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Personal Time-Management and Quality of Life in the Network Society

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1. Introduction

In recent decades, health sciences have evolved towards an integrationist model in which health and illness are not only the result of biological factors, but also those of a psychological and social nature. In this biopsychosocial model, individuals' living conditions and habits play a vital role in explaining their health and quality of life. Lifestyle is thus viewed as a substantial element to be taken into account when seeking to explain illness and promote health (Kaplan, 2003).

An in-depth examination of the concept of lifestyle is not our objective. However, we do feel it appropriate to emphasize the fact that this concept is related to behavioural patterns common to a given social group, patterns which are acquired through the process of socialization. According to this perspective, social changes also tend to entail alterations in people's lifestyles (Korp, 2010).

It seems clear, then, that the transformation advanced societies are undergoing towards what is referred to as the Network society or the information and knowledge society not only involves changes in technology, economy or education, but also in our behavioural patterns; in a word, in our lifestyles.

What characteristic traits of the Network society do we think are of particular relevance in this context? We would like to highlight the following:

- The overabundance of information.
- The speed with which such information becomes obsolete, and the consequent need for new material.
- The individual's simultaneous performance of multiple roles and undertaking of various tasks.
- The need for constant synchronization/coordination with decentralized organizations and people.
- The use of different devices to coordinate everyday life.

In brief, we have to cater for the day-to-day demands of a decentralized, multitasking, flexible, changing society whose members are in permanent contact with each other (Anderson & Tracey, 2001, Castells, 2001; Wellman & Haythornthwaite, 2002).

One of the challenges that underlie the Network society lifestyle is using available time efficiently and productively (Hassan, 2010; Parkins & Craig, 2006). Time is regarded as a limited resource, and its use must be carefully planned and supervised in the context of a day packed with tasks to be carried out, roles to be played and information to be assessed and processed. This perspective is examined, for instance, by Levine and Norenzayan (1999), who base their work on Hoch's theory on the relationship between economic factors and the pace of life; a theory that explores the economic value of people's time.

Strategies and devices designed to help us "save time" are therefore commonplace and actually make it possible to achieve more with the same time resources. However, they may also accentuate our sensation of speed. In fact, together with the experience of overburdening in terms of the roles played on a daily basis, the perception of an accelerated pace of life has been identified as one of the factors responsible for deteriorations in individuals' health (physical and psychological) and their perceived quality of life (Friedman et al., 1996; Gleick, 1999; Roxburgh, 2004). Additionally, the feeling of being constantly rushed is especially evident in technologically-advanced countries (Szollos, 2009).

It's important to point out that the polychronic attitude made necessary by the constant demand for simultaneous attention to multiple tasks is not, per se, a negative factor as regards quality of life (Feldman & Hornik, 1981). However, it can become so as a result of feeling increasing levels of stress caused by a sensation of a lack of time in day-to-day life.

In spite of the relation between time perception and health, Strazdins et al. (2011) point out that the way in which time contours health has been neglected in the literature. Szollos (2009) also makes the criticism that psychological inquiries have been largely missing in the multidisciplinary contributions to the study of time shortage, and highlights the fact that findings related with the psychological questions that could be explored in this field can be meaningfully integrated into the area of well-being and quality of life.

Moreover, Roxburg (2006) points out that scant research is undertaken into how gender differences affect the relation between time perception and quality of life. Despite the fact that time perception is related to social roles and that men and women play different roles, only a few studies take gender indicators into consideration when analyzing time perception and quality of life or health (Roxburg, 2006; De la Fuente, 2007).

In order to contribute to this neglected area of research, we carried out an empirical study of time use in the Network society and its relationship with perceived quality of life. Our aims are: a) to describe the use of time in different daily activities of a group of technology users; b) to analyze possible relations between these time habits and the way in which subjects perceive their quality of life; and c) to explore some gender differences.

2. Methods

2.1 Participants

We enrolled a total of 264 subjects, all of whom were volunteers with access to the Online Campus of the Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC). 70.3% of the volunteers were females and 29.7% males. Their average age was 33 (DT=8.48). Table 1 contains a summary of the sociodemographic data corresponding to the participating subjects.

