ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE NEW WAY OF WORKING - A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

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ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE NEW WAY OF WORKING -
A LONGITUDINAL STUDY

Completed Research

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Abstract

Information and communication technologies are rapidly transforming the work environment, providing flexibility of when and where to work. The New Way of Working (NWOW) is a relatively new phenomenon that provides the context for these developments. In this case research three reviews were performed over a one-year timeframe, evaluating the attitude of managers and employees towards the New Way of Working. Special attention was given to the relationship between personality traits (the ‘Big Five’) and satisfaction with NWOW.

The case results show that, in general, managers and employees are and remain positive towards NWOW, though the actual effects of the implementation of NWOW on work and the work environment are often limited or hard to quantify. The personality survey shows there is a significant positive relationship between conscientiousness, being (self)disciplined, and satisfaction with NWOW. There is a negative relationship for neuroticism; sensitive employees. This leads to the conclusion that the New Way of Working is not beneficial to all. Where (self)disciplined employees may thrive well in the new work environment, high neuroticism (sensitive) persons may have problems to adapt to the newly gained freedom.

Keywords: The New Way of Working, NWOW, Personality traits, Big Five, Work satisfaction.
1 Theoretical background

1.1 Introduction

The New Way of Working (NWOW) is a relatively new phenomenon that has a growing interest in organizations. NWOW focuses on the optimization of work and the work environment in order to improve employee productivity and job satisfaction (Bijl, 2011). Especially in the Netherlands and the Nordic countries, the spread and impact of NWOW is increasing (PWC, 2011, 2013; Meulen, 2014), but also in other countries there is an increased interest. As NWOW is an emerging phenomenon, scientific research on the effects of the concepts of NWOW on organizations and individuals is still scarce. This case research focuses on the attitude of managers and employees towards NWOW in time; before and after the implementation of NWOW. Special attention is given to the satisfaction with NWOW in relation to personality traits. These traits were researched based on the ‘Big Five’ personality traits: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism.

The following paragraphs describe the background of NWOW and the possible relationship between personality traits and the satisfaction with NWOW. The research method is explained in chapter 2. Chapter 3 discusses the research results. This leads to a discussion of results and a number of conclusions in chapter 4.

1.2 What is the New Way of Working?

There is not yet a single definition for the New Way of Working in the literature. Bijl (2011) defines NWOW as ‘a vision for making work more effective, efficient, pleasurable and valuable for both the organization and the individual. This is achieved by placing people center-stage and, within limits, giving them the space and freedom to determine how they work, where they work, when they work, what they work with and with whom they work. The New Way of Working aims to touch people’s intrinsic motivation and entice them into giving their best in their work.’ Baane et al. (2010) add: ‘The work principles of The New Way of Working give maximal freedom to employees, on the basis of mutual trust. This trust is expressed in the freedom that employees have for carrying out their work in ways, times and locations that suit them best. The employees are evaluated based on their personal or on the team contribution to the result, rather than their presence. Thus the employees can engage in a working relationship that suits them best in terms of ambition, skills, lifestyle or stage of life’. The NWOW has three distinct pillars or dimensions: Bricks, Bytes and Behavior. (1) Bricks, the physical dimension, addresses all aspects of the physical work environment, (2) Bytes, the technological dimension, that addresses all aspects concerning the use and application of ICT, and (3) Behavior, the personal dimension, which addresses all aspects concerning the manager-employee relationship and the way the employee works and experiences his or her work.

