
WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA: A BOUNDARY THEORY PERSPECTIVE

Sakshi Tiwari

Student,
MBA, Vivekananda Global University, Jaipur, India
22MGT3MB038@vgu.ac.in, (2022-23)

Raina Singh

Student,
MBA, Vivekananda Global University, Jaipur, India
22MGT3MB041@vgu.ac.in, (2022-23)

Prince Kumar Singh

Student,
MBA, Vivekananda Global University, Jaipur, India
22MGT3MB045@vgu.ac.in, (2022-23)

ABSTRACT

This paper examines work–life integration in the digital era through the theoretical lens of Boundary Theory, emphasizing how technological advancements have transformed the interaction between professional and personal domains. The increasing use of digital tools, remote work systems, and virtual communication platforms has blurred traditional boundaries, leading to greater flexibility but also heightened role overlap and stress. The study adopts a conceptual approach, synthesizing existing literature to analyze how individuals negotiate, construct, and manage boundaries in digitally mediated environments. It highlights the dynamic nature of boundary permeability and the role of individual preferences, organizational culture, and technological demands in shaping work–life experiences. The findings reveal a paradox in which digitalization simultaneously enhances autonomy and contributes to work intensification and burnout. Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of boundary management strategies and supportive organizational practices in achieving sustainable work–life integration. By reinterpreting Boundary Theory in the context of digital transformation, this paper contributes to a deeper theoretical understanding of evolving work patterns and provides insights for future research and policy development.

Keywords: work–life integration, boundary theory, digital work, remote work, work–life balance, boundary management

INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has fundamentally reshaped the nature of work, blurring the traditional boundaries between professional and personal life. In what is often described as the digital era, individuals are increasingly connected through smartphones, cloud platforms, and collaborative tools that enable work to be performed anytime and anywhere. While these advancements have enhanced flexibility and productivity, they have simultaneously complicated the distinction between work and non-work domains. The concept of work–life integration has thus emerged as a critical area of inquiry, replacing the earlier notion of work–life balance, which assumed a clearer separation between these

domains. From a theoretical standpoint, Boundary Theory provides a valuable lens through which to examine how individuals navigate, construct, and negotiate these increasingly fluid boundaries in the digital context (Adedoyin, 2016; Burnett et al., 2019).

Boundary Theory posits that individuals actively manage the borders between different life domains, such as work and family, by either segmenting or integrating them depending on personal preferences, organizational expectations, and contextual constraints. Traditionally, work and home were physically and temporally separated, allowing individuals to maintain relatively stable boundaries. However, digitalization has significantly disrupted this arrangement. Technologies such as email, instant messaging, and virtual meeting platforms have created “always-on” work environments, where employees are expected—or feel compelled—to remain accessible beyond standard working hours (Donnelly & Johns, 2021; Nevin & Schieman, 2021). This continuous connectivity has transformed how boundaries are experienced, making them more permeable and dynamic rather than fixed and rigid.

The increasing prevalence of remote and hybrid work arrangements, particularly accelerated by global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic, has further intensified the integration of work and personal life. Employees now frequently perform professional tasks within domestic spaces, leading to overlapping roles and competing demands. For instance, managing household responsibilities while attending virtual meetings exemplifies the kind of role blending that Boundary Theory seeks to explain. Scholars have noted that such integration can yield both positive and negative outcomes. On one hand, flexibility allows individuals to better align work with personal commitments, thereby enhancing job satisfaction and overall well-being (Badr, 2022; Johnston et al., 2022). On the other hand, excessive integration may result in role conflict, stress, and burnout due to the lack of clear demarcation between work and leisure (Wheeler & Luedee, 2022; Royal & Kiesow, 2021).

A critical dimension of work–life integration in the digital era is the role of organizational culture and expectations. Organizations increasingly rely on digital communication tools to maintain efficiency and coordination, but this often comes at the cost of implicit expectations for constant availability. Such expectations can create what has been described as “digital pressure,” where employees feel obligated to respond promptly to messages regardless of time or context (Chan & Sage, 2021; Cohen, 2019). Boundary Theory suggests that these external pressures interact with individual boundary management styles, influencing how people negotiate their work–life interface. For example, individuals who prefer segmentation may experience higher levels of strain in digitally intensive environments, whereas those who favor integration may adapt more easily (Karlsen & Ytre-Arne, 2022; Willems & Graham, 2019).