Marital status		**Employed**	
Married or with a partner	54.5%	Yes	87.9%
Single	41.3%	No	12.1%
Divorced or separated	4.2%		
Number of children		**Work in a health-related field**	
No children	52.3%	No	83.5%
One	23.4%	Yes	16.5%
Two	12%		
More than three	12%		
Relationship with UOC		**Annual family income**	
Students	76.8%	> €24,000	51.8%
Staff	11.8%	between €12,000 and €24,000	36.4%
External lecturers	8.7%	< €12,000	11.9%
Others	2.7%		
Field of study		**First use of internet**	
Psychology	29.4%	> 5 years ago	62.7%
Business studies	12.6%	Between 2 and 4 years ago	34.2%
Work studies	11.3%	< 2 years ago	3.1%
Other studies offered by UOC, master's degrees and doctorates	46.7%		
Completed studies		**Able to read English**	
General degree	34.1%	Yes	82.4%
Honours degree	28.8%	No	17.6%
Secondary education	18.2%		
Doctorate	6.8%		
Others	12.1%		

Table 1. Sociodemographic description of the participating subjects.

It should be borne in mind that the typical profile was that of a student or professional at an online university that uses distance-learning methods. The data shows that 76.8% of the subjects are students and 23.2% are staff or external lecturers. Those data related to the use of technologies can be summarized as follows: 95.5% used a computer; 95% used a mobile telephone; 62.7 % had been using the internet for over 5 years; 85.2% had a permanent internet connection; and 81% used the internet on a daily basis. It should also be noted that the level of studies of the sample group was quite high. The vast majority (69.7%) had general or honours degrees or doctorates, and 82.4% were able to read English.

2.2 Instruments

The instruments used were as follows:

- **Time usage perception scale (TUPS):** from the analysis of several personal diaries about daily routines, we created a 60-item questionnaire to explore lifestyles in the network society. This questionnaire was used in a previous study (Boixadós et al., 2007) and from the data analysis we obtained several dimensions related to lifestyles. One of these dimensions accounts for how individuals perceive their time usage in their daily

life. This dimension had 11 items (see Table 2) and we grouped them according to the time usage perception scale (TUPS). Thus, TUPS consists of 11 items (with a 5-point Likert scale) on different aspects related to lifestyle, all of which aim at capturing the perception of the use of time in different daily activities, so that the higher scores indicate a slower pace of life and vice versa. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency index is 0.70. Items 3 and 6 weigh in the opposite direction to the original scale.

Items of time usage perception scale (no. of items = 11; α = 0.70)	
1.	Adhering to regular sleeping times.
2.	Regular bowel movements.
3.	(-)Delaying going to the toilet despite it being necessary to do so.
4.	Having regular mealtimes
5.	Having meals in peace and quiet, without rushing.
6.	(-) Carrying out more than one task at a time, due to the number of jobs to be done (work-related tasks, family responsibilities, domestic chores, etc.).
7.	Foreseeing and adhering to the time required for different activities (e.g. travelling, meetings, errands, etc.).
8.	Having the necessary time and being sufficiently rested to engage in the desired level of sexual activity.
9.	Taking breaks to counteract the negative effects of physical and/or mental fatigue.
10.	Sleeping a minimum of eight consecutive hours a day.
11.	Taking an afternoon nap.

Table 2. Items corresponding to the time usage perception scale.

- **Quality of life questionnaire (QoLQ):** this generic questionnaire consists of 39 items, with a five-point Likert scale, designed and validated by Ruiz and Baca (1993) and used with a healthy Spanish population. The factor structure of the version used in this work was confirmed in a previous study (Boixadós et al., 2009). As reflected in Table 3, the items were grouped into four dimensions, namely Social support (13 items), General satisfaction (12 items), Physical/psychological wellbeing (7 items) and Absence of excessive workload/free time (7 items). The Cronbach alpha internal consistency index obtained for each dimension varied between 0.82 and 0.89, and the internal consistency of the total questionnaire score was 0.93.

Quality of life questionnaire (QoLQ) (No. of items = 39; α = 0.93)
FACTOR 1- SOCIAL SUPPORT (S.S.)- no. of items = 13; α = 0.89
36. Are you satisfied with your partner? 37. Are you physically attracted to your partner? 24. Do you feel that you have someone to turn to when you need company or support? 39. Are you satisfied with your family (partner and/or children)? 38. Does your partner satisfy your sexual desires and needs? 21. Do you feel loved by the people who are important to you? 27. Are you satisfied with your friends? 20. Do you have a satisfactory relationship with those with whom you live?

