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## Effect of Blurring Boundaries between Work and Non-Work on Work Performance and Life Quality of University Teachers

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**Abstract:** Boundaries between work and non-work become increasingly blurred by teachers in educational institutions especially at university level. It is important to understand and observe boundaries of work and non-work to improve their work performance and life quality. This study attempted to provide an insight by measuring the effect of blurring the boundaries between work and non-work on work performance and life quality of university teachers. Correlation research design based on a survey method was used to conduct this study. Teachers of all the departments of University of the Punjab, Lahore were the population of the study. A sample of 100 teachers was selected through multi-stage sampling technique. Self-developed and validated questionnaire was used to measure the variables of the study. A pilot study was conducted to validate the instrument. Descriptive and inferential statistics (t-test, Pearson Correlation & Regression analysis) were applied to analyze the data. As a result of the study, it was determined that the university teachers are blurring the boundaries of work and non-work. A significant difference was found in the perception of teachers about blurring boundaries between work and non-work in terms of gender, marital status and discipline (science & social sciences). However, there was no significant difference in the perception of university teachers regarding their teaching experience and residence. Moreover, a positive relation of blurring boundaries between work and non-work with work performance and life quality of university teachers was determined. It was also concluded that blurring boundaries between work and non-work is a significant predictor of work performance and life quality of university teachers. The results of the study suggested that practitioners and policy makers should adjust the policies and culture of educational institutions to help teachers manage their work-life boundaries.

**Keywords:** Work to Non-work, Integration, Segmentation, Teachers, Role Identification.

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### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The boundaries between work and non-work life are increasingly blurred over the last two decades. The way work has been changed by the use of mobiles, smart phones and laptops. Kossek and Michel (2010) argued that wherever we want to work can easily do with the help of technology (Golden, 2013). Many studies Green and McIntosh, (2001); Kelliher and Anderson (2009) concluded that the capacity of doing work is more intense and fast now a day. According to Park, Fritz and Jex (2011) these two work forces have been resulted in the need to be “always on.” During off timings employees took their work for home and check these work related communications. Many of the employees take this flexibility because it is easily integrated themselves with their work and non-work life balances. The constant availability is considered as continuously fatigued, overtaxed and overwhelmed. In this present study the researcher raised the question about how boundaries may affect teachers’ quality of life and performance at university level.

In order to maintain high quality and standardized education system, large group of sizes are managed by teachers because of rapidly changing social phenomena. Workload for teachers is significantly increasing. Instead of reading and writing to others teaching profession is added more work responsibilities. Many other administrative tasks like attending meetings, planning and evaluation are also done by teachers now. Therefore, teachers are needed to make themselves up to date with the rapid change of technology. Many other tasks which are included in their job descriptions are needed to be done by teachers. Outside the classroom it is difficult for a teacher to do extra duties. Goksoy and Akdag (2014) argued that teachers’ burnout, and stress is increasing day by day because of this workload. In order to increase organizational commitment, job satisfaction and balance between work and non-work life there is need for work life balance policies and practices. In order to respond the needs and expectations of an employee flexible work arrangements has been introduced. According to the

flexibility of their work and non-work life balances there is the way to combine the work of employees (Schieman, & Glavin, 2016).

According to Galea, Houkes and De Rijk (2013) stated that in order to work with flexibility the arrangement of flexible work hours are helpful for employees to manage their work and non-work flexibility. Employees can make better work-life balance from flexibility of work arrangements. In this flexible work arrangements employees can do better work but they never tied up with strict working hours (Chung, & Van der Lippe, 2018). The personal life may also get balance due to flexible working hours (Brannan, Brennan, Sellmaier, & Rosenzweig, 2018). For instance, working beside lessons a teacher can use flexible working hours. So, that teacher performs duties when they want to give time to their hobbies. Commonly the flexible working hours are used and the influence of working hours on work life balances in many studies is ambiguous. In the case of workload overwhelming, teachers are used to spend their time in working (Muasya, 2016). It is beneficial for employees to do work during flexible working hours but many employees engaged themselves in working condition due to poor work life balances (Brannan, Brennan, Sellmaier, & Rosenzweig, 2018).

