

Exploring the Role of Gender in Promoting Work from Anywhere in New Normal

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Introduction

The organizations and related work places design many aspects of our lives: work, health, development, social activities, and spiritual and mental well-being. Through the process of continuous interaction, mutual influences and discussions they convert an individual's personal beliefs into values for others, individual's aspirations into team agendas, personal thoughts into group's outcomes, and private plans, processes and ideas into collective consciousness.

The extant literature (Campbell, Coff and Kryscynski, 2012) confirms the impact of organizations on an individual. The researchers agree that organization (culture, capability, workplace, process) has four times the impact of individual (talent, competence, workforce, people) on business results (Ulrich, 2015). Thus, while the individuals may become champions, but teams win championship.

Based on the increasing evidence of the prominence of the organization over an individual, the organization structure has been evolving. Presently, the trend is towards boundaryless workspaces known by nomenclatures like, amoeba, and ambidextrous.

Acceptance of adaptive spaces by the organization provides them the requisite flexibility. Human capital has been documented as a critical source of the organization's competitive advantage (Sarr, Ganco, & Campbell, 2018). In order to develop and motivate the organization's human resources studying the role of nonpecuniary incentives is crucial (Kryscynski, 2011). One such nonpecuniary incentive is allowing to work remotely i.e wherein the employee need not be physically present within the physical boundaries of the organization and is allowed to work outside the office.

Literature Review:

Remote working has been studied under various names (teleworking, telecommuting, working from home), with no generally accepted definitions (Duxbury, Higgins & Neufeld 1998; Sullivan 2012), terms are frequently used differently and interchangeably (Depickere 1999). The studies have focused on achieving a better work life balance (Perry-Smith & Blum 2000), organizational performance through reduced absenteeism (Stavrou 2005) and gender-equality since women are more likely to WFH than men (Lindorff 2011).

Yet, the concept of WFA (work from Anywhere) has been studied only recently. WFA is fundamentally different than the much- studied WFH (Choudhury et al. 2021). Herein, the worker can remain employed and work at a firm without needing to live within commuting distance of the physical office space. Thus, there is geographical flexibility and the independence of choosing the physical work environment by the employee. This geographic decoupling of work and location has its unique set of challenges and opportunities. We believe that WFA offers opportunity in the form of: financial, by living at the location with a lower cost of living (Mas and Moretti, 2009), and psychological. However, WFA may increase firm coordination costs. Altering the spatial distribution of employees changes the means of coordination, limiting the ability of workers to rely on tacit coordination (Srikanth & Puranam, 2014), and potentially leading to increased costs of knowledge sharing (Cramton, 2001). Another potential cost is social and professional isolation (Golden, Veiga, & Dino, 2008). The later especially gains prominence in the new 'normal'.

Bloom and Roberts (2015) found evidence that shifting employees from in-office to WFH led to a 13 percent employee productivity increase, due in part to due to fewer breaks and sick days. WFA affords employees all of the benefits of a WFH policy, and awards the worker *geographic flexibility*.

Research Proposition

For the purpose of this study based on gender role theory (Gutek *et al* 1991), we propose that women will prefer the WFA alternative against WFH.

Whereas, *ceteris paribus*, men will not accord preference to WFH or WFA.

Methodology

The mixed-methodology is being followed. The authors proposed to have equal mix of the genders as the respondents.

Implications:

The study contributes to the gender gap literature by identifying work-from-anywhere practices as a novel factor that can affect gender gaps in work-related outcomes.

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