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WORK TACTICS IN HYBRID WORK ENVIRONMENT: A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Work-from-home and hybrid work situations have been around for a while and have become the new norm within many organizations. Although researchers and practitioners have focused on work-life balance and productivity aspects of hybrid work, there is a growing interest to understand the differences in gender preferences around hybrid work. Using the Boundary Theory and the conceptualization of Improvisation, we examine the boundary work tactics (behavioral, temporal, physical and communicative) and improvisation work patterns of men, women and LGBTQ+ community members. The data for this research is collected from three information intensive companies based in the US. Our study contributes to both theory and practice.

Keywords

Hybrid work, boundary work tactics, improvisation, gender

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

In recent years, there has been a resurgence in interest to understand how various individuals traverse the hybrid work environments, particularly as exacerbated during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the practice of working-from-home and telework has been around for some time now, researchers and practitioners have largely studied it in the context of increasing productivity (Tremblay, 2002) and work-life balance (Leung and Zhang, 2017). However, there is a limited discussion on the differences in gender perspectives around hybrid work.

Work-life balance is a much sought-after state of being which is of immense interest to researchers, organizations and individuals alike. Although prior scholars have focused on understanding the different factors and characteristics of work-life balance, the mixed results of prior research call for further investigation on the work tactics that could help hybrid workers balance their work and family demands. Additionally, the differences between men, women and LGBTQ+ community members in terms of using these work tactics under uncertainty pressures has not received much attention. Using the Boundary Theory and the concept of Improvisation, we investigate two main research questions: 1) what are the different preferences between men, women and LGBTQ+ for work tactics in a hybrid environment? and 2) how do men, women, and LGBTQ+ traverse the hybrid work space? Our proposed conceptual framework builds on the interactions between boundary work tactics and improvisational work patterns. The study uses Walsham’s (1993) interpretive approach to examine the preferences of the gender groups in three information intensive companies based in the US.

Our research contributes to both theory and practice. The two main theoretical contribution are: first, we contribute to the literature on hybrid work and work-life balance by showing that there are significant differences between preferences of men, women and LGBTQ+ regarding how they structure their work tactics. Second, we contribute to the literature by suggesting that men, women and LGBTQ+ improvise around uncertainty pressures to define their work tactics. Practically, this research can help in policy formulation for hybrid work scenarios based on gender preferences to improve productivity and performance.

REFERENCES