According to Guest (2002) ones' interest and quality of life make work-life balance has been a common topic. Technology has been evolved immensely after industrialization. Significantly the job structure and descriptions has been changed. Pressure of work has been changing due to this rapid change of technology (Darbo & Skjerdal, 2019). Employees may control their day to day schedule due to this flexible working hour. Individual may take decision and negotiate who want to make balance and divide their work and personal life accordingly (Tremblay, & Ilama, 2015). Hayman (2009) argued that work-life balance might be stressful and challenging for some people. It occurs in many organizations where the flexible policies are inconsistent (Evers, & von Essen, 2019).

Teachers are overloaded according to (Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt & Vanroelen, 2004). Attending meetings, planning and evaluation are the extra tasks which they have to perform. Outside the classroom a teacher has no time to perform other tasks. The study conducted by Goksoy and Akdag (2014) on examining secondary school teachers' perception of workload and concluded that workload for teachers are increasing. They complete tasks in their free time which tasks they need to manage. The occupational stress is the result of teachers' workload, work requirement and time pressure (Ploumpi & Ntalla, 2013). The factors which are related to teaching cause stress but high task accountability and administrative tasks cause burnout for teachers. The emotional exhaustion comes out because of non-teaching tasks (Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, & Vanroelen, 2014). A research study conducted by Miryala and Chiluka (2012) teachers at different levels practice workload of different types in order to increase satisfaction, work-life balance and commitment to their work from work-life balance. Satisfaction might be increased by avoiding job related stress (Saeed & Farooqi, 2014).

In this modern, global world workload is becoming a major issue. In order to work flexibly flexible working arrangements and technology is very helpful. The employees may manage their lives accordingly due to flexible work arrangements (Cruz & Meisenbach, 2018). Without any time-off it creates continuous pressure. The work-life flexible arrangements are need to examine again because it effects on peoples' well-being and relationships among flexible work-engagements (Allen, Herst, Bruck, & Sutton, 2000; Glavin, Schieman, & Reid, 2011). Workload for teachers has been increasing day by day which included exams week which is considered a continue work pressure. Therefore, the amount of flexibility of work-life balance fluctuates in different situations.

Many researches have been conducted on blurring boundaries between work and non-work (Olson-Buchanan & Boswell, 2006; Lahti, 2017; Wepfer, Allen, Brauchli, Jenny, & Bauer, 2018). In spite of these studies the researchers are confident that there is quite a need to investigate effect of blurring boundaries between work and non-work on work performance and life quality of university teachers. No efforts have been made to explore this phenomenon in educational institutes of Pakistan. To investigate effect of blurring boundaries between work and non-work on work performance and life quality of university teachers is the need of the hour and the proposed study is an effort to address this need.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Objectives of the study were to:

- Know the perception of university teachers about blurring boundaries between work and non-work.
- Identify the difference of blurring boundaries between work and non-work with respect to gender.
- Detect the difference of blurring boundaries between work and non-work in terms of teaching experience.
- Find out the relationship of blurring boundaries between work and non-work with work performance and life quality of university teachers.
- Investigate the effect of blurring boundaries between work and non-work on work performance and life quality of university teachers.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study answered the following research questions:

- To what extent university teachers are blurring boundaries between work and non-work?
- What is the difference of blurring boundaries between work and non-work with respect to gender?
- What is the difference of blurring boundaries between work and non-work in terms of teaching experience of university teachers?
- What is the relationship of blurring boundaries between work and non-work with work performance and life quality of university teachers?
- What is the effect of blurring boundaries between work and non-work on work performance and life quality of university teachers?