Quality of life questionnaire (QoLQ) (No. of items = 39; α = 0.93)
23. Do you have friends on whom you can rely if necessary? 26. Do you have someone with whom you can share your free time and pastimes? 28. Do you find your social life satisfactory? 22. Do you have a good relationship with your family? 25. Would you like to have more satisfying sexual relations? If you do not have sexual relations, would you like to?
FACTOR 2- GENERAL SATISFACTION (G.S.) no. of items =12 ; α = 0.89
01. Do you enjoy your work? 17. Do you believe that you are fulfilling your ambitions? 19. Do you feel capable of obtaining most of the things you desire? 32. Do you regard your life as interesting? 18. Do you feel that life is meeting your expectations? 02. Are you happy with the way you work? 33. Are you satisfied with your life? 11. Do you consider yourself to be a failure? 31. Do you regard your life as pleasant? 04. Are you happy with your working environment? 34. Are you satisfied with the money at your disposal? 35. Are you satisfied with the way you are?
FACTOR 3- PHYSICAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING (P.P.W.) no. of items = 7 ; α = 0.88
14. Do you suffer from insomnia or significant problems getting to sleep? 16. Are you satisfied with your current state of health? 09. Do you feel that you are in good health? 13. Do you have concerns that prevent you from relaxing or sleeping, or which make it difficult for you to do so? 15. Do you spend most of the day feeling tired? 12. Do you feel worried or distressed? 10. Do you feel that you have enough energy for your day-to-day life?
FACTOR 4- ABSENCE OF WORK OVERLOAD/FREE TIME (A.W.O.F.) no. of items = 7 ; α = 0.82
29. Do you have enough time to relax and enjoy yourself every day? 06. At the end of a working day, do you feel so tired that all you want to do is rest? 08. Do you have too much work at present? 03. Does your work leave you enough free time for other things that you want to do? 30. Are you able to pursue your pastimes (time, money, etc.)? 07 Are you permanently tense as a result of your work? 05. Do work-related problems or concerns prevent you from enjoying your free time?

Table 3. Factorial structure of the questionnaire QoLQ.

2.3 Procedure

Data was collected by means of an online questionnaire posted on an internal web page of UOC, which was only accessible to members of the community thereof. The questionnaire

was available for 3 months on the online Campus. On the first screen, prior to seeking consent, an explanation of how to answer the questions was provided and the various options as regards replies were mentioned.

3. Results

The results presented below were organized into three sections. The first section presents the response rate by gender to each item in the TUPS questionnaire. For each item we calculated the Chi Square statistic to compare response rate patterns between males and females. We carried out the necessary corrections to meet the assumptions of the Chi Square Test (expected frequencies >5).

In the second section we analyzed gender differences in relation to the scores on the four dimensions of the QoLQ. The Student's t-test was applied and confidence intervals (95%) calculated to ascertain gender differences in these scores. We checked the assumptions of normality and homogeneity of variance of the t-test by applying the necessary corrections in the absence of homogeneity.

Finally, in the third section we show the relationship between the extreme scores at either end of the TUPS scale (i.e. <P25 and >P75) and the four dimensions of QoLQ, taking into account the gender of the subjects. In order to do this, we applied the Student's t-test and calculated confidence intervals to find the differences between the <P25 and >P75 groups according to the four dimensions of the QoLQ , segmenting the results by gender. We checked the assumptions of normality (i.e. null hypothesis is not rejected in the Shapiro-Wilk test) and homogeneity of variance, applying the necessary corrections in the absence of homogeneity.

3.1 Gender patterns of TUPS scores

We first made a descriptive analysis of the items of TUPS. Table 4 summarizes these results, which have been organized from highest to lowest score based on the frequency (percentage %) with which the subjects undertook the activity described, and have been compared by gender. To make reading of Table 4 easier, we have shaded the boxes that show the biggest percentage of response for each item. All the items are presented in a positive sense, indicating regularity or availability. We recoded those that were originally negative (they now have "NO" written in front of the original).

Table 4 shows that most of the subjects answered *Almost always* or *Always* to items related to maintaining a certain degree of regularity, as is the case of "respecting meal times", "sleeping time" and "regular bowel movements". In this last item we found significant differences in gender ($\chi 2=11.71$; df= 3; p= 0.009), with men being more regular in this habit in relation to women.

Following the above, Table 4 shows the items to which the subjects mostly responded *Almost always* or *Sometimes*, and features three items of a different nature, namely "no delaying going to the toilet when it is necessary to do so"; "foreseeing and adhering to the time required for different activities", "taking breaks to counteract the negative effects of physical and/or mental fatigue". These items show similar statistical patterns in both men and women.