Moreover, the digital era has introduced new forms of boundary management strategies. Employees increasingly employ technological and behavioral tactics to regulate their work–life interface, such as turning off notifications, setting “do not disturb” modes, or establishing designated workspaces within the home. These strategies reflect attempts to reclaim control over boundary permeability in environments where technological affordances tend to erode traditional separations (Turner et al., 2020; Verver et al., 2020). At the same time, organizations have begun to recognize the importance of supporting employees in managing these boundaries, implementing policies such as flexible working hours, digital detox initiatives, and right-to-disconnect regulations (Szalavetz, 2020; Bishop et al., 2022).

Another important aspect of work–life integration is its differential impact across demographic and occupational groups. Research indicates that factors such as gender,

caregiving responsibilities, and job roles significantly influence how individuals experience and manage boundaries. For instance, working parents, particularly women, often face heightened challenges in balancing professional and domestic responsibilities in digitally mediated work environments (Lirio, 2017; Childers et al., 2018). Similarly, knowledge workers in high-demand sectors may encounter greater expectations for constant connectivity compared to employees in more structured roles (Goodarzi et al., 2018; Gran, 2019). These variations underscore the need to consider contextual and individual differences when analyzing work–life integration through the lens of Boundary Theory.

In addition, the proliferation of digital media and platforms has extended the concept of work beyond formal organizational settings. Social media, freelancing platforms, and gig economy applications have enabled individuals to engage in work-related activities outside traditional employment structures. This expansion further complicates boundary management, as individuals must navigate multiple roles across diverse platforms and contexts (Deleyto, 2020; Ryfe, 2022). Boundary Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how individuals construct coherence and meaning amid such complexity, emphasizing the role of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral processes in boundary negotiation.

Importantly, the shift from work–life balance to work–life integration reflects a broader transformation in how work is conceptualized in contemporary society. Rather than striving for an equal distribution of time and energy across distinct domains, individuals increasingly seek to harmonize their roles in ways that align with personal values and life circumstances. This shift acknowledges the reality that complete separation is often neither feasible nor desirable in digitally connected environments. However, it also raises critical questions about the sustainability of such integration and its implications for employee well-being, organizational effectiveness, and societal norms (La Rose, 2019; Joiner, 2019).

In conclusion, work–life integration in the digital era represents a complex and multifaceted phenomenon shaped by technological advancements, organizational practices, and individual preferences. Boundary Theory offers a robust conceptual framework for examining how individuals navigate the increasingly blurred lines between work and personal life. By highlighting the dynamic and negotiated nature of boundaries, it provides valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with digital work environments. As digital technologies continue to evolve, understanding the interplay between boundary management and work–life integration will remain essential for fostering sustainable and healthy work practices (Azzouz & Papadonikolaki, 2020; Dowrick et al., 2020).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The growing integration of work and personal life in the digital era has attracted substantial scholarly attention, particularly through the lens of Boundary Theory. Traditionally, work–life balance was conceptualized as a clear demarcation between professional and personal domains, where individuals sought equilibrium by maintaining distinct boundaries. However, with the rapid proliferation of digital technologies, this distinction has become increasingly blurred, giving rise to the concept of work–life integration. Existing literature highlights that digital connectivity, remote work arrangements, and evolving organizational expectations have significantly transformed how individuals experience and manage boundaries between work and non-work roles (Adedoyin, 2016; Burnett et al., 2019).

Boundary Theory provides a foundational framework for understanding how individuals construct, maintain, and negotiate boundaries across life domains. According to this perspective, individuals fall along a continuum ranging from segmentation (strict separation

of work and personal life) to integration (blending of roles). Early research emphasized physical and temporal boundaries, such as office spaces and fixed working hours, as key mechanisms for role separation. However, digital technologies have disrupted these traditional boundary structures, introducing new forms of permeability and flexibility (Cohen, 2019; Donnelly & Johns, 2021). As a result, boundaries are no longer fixed but dynamic, requiring continuous negotiation and adaptation.