The New Way of Working is often considered to be similar to Teleworking but it is more than that; it embodies the redesign of offices to accommodate task-based workplaces and a result oriented way of working in which freedom and trust play an important role. The concepts of the New Way of Working are not new as such. The ideas of mobile working, desk sharing, video conferencing and paperless, open offices originate from the 1970’s or before. Meel (2011) gives an overview of these early ideas, but concludes that they were by no means common or widely adopted at that time. Possible explanations may be that the technologies at the time were not yet able to provide the speed, power and ease of use that people need for mobile and flexible work styles, and the corporate mindset. It seems that managers were simply not yet ready for these ideas, not willing to provide employees with the high levels of autonomy that come with mobile and flexible ways of working. Some industries and companies were more progressive than others, but in general office organizations were command-and-control structures, characterized by hierarchy and rigidity, and little freedom for individual employees (Meel,
2011). Meel warns not to be too quick by denouncing new ways of working as recycled ideas from the 1970s.

As research in the field of NWOW is still scarce, in order to get an impression of effects on employees, we need to look at previous research on the effects of flexible working and Teleworking. Gajendran & Harrison (2007) noted that employees experience more freedom and autonomy in a flexible work environment with Teleworking. This work flexibility also facilitates a better work-life balance (Steenbergen & Ellemers, 2009), and reduces costs for the employer as less office space is needed (Workman et al., 2003). Golden and Veiga (2005) found a reversed U-shaped effect: there is a certain optimum in the level of Teleworking and work satisfaction. Konradt et al. (2003) found that employees teleworking more than 50% of the workweek experienced different stressors and motivations relative to office-centered and non-teleworking employees working at least 50% of their workdays in a central location. Gajendran & Harrison (2007) found that those who telework more than 50% have more negative relationships with co-workers than lower-intensity teleworkers. There seems to be a tipping point at 50%, but personality factors could also play a role.

The aim of this paper is to gain more insight in how the attitude of workers, confronted with the implementation of the New Way of Working, changes over time. Have they become more positive or negative, and what changes have occurred in their daily work and work environment? Based on the before mentioned aspects of NWOW, the expectation is that by NWOW they are able to work anywhere and anytime, be more flexible in their work location, and choose task-based workplaces. Also, they could experience more freedom in their work, a more coaching management, and a better work-life balance. Personality traits may influence the way people perceive and deal with changes. For this reason, in this research additional study was performed on the relationship between personality traits and the satisfaction with the New Way of Working.

1.3 Personality traits and the New Way of Working

Besides the attitude towards NWOW, the satisfaction with NWOW in relation to personality traits will be researched. In Psychology, the research on the behavior of people lead to a model of personality traits, known as the Five Factor Model (FFM), or the ‘Big Five’ (Tuples & Christal, 1961; Digman, 1990; Barrick & Mount, 1991). The five factors are labelled as: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism, referred to by the acronym OCEAN. The Person-Environment (P-E) Fit Theory of Davis et al. (1964) states that a fit between the personal traits and the (work) environment leads to a higher degree of satisfaction. In the following section the five personality traits will shortly be discussed in the light of NWOW; i.e. in the light of Teleworking, flexible working, and open offices literature, as there is no NWOW literature available on this subject.

• Openness (to experience; curious vs. cautious). Openness can be defined as creativity, in search for innovation and intellectual stimulation (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 2003). High openness people can be perceived as unfocused, low openness people are often pragmatic, sometimes closed-minded. Gainey & Clenney (2006) report a positive relationship between openness and the attitude towards flextime and Teleworking.

• Conscientiousness (organized vs. careless). Conscientious people can be described as disciplined, organized, efficient, goal oriented and precise (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Low conscientious people are flexible and spontaneous, but can be perceived as sloppy and unreliable. Haddon & Lewis (1994) stated that being able to work routine-based, independent and disciplined, and being able to divide the available time independently, are important characteristics for successful Teleworking.

• Extraversion (outgoing vs. reserved). People that score high on extraversion can be described as assertive and socially engaged (Barrick & Mount, 1991). Gainey & Clenney (2006) found a positive relationship between extraversion and flextime, in which employees can determine on their own work location. Extravert people prefer an environment with much stimulation and social interaction, as they seem to be energized by the interaction with others (Eysenck, 1967, Daniëls et al.,
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2000). McCusker (2002) found that satisfaction with open offices have a positive correlation to extraversion. NWOW promotes activity-based work places in an open-office environment.