## METHODOLOGY

This study attempted to provide an insight by measuring the effect of blurring the boundaries between work and non-work on work performance and life quality of university teachers. Correlation research design based on a survey method was used to conduct this study. Teachers of all the departments of University of the Punjab, Lahore were the population of the study. A sample of 100 teachers was selected through simple random sampling technique. Only fifty two teachers participated in the study. Self-developed and validated questionnaire was used to measure the variables of the study. This questionnaire was consisted of four scales regarding four variables (Blurring boundaries between work to non-work, non-work to work, life quality and work performance). Blurring boundaries between work to non-work and non-work to work scales were consisted of 22 items with reliability (Cronbach's alpha =.941). The scale used to measure life quality of the university teachers was comprised of 10 items with reliability coefficient ( $\alpha=.924$ ) and work performance scales was consisted of 8 items with Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha=.907$ ). Descriptive and inferential statistics (t-test, Pearson Correlation & Regression analysis) were applied to analyze the data.

## RESULTS

**RQ1.** To what extent university teachers are blurring boundaries between work and non-work?

**Table 1: Descriptive statistics of teachers' responses about their blurring boundaries between work and non-work**

	<i>N</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Work to Non-Work	52	23.00	55.00	42.71	8.35
Non-Work to Work	52	26.00	55.00	42.50	8.62

Table shows that the majority of the university teachers were blurring boundaries between work and non-work. The mean score for university teachers about their blurring boundaries between work to non-work ( $M=42.71$ ,  $SD=8.35$ ) and between non-work to work ( $M=42.50$ ,  $SD=8.62$ ) indicated that the teachers were almost at the same level of blurring boundaries between home to office work and office work to home. Hence, it is concluded that the teachers were blurring boundaries between work and non-work. They were performing their office tasks at home and not showing their interest in work during office hours.

**RQ2.** What is the difference of blurring boundaries between work and non-work with respect to gender?

**Table 2: Comparison of male and female university teachers regarding their blurring boundaries between work and non-work**

Variable	Gender	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>P</i>
Blurring Boundaries between Work and Non-Work	Male	37	87.08	16.54	1.35	50	.184
	Female	15	80.60	13.34			

Table represents that the mean score for male ( $M=87.08$ ,  $SD=16.54$ ) was greater than the mean score for female university teachers ( $M= 80.60$ ,  $SD=13.34$ ). There was statistically no significant difference found between the perception of male and female university teachers about their blurring boundaries between work and non-work at the  $p\geq.05$  level of significance  $t(50)= 1.35$ ,  $p= .184$ . Hence, it is concluded that female and male university teachers were almost at the same level in blurring their boundaries between work and non-work.

**RQ3.** What is the relationship of blurring boundaries between work and non-work with work performance and life quality of university teachers?

**Table 3: Relationship of blurring boundaries between work and non-work with work performance and life quality of university teachers**

	Variables	1	2	3
1	Blurring Boundaries between Work and Non-work	-	.83**	.46**
2	Life Quality		-	.42**
3	Work Performance			-

\*\*p< 0.01

The results of correlation analysis revealed that the blurring boundaries between work and non-work positively correlated with life quality and work performance of university teachers [ $r=.83(p\leq 0.01)$ ;  $r=.46(p\leq 0.01)$ ]. Life quality of university teachers is also positively associated with their work performance [ $r=.42(p\leq 0.01)$ ]. Henceforth, it is concluded that increase in blurring boundaries between work and non-work made the life quality and work performance of university teachers low. Moreover, better life quality of university teachers improved their work performance.

### CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the teachers were blurring boundaries between work and non-work. They were performing their office tasks at home and not showing their interest in work during office hours. Female and male university teachers were almost at the same level in blurring their boundaries between work and non-work. Results of the current study further revealed that increase in blurring boundaries between work and non-work made the life quality and work performance of university teachers low. Moreover, better life quality of university teachers improved their work performance.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Following recommendations were made on the basis of the finding of the study.

- Educational sector should provide balanced environment to improve teachers working conditions.
- Future research can be conducted to get the deep insight regarding the work-life phenomenon by taking into account the physical, psychological and behavioral aspects.
- Teachers should try to limit their office work to the office and home tasks at the home.
- Educational authorities should reduce the flexible working environment which will be helpful to improve the work performance and life quality of teachers.

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