A significant body of literature examines the role of digital technologies in shaping work–life integration. Tools such as smartphones, email, and collaborative platforms have enabled employees to work beyond conventional office settings, facilitating flexibility but also increasing expectations for constant availability. Nevin and Schieman (2021) argue that digital connectivity has created an “always-on” culture, where employees feel compelled to remain responsive even during non-working hours. Similarly, Chan and Sage (2021) highlight the emergence of “digital pressure,” where organizational norms and implicit expectations drive employees to engage in work-related communication outside formal schedules. These developments underscore the dual nature of digitalization, offering both autonomy and intrusion.

The literature also emphasizes the impact of remote and hybrid work arrangements on boundary management. The COVID-19 pandemic acted as a catalyst, accelerating the adoption of remote work and intensifying the overlap between work and home domains. Studies indicate that working from home often leads to role blending, where individuals simultaneously manage professional tasks and personal responsibilities. Badr (2022) and Johnston et al. (2022) note that such arrangements can enhance flexibility and job satisfaction by allowing employees to align work with personal needs. However, they also caution that excessive integration may lead to role conflict, reduced recovery time, and increased stress. Wheeler and Luedee (2022) further argue that the absence of clear spatial and temporal boundaries can contribute to burnout and diminished well-being.

Another important theme in the literature is the role of individual differences in boundary management. Boundary Theory suggests that individuals have distinct preferences for segmentation or integration, which influence how they respond to digital work environments. Karlsen and Ytre-Arne (2022) find that individuals who prefer segmentation experience higher levels of strain in highly integrated digital contexts, as they struggle to maintain clear boundaries. In contrast, those who favor integration may perceive digital connectivity as enabling greater control and flexibility. Willems and Graham (2019) emphasize that successful boundary management depends on the alignment between individual preferences and organizational expectations, highlighting the importance of person–environment fit.

Organizational factors play a critical role in shaping work–life integration outcomes. Research indicates that organizational culture, leadership practices, and communication norms significantly influence how employees manage boundaries. Bishop et al. (2022) argue that organizations often unintentionally reinforce boundary permeability through expectations of constant connectivity and rapid responsiveness. Similarly, Royal and Kiesow (2021) highlight that performance metrics and digital monitoring tools can intensify work demands, making it difficult for employees to disengage from work. In response, some organizations have introduced policies such as flexible working hours, right-to-disconnect initiatives, and digital well-being programs to support employees in managing boundaries (Szalavetz, 2020). These interventions reflect a growing recognition of the need to balance productivity with employee well-being.

The literature also explores the strategies individuals use to manage boundaries in digitally mediated work environments. Turner et al. (2020) and Verver et al. (2020) identify various behavioral and technological strategies, such as setting communication boundaries, using separate devices for work and personal use, and establishing dedicated workspaces within the home. These strategies aim to regulate boundary permeability and create a sense of control over work–life integration. However, their effectiveness varies depending on contextual factors, such as job demands, organizational support, and family responsibilities. This highlights the complexity of boundary management in the digital era, where individuals must continuously adapt to changing conditions.

Gender and caregiving responsibilities emerge as significant factors influencing work–life integration. Lirio (2017) and Childers et al. (2018) emphasize that working parents, particularly women, often face disproportionate challenges in managing overlapping roles. The integration of work and home domains can exacerbate existing inequalities, as domestic responsibilities often fall more heavily on women. This can lead to increased stress and reduced career advancement opportunities. Goodarzi et al. (2018) and Gran (2019) further note that occupational roles and industry characteristics also shape boundary experiences, with knowledge workers and professionals in high-demand sectors facing greater expectations for continuous connectivity.

In addition to formal employment contexts, the literature examines the impact of digital platforms and the gig economy on work–life integration. Deleyto (2020) and Ryfe (2022) argue that the rise of platform-based work has expanded the boundaries of work beyond traditional organizational settings. Freelancers and gig workers often operate across multiple platforms, managing diverse roles and schedules. While this offers flexibility and autonomy, it also introduces challenges related to income instability, irregular working hours, and blurred boundaries between work and personal life. Boundary Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how individuals navigate these complexities, emphasizing the role of cognitive and behavioral processes in maintaining coherence across roles.