Items of time usage perception scale	**Gender**	*Never*	*Almost never*	*Sometimes*	*Almost always*	*Always*
Adhering to regular sleeping times.	M	3.7	11.1	8.6	**59.3**	**17.3**
	F	3.6	11.4	9.9	**62.3**	**12.8**
Having regular mealtimes	M	2.5	6.2	13.6	**61.7**	**16**
	F	0.5	6.8	15.2	**65.4**	12
Regular bowel movements * (χ2=11.71; df= 3; p= 0.009) M>F	**M**	1.2	8.6	9.9	**48.1**	**32.1**
	F	3.2	12.1	**22.6**	**44.2**	17.9
NO Delaying going to the toilet despite it being necessary to do so.	M	1.2	2.5	**29.6**	**37**	**29.6**
	F	3.2	4.2	**35.3**	**40.5**	16.8
Foreseeing and adhering to the time required for different activities (e.g. travelling, meetings, errands, etc.).	M	2.5	6.2	**26.2**	**50**	15
	F	2.1	6.2	**33.3**	**45.3**	13
Taking breaks to counteract the negative effects of physical and/or mental fatigue	M	4.9	13.6	**28.4**	**35.8**	17.3
	F	4.7	18.8	**31.4**	**28.8**	16.2
Having meals in peace and quiet, without rushing.* (χ2=7.4; df= 2; p= 0.025); M>F	**M**	1.2	12.5	**37.5**	**38.8**	10
	F	4.8	**24.3**	**33.3**	**33.3**	4.2
Having the necessary time and being sufficiently rested to engage in the desired level of sexual activity.	M	10	15	**37.5**	**28.8**	8.8
	F	4.7	**27.4**	**41.6**	21.6	4.7
NO Carrying out more than one task at a time, due to the number of jobs to be done (work-related tasks, family responsibilities, domestic chores, etc.).	M	2.5	**35**	**32.5**	25	5
	F	8.9	**36.5**	**32.8**	18.2	3.6
Sleeping a minimum of eight consecutive hours a day.	M	20	**35**	**20**	12.5	12.5
	F	13.8	**30.2**	**24.9**	19.6	11.6
Taking an afternoon nap.* (χ2=8.06; df= 3; p= 0.045); M>F	**M**	**42.5**	20	25	12.5	0
	F	**37.8**	**36.7**	17.6	6.9	1.1

Table 4. Percentages of responses of TUPS by gender.

Following these appear the items "having meals in peace and quiet" and "have enough time to engage in sexual relations", for which frequency response decreases in women, compared to the previous items. As reflected in Table 4, when comparing by gender significant differences were found for the item "Having meals in peace and quiet, without rushing" (χ2=7.4; df= 2; p= 0.025), with women responding with greater frequency with *Almost Never* or *Never* (29.1%) in comparison to men who had a 13.7% response rate; on the other hand the response *Always* or *Almost always*, was higher among men (M=48.8%; F=37.6%).

The last section of Table 4 shows the three items that have *Almost never*, *Sometimes* or *Never* as the most common answers. Those items were: "not carrying out more than one task at a time, due to the number of jobs to be done…", "sleeping a minimum of eight consecutive hours a day" and "taking a nap in the afternoon". In the last item significant differences were found between men and women ($\chi 2=8.06$; df= 3; p= 0.045) if we compare the response patterns, the most frequent category for both was *Never*; however, men showed an increased frequency compared to women in the responses *Sometimes* and *Almost Always*.

In summary we can say that the response pattern is similar between men and women in most TUPS items, however, there are three items ("regular bowel movements", "having meals in peace and quiet, without rushing" and "taking an afternoon nap") in which we observed significant gender differences and in all cases we see that women perceive themselves as having a faster pace of life or less time than men.

3.2 Relationships between quality of life dimensions and gender

Additive scales were generated in order to calculate scores for the QoLQ as a whole and for each of its four component dimensions.

Table 5 and Figure 1 show the descriptive statistics and confidence intervals (95%) of the mean difference between genders in those quality of life dimensions. Looking at Figure 1 and the confidence intervals in relation to the differences between men and women (see Table 5), we see that gender significantly affects two of the quality of life dimensions, i.e.

	Male			**Female**				
	Mean	**SD**	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**N**	**CI (95%)dif**	
S.S.[1]	4.15	0.58	60	4.23	0.52	132	-0.24;0.09	M=F (p=0.360)
G.S.	3.79	0.59	77	3.69	0.53	174	-0.05;0.25	M=F (p=0.195)
P.P.W.	3.91	0.63	78	3.67	0.60	179	0.08; 0.41	**M>F (p=0.003)**
A.W.O.F.	3.48	0.67	76	3.27	0.62	180	0.04;0.38	**M>F (p=0.016)**

SS: Social support; GS: General satisfaction; PPW: Physical/psychological wellbeing; AWOF: Absence of excessive workload/free time.
[1]*The size of the sample in the Social support subscale is smaller due to the fact that some items of this subscale can only be answered by people with a partner.*

Table 5. Descriptive statistics and confidence intervals (95%) of the mean difference between gender (Male/ Female) in quality of life dimensions.