- Agreeableness (friendly vs. detached). Agreeable people can be described as cooperative, friendly, helpful, honest and reliable (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1991). Clark et al. (2012) found a positive relation between agreeableness and the attitude towards Teleworking. People that score high on agreeableness were found to deliver good results, when working with a lot of interpersonal interactions (Mount et al., 1998).

- Neuroticism: (sensitive vs. confident). Neuroticism is associated with emotional instability, fear and uncertainty (Goldberg, 1990). Persons that score high on neuroticism are according to McCrae & Costa (2003) more often frightened and worried, more often experience feelings of depression, and they are sensitive to changing conditions. Clark et al. (2012) therefore argue that persons that score high on neuroticism prefer to work separately, thus experiencing less factors that may influence their mood. Kwapil et al. (2002) found that people that score high on neuroticism feel less connected to their colleagues. Clark et al. (2012) found a significant negative relationship between neuroticism and the attitude towards Teleworking.

2 Research method

2.1 Case design

In this research the attitude towards the New Way of Working before and after the implementation was surveyed. For this research a case study was performed in an independent 250 employee Infrastructure Division of a 3,500 employee Dutch construction company. In total 3 reviews were conducted in a timeframe of one year. Figure 1 gives an schematic overview of the case design (Yin, 2009), figure 2 of the case execution.

The first review was performed 2 months before the implementation of NWOW started. For this review all 250 employees of the division were approached (by e-mail), and asked to participate. The review consisted of two parts. The first part was a survey with a small number (5) of general questions on office location, working hours and attitude towards NWOW. The second part was (the request to fill in) the NWOW Analysis Monitor, with 77 questions; this analysis tool is explained in the next paragraph. In total 94 persons filled in the general survey; 14 managers and 80 employees. The NWOW Analysis Monitor was filled in by 66 respondents; 11 managers and 55 employees.

The New Way of Working was introduced and implemented floor by floor. This is a common approach by many organizations; since the new work environment fulfils such an important part of the implementation of New Way of Working, it often coincides with ‘opening’ of the new office space. This meant that in this implementation, it depended on the departments that were housed on ‘redesigned floor’, when they would be confronted with the New Way of Working.
Two months after the first floor was ‘opened’, the approximately 85 employees of the departments housed on that floor were addressed for the second review. This review also consisted of two parts. The first part (A) was a questionnaire (of 36 questions) on several topics concerning the NWOW implementation, such as the work environment, use of IT tools, and the manager-employee relationship. The question on the attitude towards NWOW was repeated, but the participants were also asked to indicate if they had become more positive or negative in their attitude towards NWOW. In total 36 people participated; 6 managers and 30 employees. For the second part (B) the participants were asked if they were also willing to participate in a personality test. This test consisted of a 15-question survey on personality traits from the validated personality test of Emmerik et al. (2004), based on the Mowen Personality Scale (Mowen, 2000).

followed by a short interview, meant to give the respondent the opportunity to give additional feedback. All 36 respondents agreed to participate in the personality test. The survey on personality traits was executed with the support of Dries et al. (2013), and will be discussed in the results section. For the content of the survey on the implementation of NWOW and the personality traits, see Part A and B of the survey on: https://nl.surveymonkey.com/r/NWOW_Evaluation.

Half a year later, the renovation of the second floor was finished. Again, two months after the opening, approximately 85 people of the departments housed on the second floor, were approached to participate in the third review. This review consisted only of the before mentioned 36-question survey (Part A). In total 59 people responded; 10 managers and 49 employees. This means that in total 95 people (16 managers, 79 employees) participated in (Part A of) the After-N WOW-implementation survey. All results were analyzed and presented to the NWOW implementation team and division management.