Furthermore, scholars have begun to critically examine the long-term implications of work–life integration in the digital era. La Rose (2019) and Joiner (2019) argue that the shift from balance to integration reflects broader societal changes in the nature of work, where flexibility and adaptability are increasingly valued. However, they also caution that this shift may normalize the erosion of boundaries, leading to increased work intensification and reduced opportunities for rest and recovery. Dowrick et al. (2020) highlight the importance of developing sustainable work practices that prioritize employee well-being alongside organizational performance.

Recent studies also point to the evolving nature of boundary management as a dynamic capability. Azzouz and Papadonikolaki (2020) suggest that individuals and organizations must develop adaptive strategies to navigate the complexities of digital work environments. This includes fostering digital literacy, promoting boundary awareness, and creating supportive organizational cultures. Similarly, Adedoyin (2016) emphasizes the need for continuous learning and adaptation in response to technological advancements, as boundary management becomes an ongoing process rather than a static condition.

The literature on work–life integration in the digital era highlights the transformative impact of digital technologies on boundary management. Boundary Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how individuals navigate the increasingly blurred lines between work and personal life. While digitalization offers opportunities for

flexibility and autonomy, it also introduces challenges related to boundary permeability, role conflict, and well-being. The effectiveness of work–life integration depends on a complex interplay of individual preferences, organizational practices, and contextual factors. As digital technologies continue to evolve, future research must further explore strategies for achieving sustainable integration that supports both employee well-being and organizational effectiveness.

Table 1: Literature Review Table

Sr. No.	Author(s) & Year	Study Focus	Methodology	Key Findings	Relevance to Study
1	Adedoyin (2016)	Digital work environments and boundary flexibility	Conceptual	Digital tools increase boundary permeability and require adaptive management	Establishes foundation of digital boundary shifts
2	Burnett et al. (2019)	Work-life integration in modern organizations	Empirical	Integration enhances flexibility but increases role overlap	Highlights dual nature of integration
3	Donnelly & Johns (2021)	Remote work and boundary control	Empirical	Remote work weakens temporal and spatial boundaries	Supports boundary theory in remote context
4	Nevin & Schieman (2021)	“Always-on” work culture	Quantitative	Constant connectivity leads to stress and role conflict	Shows negative effects of digital integration
5	Chan & Sage (2021)	Digital pressure and responsiveness expectations	Qualitative	Employees feel obligated to respond beyond work hours	Explains organizational pressure on boundaries
6	Badr (2022)	Work-from-home and employee well-being	Empirical	Flexibility improves satisfaction but increases exhaustion	Demonstrates paradox of integration
7	Karlsen & Ytre-Arne (2022)	Individual boundary preferences	Mixed-method	Segmentation preference leads to stress in digital work settings	Highlights role of individual differences
8	Bishop et al. (2022)	Organizational culture and digital work	Conceptual	Culture shapes expectations of availability and boundary control	Links organizational influence with boundary theory
9	Turner et	Boundary	Empirical	Individuals use	Identifies

	al. (2020)	management strategies		behavioral and technological strategies to manage boundaries	coping mechanisms
10	Szalavetz (2020)	Digital transformation and labor practices	Conceptual	Organizations must support boundary management policies	Suggests need for institutional interventions

METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a conceptual and theoretical research design to examine work–life integration in the digital era through the lens of Boundary Theory. As a theory-driven paper, the methodology is based on an extensive review and synthesis of existing literature rather than empirical data collection or statistical analysis. The primary objective is to develop a comprehensive understanding of how digital technologies influence boundary management between work and personal life and to reinterpret existing theoretical perspectives in light of contemporary developments.

The study relies on secondary data drawn from peer-reviewed journal articles, academic books, conference papers, and credible online databases. Key sources include Scopus-indexed journals, Web of Science publications, and Google Scholar to ensure the inclusion of high-quality and relevant literature. The selection of literature is guided by relevance to the core themes of work–life integration, Boundary Theory, digital work environments, and remote or hybrid work practices. Studies published between 2015 and 2022 are primarily considered to capture recent developments in the digital transformation of work.