"Physical and Psychological wellbeing (PPW)" (t=2.97; df=255; p=0.003) and "Absence of excessive workload (AWOF) " (t=2.43; df=254; p=0.016). In both cases, men show better quality of life than women, as they perceive they have better physical and psychological wellbeing and that they are less overwhelmed. The effect size is higher in the subscale P.P.W. CI 95% (0.08; 0.41). In relation to the scores for "Social support (SS)" y "General satisfaction (GS)", we can conclude that gender is not a significant influence.

It can be interpreted, therefore, that gender influences individuals' perception of quality of life, so that men would score higher than women on the subscales that assess physical health, psychological wellbeing and absence of excessive workload.

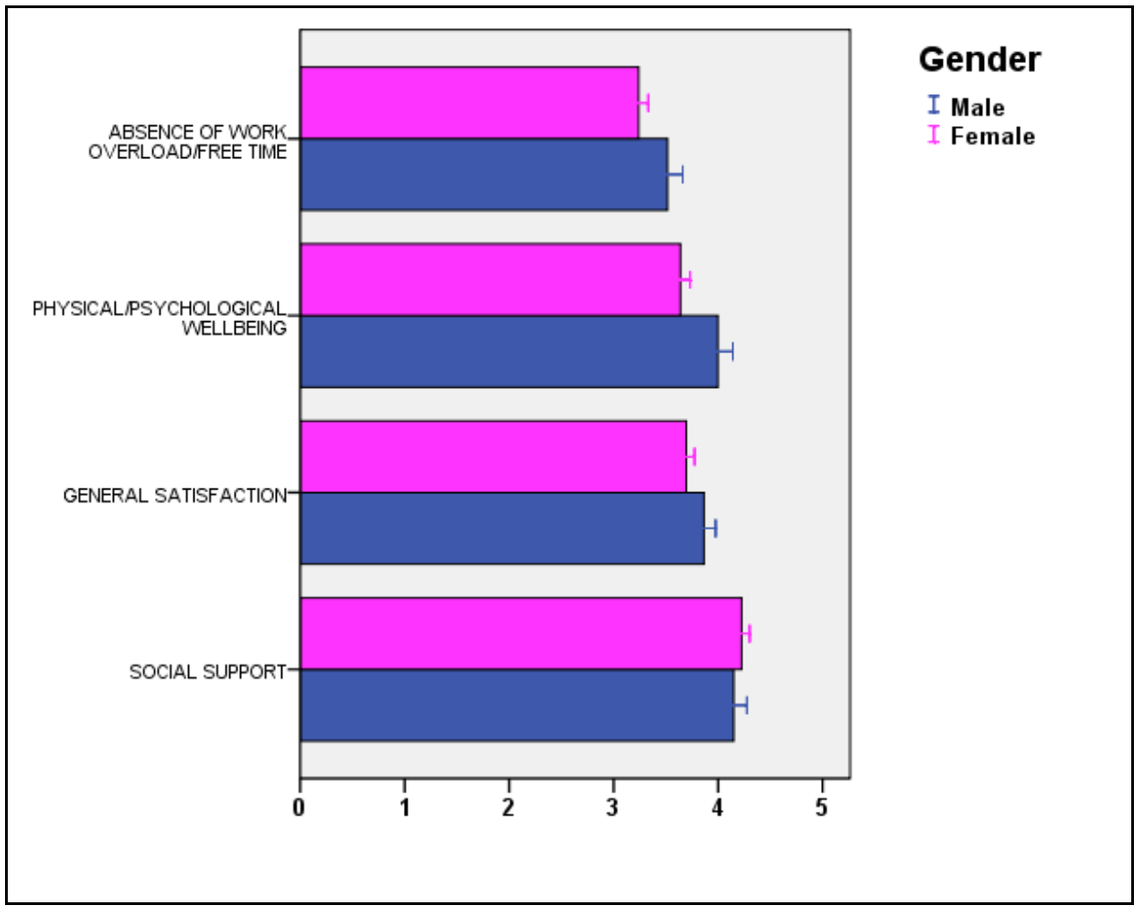

Fig. 1. Means and confidence intervals (95%) of total scores and quality of life dimensions according to gender (Male/ Female).

