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The impact of mobile connectivity on women at work

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- › “Chord of connectivity” or is it “cord of connectivity”
- › Numerous strands or notes working independently but also together
- › Often referred to as a technology toolkit
- › Focus of our work is the smart phone
 - "push" technology
 - Held in the hand/on the body of the user
 - Enhances the concepts of “anytime, anywhere”
 - Blurs the boundaries between work/non-work
 - Challenges the perceptions of possibilities



- › Not gendered but some interesting insights for women and work
- › Senior and Middle managers
- › Semi structured interviews ,observations and time diaries

Study 1:

- › Financial services sector
- › Impact of smart-phones on the nature of work
- › Blackberry users

Study 2:

- › Academics
- › Impact of mobile connectivity on organisational citizenship behaviour
- › i-phone users



Connectivity, Flexibility and Mobility

- › Challenges our understanding of space and time
- › New work practices rather than automating/facilitating existing practices
- › Redefines boundaries between work and non-work
- › Changes existing dimensions of organisational discretionary/citizenship behaviour
- › Organisational engagement and dysengagement amplified



Impact of mobile connectivity highest amongst those:

- › juggling temporal, spatial boundaries particularly in the context of meeting family commitments
 - › with global responsibilities or other roles that require connectivity outside of standard working hours
 - › where the nature of the job requires (or is perceived as requiring) constant availability to be successful
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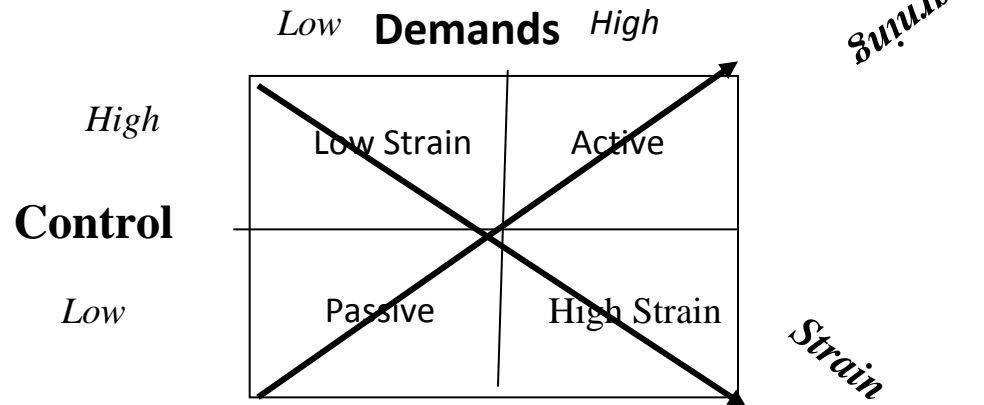


Figure 1: *The Job Demands-Control Model (Van der Doef & Maes, 1999, p.88)*

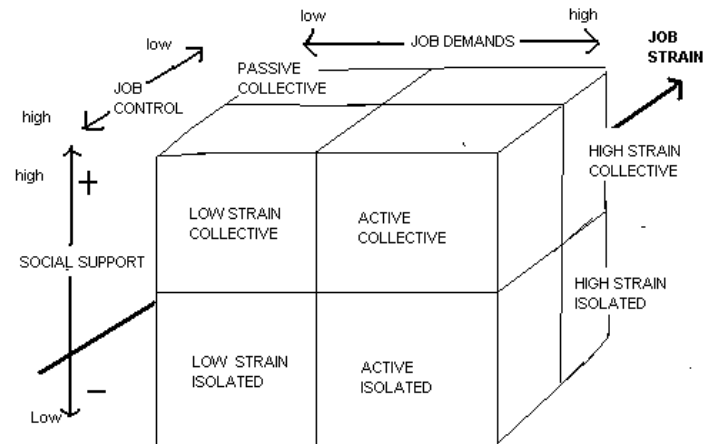


Figure 2: *Job Demands-Control-Support Model (adapted from Johnson & Hall, 1988: 1336)*

Opportunities for effective management

- › Recognition of job intensification raises an opportunity for management to re-evaluate and redesign jobs
- › Provide support to ensure that employees can more effectively control their time and work/non-work boundaries
- › Establish practices around connectivity that focus on sustainable work habits and establish task focussed behaviours
- › Provide training in the technology and IT support that enables users to use the technology to re-evaluate their tasks rather than automating existing practice to work faster and harder
- › Establish some etiquettes around behaviours in a more virtual world

- › Opportunities for job redesign to offer greater flexibility of temporal and spatial boundaries
 - › Mobile connectivity facilitating an “even playing field” enabling women to engage more effectively while juggling family demands
 - › Knowledge of the technology itself critical for leveraging the benefits of mobile connectivity
 - › Potential weakening of the traditional entertaining forums to develop and maintain relationships (particularly with the added significant increase in the importance of social media in business)
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- › Over engagement leading to burn-out and stress
 - › Increase in working hours threatening work/non-work boundaries
 - › Ability to control connectivity important to reaping the advantages of mobility and flexibility
 - › Work creep creating a false sense of the enhanced opportunities generated by mobile connectivity
 - › Smart-phones can both enhance and constrain human agency
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- › Know the technology and how it can facilitate a re-design of work/non-work activities
 - › Clearly articulate your expectations of work/non-work boundaries to ensure that the technology is enhancing opportunities
 - › Apply the technology to redesign work rather than automating existing practice.
 - › Be aware that the effect of the technology is not neutral and thus requires personal management to reap the benefits
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