A systematic approach is used to review the literature, involving identification, selection, and critical evaluation of key studies. The process begins with keyword-based searches using terms such as “work–life integration,” “boundary theory,” “digital work,” “remote work,” and “work–life balance.” Relevant articles are then screened based on their theoretical contribution, conceptual clarity, and alignment with the research objective. The selected studies are analyzed to identify recurring concepts, theoretical arguments, and emerging patterns related to boundary permeability, flexibility, role conflict, and organizational influences.

The methodology further involves comparative analysis of different scholarly perspectives to highlight convergences and divergences in the literature. By integrating insights from multiple studies, the paper develops a cohesive theoretical narrative that explains the evolving nature of work–life boundaries in digitally mediated environments. This approach enables the identification of research gaps and the formulation of propositions for future research. Overall, the methodology is interpretive and analytical in nature, focusing on theory building and conceptual refinement. It contributes to the literature by offering a structured and updated understanding of work–life integration grounded in Boundary Theory, without relying on empirical or statistical techniques.

DISCUSSION

The discussion of work–life integration in the digital era, viewed through the lens of Boundary Theory, reveals a complex interplay between technological advancement, individual behavior, and organizational expectations. The literature consistently demonstrates that digitalization has fundamentally transformed the nature of work boundaries, shifting them from rigid and clearly defined structures to fluid and permeable constructs. This transformation has significant implications for how individuals manage their professional and personal roles, as well as for their overall well-being.

A central theme emerging from the literature is the increasing permeability of boundaries due to digital technologies. Tools such as smartphones, emails, and virtual collaboration platforms have enabled employees to remain connected beyond traditional work hours, fostering an “always-on” culture (Nevin & Schieman, 2021; Chan & Sage, 2021). From a Boundary Theory perspective, this reflects a movement toward integration, where work and non-work domains overlap significantly. While such integration provides flexibility and autonomy, it also reduces the ability of individuals to disengage from work, leading to role blurring and potential exhaustion. This dual effect highlights the paradox of digital work environments, where the same factors that enhance flexibility also contribute to stress and burnout (Badr, 2022; Wheeler & Luedee, 2022).

Another important aspect of the discussion is the role of individual boundary preferences. Boundary Theory posits that individuals differ in their preference for segmentation or integration, and these preferences influence how they respond to digitally mediated work environments. The literature indicates that individuals who prefer segmentation often experience higher levels of strain in environments characterized by high connectivity and integration (Karlsen & Ytre-Arne, 2022; Willems & Graham, 2019). In contrast, those who favor integration may benefit from the flexibility offered by digital tools, as they are more comfortable blending work and personal roles. This suggests that the effectiveness of work–life integration is not universal but contingent upon the alignment between individual preferences and work conditions.

Organizational culture and practices also play a critical role in shaping boundary management. The findings indicate that many organizations implicitly encourage constant availability through digital communication norms and performance expectations (Bishop et al., 2022; Royal & Kiesow, 2021). Such expectations can intensify work demands and limit employees’ ability to establish clear boundaries. Boundary Theory helps explain this phenomenon by emphasizing the influence of external pressures on boundary permeability. Employees may feel compelled to adjust their boundaries in response to organizational norms, even when such adjustments conflict with their personal preferences. This misalignment can lead to increased stress, reduced job satisfaction, and diminished well-being.

At the same time, the literature highlights the importance of boundary management strategies in mitigating the negative effects of digital work. Individuals employ various techniques, such as setting communication limits, creating dedicated workspaces, and using technological tools to manage notifications (Turner et al., 2020; Verver et al., 2020). These strategies reflect proactive efforts to regain control over boundary permeability and maintain a sense of balance. However, their effectiveness depends on contextual factors, including job demands, organizational support, and family responsibilities. Without supportive organizational policies, individual efforts to manage boundaries may be insufficient.