2.2 The NWOW Analysis Monitor

More and more organizations embrace the principles of the New Way of Working. When performing research on the implementation of NWOW, the question becomes relevant: to what extent have organizations adopted the principles of NWOW, and what are their future expectations? Even when the phenomenon of NWOW is not known as such (for studies outside the Netherlands and Scandinavian countries), one could discuss that, any organization that focusses on implementing certain aspects of new ways of working, may have already reached a certain level of NWOW adoption.

In order to be able to measure the perceived current level of NWOW adoption, and the future desired level of NWOW implementation, a so called NWOW Analysis Monitor was developed (de Kok et al., 2014). The monitor gives an indication of the perceived level of NWOW adoption on 13 themes that are clustered on the before mentioned three dimensions: Brick, Bytes and Behavior. These themes are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bricks - Physical dimension</th>
<th>Bytes - Technological dimension</th>
<th>Behavior - Personal dimension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flexible work location</td>
<td>Devices</td>
<td>Result-oriented management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workplace design</td>
<td>Information availability</td>
<td>Result-oriented working</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability &amp; mobility</td>
<td>Knowledge availability</td>
<td>Trust &amp; autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Satisfaction &amp; work-life balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Culture &amp; motivation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Dimensions and themes of the NWOW Analysis Monitor

Within each theme, topics are defined that can be rated by the respondent on a 4-point Likert scale. Using weight factors, the results are calculated and can be presented at the level of themes and dimensions. The NWOW Analysis Monitor is able to present results for the current and future situation, including a gap analysis, and also details for managers and employees. For the monitor and list of topics, see the web link: https://nl.surveymonkey.com/s/NWOW_Analysis_Monitor. In this research the Analysis Monitor was used to get an indication of the perceived level of NWOW adoption and future expectations for the New Way of Working.
3 Research results

3.1 Attitude towards NWOW before implementation

Two months before the implementation of NWOW started, 14 managers and 80 employees participated in a review of their attitude towards NWOW. The results were positive; over 75% of the respondents had a moderately, positive or very positive attitude towards the New Way of Working.

![Figure 3 & 4 Attitude towards NWOW (Absolute and Relative)](image)

Figures 3 and 4 show the attitude of managers and employees towards NWOW. Relatively, managers are a bit more negative than employees, though the majority tends to be positive or very positive. Of the employees 2% are very negative. In their vision (comments) NWOW will only be implemented as a cost-saving measure, not to support the employees in reaching more work satisfaction.

The respondents were also asked how many days per week they usually spent at the (head)office.

![Figure 5 Attitude towards NWOW and days at the office](image)

Figure 5 clearly shows that the most negative responses came from those who spent 4 to 5 days a week at the office. The reason for these negative responses can partly be lead back to the fear of losing one’s own desk in the new environment. As the new flexible office has a ‘clean desk policy’, a number of respondents commented they did not see the need to clean out their desk by the end of the day, when returning to the same desk in the morning. This is a commonly heard comment, also in other implementations of NWOW. For this reason Microsoft Netherlands chose to exclude departments with a full-time desk function, such as Personnel and IT Support, out of the open flex office concept.
3.2 Results of the NWOW Analysis Monitor

The second part of the ‘Before-N WOW’ survey consisted of the NWOW Analysis Monitor. In total 66 respondents (11 managers and 55 employees) filled in the 77-questionnaire survey. Figures 6 and 7 show the result on the level of themes, for the managers and employees, for the current and future (desired) situation.

![Figure 6 and 7 Results NWOW Analysis monitor for managers and employees](image)

The figures 6 and 7 show a reasonable consistent image for the managers in comparison with the employees for the current and future situation. The managers have a bigger gap (than the employees) for the theme Knowledge availability, the employees have a bigger gap for Workplace design. Overall, employees are more positive on the current situation, in particular on Trust & autonomy and Culture & motivation. Overall, managers have a slightly higher expectation for the future situation, in particular for Communication. The top-10 gap analyses of the most important topics (lists not shown here) for managers and employees, have 7 matching topics on both lists. This indicates that the expectations on the lower level (topic) also have much similarities for managers and employees.