3.3 Relationships between time usage perception and quality of life by gender

The overall score for the TUPS was calculated in the same way as the QoLQ, i.e. each subject's mean score was generated on the basis of the items' direct scores. Higher scores were obtained from subjects who perceived they managed time well in their everyday life, so that they felt less pressured by time (Szollos, 2009).

The aim of this analysis is to explore the relationships between time perception and quality of life. We decided to split the sample and to concentrate on the items below or above the 25th or 75th percentile of the TUPS scores. It was thus possible to compare the mean quality of life scores of these two extreme groups.

Table 6 and Figure 2 summarize the descriptive statistics, means and confidence intervals (95%) of quality of life dimensions according to *higher/lower* (below P_{25}/ above P_{75}) TUPS scores, segmented by gender.

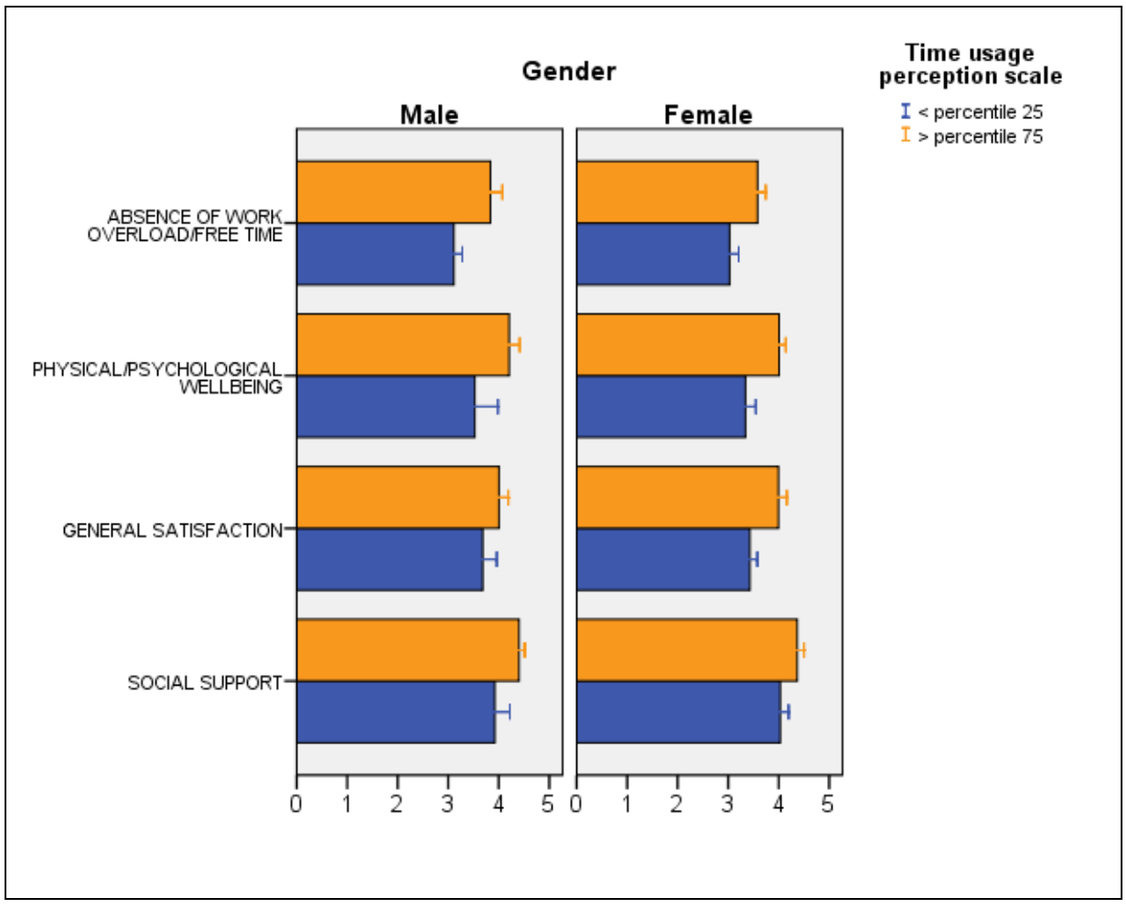

Fig. 2. Means and confidence intervals (95%) of quality of life dimensions according to *higher/lower* (below P_{25}/ above P_{75}) in time usage perception scale by gender.

When interpreting the data plotted in Figure 2 and the confidence intervals of the differences observed between the extreme groups, it can be seen that the variable of time use perception significantly affects quality of life across three dimensions, for both men and women. The relationship is in the expected direction, with higher perceived quality of life in those with a slower pace of life.