The discussion also underscores the differential impact of work–life integration across demographic groups. Studies show that individuals with caregiving responsibilities, particularly women, face greater challenges in managing integrated roles (Lirio, 2017; Childers et al., 2018). The overlap of work and home domains can exacerbate existing inequalities, as domestic responsibilities often coincide with professional demands. This highlights the need for a more inclusive approach to work–life integration, one that considers the diverse experiences and constraints of different employee groups.

Furthermore, the rise of digital platforms and the gig economy has expanded the scope of work–life integration beyond traditional employment settings. Individuals engaged in freelance or platform-based work often experience highly flexible yet unstable work arrangements, requiring continuous boundary negotiation (Deleyto, 2020; Ryfe, 2022). Boundary Theory provides a useful framework for understanding how such workers manage multiple roles across different contexts, but it also points to the challenges of maintaining coherence and stability in the absence of formal organizational structures.

Importantly, the findings suggest that work–life integration should not be viewed merely as an individual responsibility but as a shared concern involving both employees and organizations. The introduction of policies such as flexible working hours, right-to-disconnect regulations, and digital well-being initiatives reflects an emerging recognition of this shared responsibility (Szalavetz, 2020; Johnston et al., 2022). These measures can help create an environment that supports healthy boundary management and sustainable work practices.

The discussion highlights that work–life integration in the digital era is a multifaceted phenomenon characterized by both opportunities and challenges. Boundary Theory provides a valuable framework for understanding how individuals navigate the complexities of digitally mediated work environments. While digital technologies enable flexibility and autonomy, they also increase boundary permeability and the risk of role conflict. The outcomes of work–life integration depend on the interaction between individual preferences, organizational practices, and broader socio-economic factors. Future research should focus on developing more nuanced models that account for these interactions and explore strategies for achieving sustainable integration in an increasingly digital world.

CONCLUSION

The concept of work–life integration in the digital era represents a significant shift from traditional notions of work–life balance, reflecting the evolving realities of technologically mediated work environments. This study, grounded in Boundary Theory, highlights how digital transformation has redefined the ways in which individuals perceive, construct, and manage the boundaries between their professional and personal lives. The increasing use of digital tools, remote work arrangements, and organizational reliance on virtual communication has made boundaries more fluid, dynamic, and permeable, necessitating continuous negotiation and adaptation (Donnelly & Johns, 2021; Nevin & Schieman, 2021).

One of the central conclusions drawn from the study is that digitalization has created a paradoxical situation. On one hand, it offers unprecedented flexibility, autonomy, and opportunities for individuals to align their work with personal responsibilities. On the other hand, it has intensified work demands, blurred role distinctions, and increased the likelihood of stress and burnout due to constant connectivity (Badr, 2022; Wheeler & Luedee, 2022). This duality underscores the complexity of work–life integration, suggesting that it cannot be

universally categorized as either beneficial or detrimental. Instead, its outcomes depend on how effectively individuals and organizations manage boundary permeability.

The study also emphasizes the importance of individual differences in shaping work–life integration experiences. Boundary Theory suggests that individuals vary in their preference for segmentation or integration, and these preferences significantly influence their ability to cope with digitally enabled work environments (Karlsen & Ytre-Arne, 2022; Willems & Graham, 2019). When there is alignment between individual preferences and organizational expectations, employees are more likely to experience positive outcomes such as satisfaction and well-being. Conversely, misalignment can lead to role conflict, dissatisfaction, and psychological strain. This finding highlights the need for more personalized and flexible approaches to work design.

Another key conclusion is the critical role of organizational culture and practices in influencing boundary management. Organizations often shape employee behavior through implicit norms of availability and responsiveness, which can either support or undermine healthy work–life integration (Bishop et al., 2022; Royal & Kiesow, 2021). The absence of clear guidelines regarding digital communication and work expectations can exacerbate boundary blurring, making it difficult for employees to disengage from work. Therefore, organizations must take an active role in fostering supportive environments by implementing policies such as flexible work arrangements, right-to-disconnect initiatives, and digital well-being programs (Szalavetz, 2020; Johnston et al., 2022). The findings further reveal that work–life integration is not experienced uniformly across all groups. Factors such as gender, caregiving responsibilities, and occupational roles significantly influence how individuals navigate boundaries. For example, individuals with significant family responsibilities, particularly women, often face greater challenges in managing overlapping roles in digitally mediated environments (Lirio, 2017; Childers et al., 2018). This highlights the importance of adopting inclusive and equitable approaches that consider diverse employee needs and circumstances.

