connectivity before designing any ICT/internet policy.
Second, managers need to understand that the availability of a policy does not guarantee awareness of the policy. In addition, an email includ- ing links to the policies does not necessarily increase employees' aware- ness of policies. Our data showed that many interviewees did not know about their employers' ICT/internet use policies. In addition, we found that even among those who were aware of the ICT/internet policies, social norms and their perceptions controlled their boundary manage- ment behaviors. Thus, our findings are applicable in training programs as this study suggests the best way to deal with negative aspects of con- stant connectivity is 'modifying the norms and perceptions'.

5.5. Limitations and future research

Our research is not without limitations. First, since this is one of the first studies to examine the dynamics of employees' perceptions of constant connectivity in association with

contextual factors (e.g., work flexibility and an organization's social norms), further research is needed. Future studies may uncover other boundary management behaviors if different contextual factors are present. For example, IT- use and security policies might be very stringent in some organizations, such as healthcare or law enforcement, due to the nature of data or work practices, and employees might go through specific training. Although there might still be the use of personal devices or accessing work systems from home, employees might show other boundary management behaviors due to such contextual factors. Second, we conducted this research within academia following other relevant studies (e.g., Aljabr et al., 2022; Wajcman et al., 2008). Further research is required to study this phenomenon in other organizational contexts and sectors. For example, employees' perceptions might differ within inflexible organizations (e.g., the automotive indus- try) or born-digital organizations such as Spotify and Netflix. Thus, fur-ther studies are required to investigate how constant connectivity may beperceived in different industries for different practices in those industries.Third, although we found the role of social norms at work in bound-ary management behaviors was more substantial than the impact of ICT/internet policies, we did not distinguish between different social norms. Different social norms at work can cause different boundary manage- ment behaviors, which need further investigation. For example, in some sectors, there might be more flexibility towards information sharing and deadlines, or in other sectors and organizations, dealing with customers' complaints urgently could be a norm that might require ubiquitous access and ongoing monitoring of systems and influence employees' boundary management behaviors. Finally, in the present study, we could not inves-tigate the impact of age on employees' perceptions, as all academics who responded to our interviewee invitations were between 40-and 50 years of age. Although constant connectivity is increasingly being incorporatedinto the everyday routines of older adults, younger and older adult users may perceive constant connectivity differently and adopt different bound-ary management behaviors, so we suggest further studies are required to examine the dynamics between age, contextual factors, constant connectivity and boundary management behaviors.

6. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we reported on knowledge workers' experiences and per- ceptions of constant connectivity for practice. We concluded that three perceptions of constant connectivity trigger specific boundary manage- ment behaviors, including constant connectivity as a challenge for prac- tice, resource for practice, or duality of challenge-resource for practice. Specifically, we found that the impact of social norms on shaping bound- ary management behaviors is more potent than official workplace poli- cies except when the negative consequences of ignoring the policies are severe (i.e., losing their jobs).

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