		Below P25			**Above P75**				
		Mean	**SD**	**N**	**Mean**	**SD**	**N**	**CI (95%)dif**	
S.S. [1]	M	3.92	0.57	10	4.40	0.31	24	-0.78; -0.17	**P75>P25** (p=0.004)
	F	4.10	0.63	42	4.37	0.46	31	-0.58; -0.05	**P75>P25** (p=0.022)
G.S.	M	3.75	0.65	15	3.97	0.53	24	-0.60; 0.17	P75=P25 (p=0.251)
	F	4.44	0.56	50	3.9	0.55	44	-0.70; -0.25	**P75>P25** (p<0.001)
P.P.W.	M	3.57	0.73	15	4.1	0.61	25	-0.98; -0.11	**P75>P25** (p=0.014)
	F	3.34	0.72	55	3.99	0.40	45	-0.84; -0.42	**P75>P25** (p<0.001)
A.W.O.F.	M	3.12	0.50	15	3.83	0.65	23	-1.11; -0.30	**P75>P25** (p=0.001)
	F	3.01	0.65	54	3.62	0.54	45	-0.85; -0.37	**P75>P25** (p<0.001)

SS: Social support; GS: General satisfaction; PPW: Physical/psychological wellbeing; AWOF: Absence of excessive workload/free time.

[1]*The size of the sample in the Social support subscale is smaller due to the fact that some items of this subscale can only be answered by people with a partner*.

Table 6. Descriptive statistics, means and confidence intervals (95%) of quality of life dimensions according to *higher/lower* (below P_{25}/ above P_{75}) in time usage perception scale by gender.

We can also see that the influence of the variable time usage perception tends to be more severe in men than in women on the subscales "Absence of excessive workload/free time (AWOF)" (CI 95%dif in M: -1.11; -0.30; CI 95%dif in F: -0.85; -0.37) ; "Physical/psychological wellbeing (PPW) " (CI 95%dif in M: -0.98; -0.11; CI 95%dif in F: 0.84; -0.42) and "Social support (SS)" (CI 95%dif in M: -0.78; -0.17; CI 95%dif in F: -0.58; -0.05). On the other hand, it tends to have a greater influence on women than men for the subscale "General satisfaction (GS)" (CI 95%dif in M:-0.60; 0.17; CI 95%dif in F: -0.70; -0.25). These data allow us to talk about trends, but the confidence intervals of the differences between the extreme groups overlap when comparing gender, and therefore the differences between men and women reflected in Figure 2 are not statistically significant.

In summary, participants with a slower pace of life, regardless of gender, have statistically higher scores in terms of both the overall quality of life score, and the questionnaire's four dimensions. What this means is that the differences in participants' time usage perception are relevant for the perception of their quality of life, irrespective of gender.

4. Discussion

Returning to the aims of our work, our analysis aims to meet three objectives. First, to describe the use of time in the different daily activities of a group of technology users; second, to analyze possible relations between these time habits and the way in which subjects perceive their quality of life; and third, to explore (if any) some gender differences.

Regarding time usage, men and women reported not allocating enough time to basic behaviours such as meals, sleep or sex. Moreover, carrying out more than one task at the same time appeared as being one of the characteristics of our participants' lifestyles. All of our participants were technology users as they worked/studied (or both) with technology and they played various roles in their day-to-day life. This is coherent with what we expected from individuals living in the Network society, where using available time efficiently and productively is crucial (Hassan, 2010; Parkins & Craig, 2006). People are constantly looking for better ways to manage their time. Application of economic utility-maximizing behaviours to that purpose, such as using technology to enhance time allocation, hasn't resulted in a solution because people still feel their pace of life is too fast.

On the topic of perceived quality of life, our results correspond with the national surveys conducted in Catalonia, Spain (De la Fuente, 2007; Generalitat de Catalunya, 2006), showing high levels of quality of life among our participants, together with a fast pace of life in line with the existing literature (i.e. Warren, 2010; Mattingly & Sayer, 2006). This is an initially paradoxical co-occurrence. Nevertheless, it can be understood by using cultural explanations such as assuming that feeling pressured for time is the expected adaptive personal answer to the Network society's pace of life. It can be also understood by considering that doing more –and at the same time feeling pressured for managing this increased level of simultaneous activity- could be an index of personal empowerment and high living standards and comfort. All of these explanations can be applied to the

characteristics of our group of participants: successful people with enough time for work and personal interests and who have medium-high annual incomes.