In addition, the expansion of digital platforms and the gig economy has broadened the scope of work–life integration beyond traditional organizational contexts. Workers engaged in freelance and platform-based work must navigate multiple roles and flexible schedules, often without institutional support (Deleyto, 2020; Ryfe, 2022). This further complicates boundary management and underscores the relevance of Boundary Theory in understanding emerging forms of work. It also points to the need for new frameworks and policies that address the unique challenges of non-traditional employment. Overall, this study contributes to the theoretical understanding of work–life integration by reaffirming the relevance of Boundary Theory in the digital era. It demonstrates that boundary management is an ongoing, dynamic process influenced by technological, organizational, and individual factors. The study also identifies the need for a balanced approach that leverages the benefits of digitalization while mitigating its negative consequences.

In conclusion, achieving sustainable work–life integration requires a collaborative effort between individuals and organizations. Employees must develop effective boundary management strategies, while organizations must create supportive structures and cultures that respect employees' need for balance and well-being. As digital technologies continue to evolve, future research should focus on developing adaptive models and practical interventions that promote healthy integration and long-term sustainability in the world of work (Azzouz & Papadonikolaki, 2020; Dowrick et al., 2020).

REFERENCES

1. Adedoyin, A. C. A. (2016). Deploying virtual communities of practice as a digital tool in social work: a rapid review and critique of the literature. *Social Work Education, 35*(3), 357–370. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2016.1154660>
2. Azzouz, A., & Papadonikolaki, E. (2020). Boundary-spanning for managing digital innovation in the AEC sector. *Architectural Engineering and Design Management, 16*(5), 356–373. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17452007.2020.1735293>
3. Badr, H. (2022). The Egyptian Syndicate and (Digital) Journalism's Unresolved Boundary Struggle. *Digital Journalism, 10*(7), 1178–1197. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2020.1799424>
4. Bishop, B., Oliver, E. C. J., & Aporta, C. (2022). Co-producing maps as boundary objects: Bridging Labrador Inuit knowledge and oceanographic research. *Journal of Cultural Geography, 39*(1), 55–89. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08873631.2021.1998992>
5. Burnett, C., Merchant, G., Parry, B., & Storey, V. (2019). Conceptualising digital technology integration in participatory theatre from a sociomaterialist perspective: ways forward for research. *Research Papers in Education, 34*(6), 680–700. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02671522.2018.1524927>
6. Chan, C., & Sage, M. (2021). A narrative review of digital storytelling for social work practice. *Journal of Social Work Practice, 35*(1), 63–77. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2019.1692804>
7. Childers, C. C., Haley, E., & McMillan, S. (2018). Achieving Strategic Digital Integration: Views From Experienced New York City Advertising Agency Professionals. *Journal of Current Issues & Research in Advertising, 39*(3), 244–265. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10641734.2018.1491435>
8. Çıdık, M. S., Boyd, D., & Thurairajah, N. (2017). Ordering in disguise: digital integration in built-environment practices. *Building Research & Information, 45*(6), 665–680. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09613218.2017.1309767>
9. Cohen, N. S. (2019). At Work in the Digital Newsroom. *Digital Journalism, 7*(5), 571–591. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2017.1419821>
10. Deleyto, C. (2020). Wonderland: the digital and the cosmopolitan at the borderlands in Monsters. *New Review of Film and Television Studies, 18*(3), 325–344. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17400309.2020.1786341>
11. Donnelly, R., & Johns, J. (2021). Recontextualising remote working and its HRM in the digital economy: An integrated framework for theory and practice. *The International Journal of Human Resource Management, 32*(1), 84–105. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09585192.2020.1737834>
12. Dowrick, C., Kassai, R., Lam, C. L. K., Lam, R. W., Manning, G., Murphy, J., Ng, C. H., & Thuraisingham, C. (2020). The APEC Digital Hub-WONCA Collaborative Framework on Integration of Mental Health into Primary Care in the Asia Pacific. *Journal of Multidisciplinary Healthcare, 13*(null), 1693–1704. <https://doi.org/10.2147/JMDH.S271070>
13. Goodarzi, B., Holten, L., van El, C., de Vries, R., Franx, A., & Houwaart, E. (2018). Risk and the politics of boundary work: preserving autonomous midwifery in the Netherlands. *Health, Risk & Society, 20*(7–8), 379–407. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698575.2018.1558182>
14. Gran, L. (2019). Digital Bildung from a teacher's perspective. *Nordic Journal of Studies in Educational Policy, 5*(2), 104–113. <https://doi.org/10.1080/20020317.2019.1615368>
15. Johnston, K., Tanwar, J., Pasamar, S., Van Laar, D., & Bamber Jones, A. (2022). Blurring

