

# Chapter 19

## The Relationship Between Technoference, Work–Family Interface, and Telework in the Age of 4IR

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In the age of 4IR, working life is generally characterized by penetration of technological devices and online platforms to individuals' social lives through teleworking. There is no consensus about teleworking whether it has negative or positive impacts on work-life balance of employees. Since teleworking is directly related with technological devices, researchers discuss technoference and its effects on teleworkers' lives. So, in terms of its impact, teleworking and work-family interface should be taken into consideration with the concept of technoference. This chapter will analyze the relationship between teleworking and work-family interface in the context of technoference in depth. Due to pervasiveness of teleworking at the age of 4IR, this analysis seems like a necessity for both individuals and companies in terms of teleworkers' work-family satisfaction. Suggestions and protection methods in order to decrease negative impacts of teleworking will also be discussed.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

It is noted by researchers that the 21st century is the age of technology and has witnessed many transformations and changes. These changes mostly effect individuals' lives in the context of work models (Sarbu, 2018; Hynes, 2016; Sarker, Sarker, Xiao, and Ahuja, 2012; Tremblay & Thomsin, 2012; Wheatley, 2012; Golden, Veiga, and Şimşek, 2006; Wilson & Greenhill, 2004). Now, the world experience 4IR which is The Fourth Industrial Revolution. The age of 4IR is characterized with the blurring boundaries between the physical, digital, and biological worlds. It's a synthesis and fusion of benefits in artificial

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intelligence (AI), robotics, the Internet of Things (IoT), 3D printing, genetic engineering, quantum computing, and other technologies. Many products and services which are indispensable to modern life are offered by 4IR. Those products and services are still continuing to change. Undoubtedly, technological changes and transformations are felt in working environments in risky and beneficial ways (Neirotti, Paolucci, and Raguseo, 2013; Golden & Raghuram, 2010; Wilson & Greenhill, 2004). Since, the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) diffuse to professional working life, researchers (Wheatley, 2012; Leonardi, Treem, and Jackson, 2010; Hardhill, 2003) have been underlining freedom, flexibility and new opportunities such as Teleworking. Teleworking is basically defined as working model in which workers maintain traditional office, but the firm offers an opportunity to work from home or telecentres remotely up to three days of week (Sarbu, 2018).

It is believed that people feel the consequences of technological era exaggeratedly, because digital devices penetrate in individuals' working environment (Loh & Lim, 2019; Eklund & Roman, 2017; Hodgkinson, 2017). As a result of diffusions of new ICT's to working life, the definitions and boundaries of "working from home" are mostly confused with Teleworking or Telecommuting. It is also not clear since Teleworking depends on different characteristics such as employees' working place or technological devices (Nakrosiene, Bucuniene, and Gostautaitė, 2019; Messenger & Gschwind, 2016; Madsen, 2003). This confusion leads to blurring the line between family- work life and family conflict as a result.

For the age of 4IR, technology use has penetrated and diffused in family life not only with working context but also everyday intrusions and interruptions through technological devices. These interruptions lead to Technoference which is defined as negative impacts and interruptions on interpersonal relationships through using technological devices (McDaniel & Coyne, 2016). People who are subjected to Teleworking have difficulties at their relationships due to Technoference. Not only related with teleworking but also due to the raise of using communication technology devices, family relationships are considered in a danger. As Technoference is raising, it may have a harmful impact on romantic or family relationships. Moreover, technology may interfere with the development of face to face intimacy in family relationships through individual may multitask with technology while interacting with others (McDaniel & Coyne, 2014).

During the period of COVID-19 pandemic remote working was very popular due to necessity and it became more pervasive. As a result of this, couples and families are more likely to report family conflicts and disadvantages of Teleworking. But there is not a consensus about technological devices' effects on family relationship. Some researchers argued that more couples report that extreme communication devices usage is very harmful for relationships (Morey, Gentzler, Creasy, Oberhauser, and Westerman, 2013; Walker et al, 2012); but the others (Appel, Markera, and Gnambs, 2020; Orben, Dienlin, and Przybylski, 2019) showed with the meta-analyses that social media and technological devices usage have small effect on life satisfaction and well-being of couples when combined with different aspects.

In this study, work-family interface and Teleworking will be discussed in depth in terms of Technoference which is very common in family life at digital age. Technoference will be discussed as a risk of relationship because Teleworking is closely related with Technoference. In order to benefit from advantages of 4IR, it is believed that society, individuals, government and companies should have policies about working conditions, effect of Teleworking on quality of family-work and couple-work interface.

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