Beyond cultural explanations, subjective dimensions can also be used to explain this phenomenon. In particular, analyzing the satisfaction that people derive from everyday activities is worthwhile. It has been shown to be a useful explanatory variable in understanding gender differences both in quality of life and with respect to feeling rushed. With regards to this, satisfaction seems to be a mediator variable for women (Szollos, 2009; Mattingly & Sayer, 2006; Warren, 2010).

Furthermore, and as expected, there is a relation between quality of life and the perception of being hurried, so that having a slower pace of life is related with higher rates of quality of life. To explore further this relationship, and as suggested in the literature (Szollos, 2009), we compared quality of life rates of those participants in our study with the fastest pace of life with those with the slowest. This resulted in evidence for the crucial effect of pace of life on individuals' quality of life, even beyond gender differences, which we discuss below.

Our third aim focuses on trying to identify some gender differences concerning pace of life and quality of life. According to our results, slight gender differences in regard to time habits showed that women perceived a faster pace of life or of having less time than men. We can also note that women –even when perceiving a high quality of life- have an overall lower quality of life than men, particularly regarding their perceptions of having less physical and psychological wellbeing and feeling more overwhelmed. Nevertheless, these differences are, beyond gender, tied to the perception of time usage. This highlights the strong effect that pace of life has on people's quality of life. These results are consistent with the literature, showing a persistent inequality in gendered time-use patterns together with gendered experiences of time pressure and gendered rates of quality of life (i.e. Mattingly & Sayer, 2006).

Among our results, we can point to the significance of those aspects related to feeling overwhelmed as a result of doing several tasks at the same time. Thus, perception of overload is crucial and has been identified as one of the basic factors responsible for stress and deteriorations in individuals' health (physical and psychological) in today's society (Friedman et al., 1996; Gleick, 1999; Roxburgh, 2004). Nevertheless, as Warren points out (Warren, 2010), feeling overwhelmed and having a fast pace of life due to multitasking is not so simple, as it requires us to consider not only a time wealth dimension (having enough time), but a chronologic (time at the right time), sovereignty (control), and a synchronization (time that fits) dimensions. To this end, it is clearly vital to broaden research beyond chronometric dimensions to better understand time management issues.

To conclude, our analysis can be deepened and broadened by examining subjective assessments of time usages and by considering the extent to which cultural factors are also contributing to heightened perceptions of time scarcity. Those ideas will be picked up in the concluding remarks.

5. Conclusions

Despite reporting that they have an overall high quality of life, men and women feel they have a fast pace of life, and are thus overloaded. Therefore, dealing with feelings of time pressure could improve their quality of life.

To reach this goal, first it is crucial to better define and choose the time-usage issues to be studied in order to increase our understanding of the subjective aspects related to management of personal time. Advancing towards more *ecological momentary assessments* (Stone et al., 2007) and going beyond behavioural surveys of standard time -diaries and self-retrospective reports- more meaningful data are required. Thus, gathering data about mental states, feelings & cognitions (Szollos, 2009) gathered at random times and with a life course perspective (Mattingly & Sayer, 2006), could help us better understand the relationships between pace of life, feelings of being pressured and quality of life. By first understanding how people live and feel about their routines, it then becomes possible to intervene more efficiently to improve their management of personal time and quality of life.

Moreover, as women appear to have a faster pace of life than men, together with higher workload and lower perceptions of wellbeing, the primary focus should be on them. Thus, efforts need to be addressed to lower their pace of life by working on their feelings and cognitions about time usage. It can also be useful to promote periods in which there are no interferences or combination among different activities or responsibilities, even in free time. This could improve the management of their personal time together with their quality of life.

6. Acknowledgment

This work was financially supported by the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science (I+D 2003-03403) and (PSI2008-01124) projects of the Plan Nacional of I+D.

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Time Management
Edited by Prof. Todor Stoilov

ISBN 978-953-51-0335-6
Hard cover, 106 pages
Publisher InTech
Published online 23, March, 2012
Published in print edition March, 2012

The time management is worthy goal of many human activities. It concerns variety problems related to goals definition, assessment of available resources, control of management policies, scheduling of decisions. This book is an attempt to illustrate the decision making process in time management for different success stories, which can be used as reference models by the interested audience.

How to reference
In order to correctly reference this scholarly work, feel free to copy and paste the following:

Mercè Boixadós Anglès, Eulàlia Hernández-Encuentra and Modesta Pousada Fernández (2012). Personal Time-Management and Quality of Life in the Network Society, Time Management, Prof. Todor Stoilov (Ed.), ISBN: 978-953-51-0335-6, InTech, Available from: http://www.intechopen.com/books/time-management/personal-time-management-and-quality-of-life-in-the-network-society

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