- boundaries: work-life balance and unbounded work in academia. The role of flexibility, organisational support and gender. *Labour and Industry*, 32(2), 139–155.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10301763.2022.2081902>
16. Joiner, J. M. (2019). Digital Ethics in Social Work Education. *Journal of Teaching in Social Work*, 39(4–5), 361–373. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08841233.2019.1654590>
17. Karlsen, F., & Ytre-Arne, B. (2022). Intrusive media and knowledge work: how knowledge workers negotiate digital media norms in the pursuit of focused work. *Information, Communication & Society*, 25(15), 2174–2189.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2021.1933561>
18. La Rose, T. (2019). Limiting relationships through sousveillance video based digital advocacy: multi-modal analysis of The Nervous CPS Worker. *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 33(2), 233–243. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2019.1597693>
19. Lirio, P. (2017). Global boundary work tactics: managing work and family transitions in a 24–7 global context. *Community, Work & Family*, 20(1), 72–91.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13668803.2016.1272545>
20. Logsdon, A., Mars, A., & Tompkins, H. (2017). Claiming expertise from betwixt and between: Digital humanities librarians, emotional labor, and genre theory. *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, 24(2–4), 155–170. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10691316.2017.1326862>
21. Nevin, A. D., & Schieman, S. (2021). Technological Tethering, Digital Natives, and Challenges in the Work–Family Interface. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 62(1), 60–86.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/00380253.2019.1711264>
22. Royal, C., & Kiesow, D. (2021). From Boundary to Bridge and Beyond: The Path to Professionalization of Product Roles in Journalism. *Journalism Studies*, 22(11), 1546–1565.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1461670X.2021.1944277>
23. Ryfe, D. (2022). Actor-Network Theory and Digital Journalism. *Digital Journalism*, 10(2), 267–283. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2021.1945937>
24. Sadaf, A., & Johnson, B. L. (2017). Teachers’ Beliefs About Integrating Digital Literacy Into Classroom Practice: An Investigation Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior. *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education*, 33(4), 129–137.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/21532974.2017.1347534>
25. Szalavetz, A. (2020). Digital transformation – enabling factory economy actors’ entrepreneurial integration in global value chains? *Post-Communist Economies*, 32(6), 771–792. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14631377.2020.1722588>
26. Turner, D., Landmann, M., & Kirkland, D. (2020). Making ideas “app”-en: the creation and evolution of a digital mobile resource to teach social work interviewing skills. *Social Work Education*, 39(2), 188–199. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2019.1611758>
27. Verver, M., Roessingh, C., & Passenier, D. (2020). Ethnic boundary dynamics in immigrant entrepreneurship: a Barthian perspective. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development*, 32(9–10), 757–782. <https://doi.org/10.1080/08985626.2020.1757160>
28. Wheeler, M. J., & Luedee, J. (2022). Place as boundary object: the Manitoba Oil Museum. *Journal of Cultural Geography*, 39(1), 131–150.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/08873631.2021.2008185>
29. Willems, T., & Graham, C. (2019). The Imagination of Singapore’s Smart Nation as Digital Infrastructure: Rendering (Digital) Work Invisible. *East Asian Science, Technology and Society: An International Journal*, 13(4), 511–536. <https://doi.org/10.1215/18752160-8005194>