3.3 Attitude towards NWOW after implementation

Two months after the openings of the first and second floor, the personnel housed on those floors was again addressed, and asked to participate in an After-N WOW-implementation survey.

![Figure 8 & 9 Attitude towards NWOW before and after implementation, and details for managers and employees](image)
Figure 8 shows the attitude towards NWOW before the implementation (i.e. the combination of managers and employees as shown in figure 4), and the combined figures of floor 1 and 2 after the implementation. The figure shows that the positive group has remained the same size, but the neutral and very negative group have diminished at the cost of more negative respondents. Figure 9 shows the details for the managers and employees before and after the implementation. These are again split by floor. The figure shows that managers have become a bit more positive, but employees have become more negative. The split per floor shows that both for managers and employees the attitude towards NWOW of the respondents from the second floor is more negative than from the first floor.

Though the Before and After groups are almost the same size (94 and 95), it should be noted that the individual respondents to the three reviews are different, though with overlaps. In the review of the first floor 13 of 36 (36%) of the respondents also participated in the Before-N WOW survey, for the second floor this was 33 of 59 (56%). To obtain a better comparison of the change in attitude before and after the implementation, the participants were all asked if there was a change in their attitude: had they become more positive or negative towards NWOW? This result is shown figures 10 and 11.

![Figure 10](image1.png)  ![Figure 11](image2.png)

Figure 10 gives a more accurate picture of the before and after situation: overall the attitude of the participants towards NWOW has become a bit more positive after the implementation; i.e. the number of the people that have become more positive is bigger than the number of those who have become more negative. Apparently the Before-N WOW group from the total division (figure 3 and 4) contained relatively more positive respondents, not housed on the first or second floor. Figure 11 shows that relatively managers have become more positive than employees.

As observed before at figure 9, the figures 10 and 11 clearly show that the attitude towards NWOW on the second floor is less positive than on the first floor. This is partly due to the fact that the number of respondents that were already negative upfront, and that remained negative, is bigger on the second floor. It can also partly be explained from the fact that – due to budget cuts – the second floor was re-designed with a smaller budget than the first floor. For instance: on the first floor a trendy ‘Work café’ was designed, but to cut back on the costs, the second floor only had a small kitchenette. There was less money spent on decoration and design-furniture, giving the floor a more ‘dull’ appearance. Also there were more flex-desks in the same area than on the first floor, leading to respondents commenting on a ‘crowded feeling’ with more rumor and disturbances.

### 3.4 Evaluation of the implementation of NWOW

In the reviews on both floors the participants were asked to agree or disagree on a number of aspects concerning the implementation of NWOW. The questions and results are clustered in three sections, based on the before-mentioned three dimensions: (1) Bricks, the physical dimension; the work environment, (2) Bytes, the technological dimension; the use of ICT, and (3) Behavior, the personal di-
mension; the manager-employee relationship and work-life balance. Because of the small differences between the responses of the first and second floor, the response has been combined for both floors.

Figure 12 Evaluation of the NWOW implementation - Bricks

Figure 12 shows the result for the physical dimension, Bricks. The figure shows that about 75% of the respondents partly or fully agree they are satisfied with their new work environment, and can perform their work well in it. Overall the office is however not used more activity-based: only 35% indicate to have made some changes in that area. Over 50% choose their work location based on where the colleagues of their team or department are seated. Also, 85% of the respondents stay on the same workplace all day. The implementation seems to be largely missing out on one the aspects of NWOW; a more flexible and task-based use of the workspace.

Figure 13 Evaluation of the NWOW implementation - Bytes

Figure 13 shows the response in relation to the Information Technology in use, Bytes. The ability to work anyplace anytime has clearly been achieved; 85% of the respondents partly or fully agree on that. Over 60% of the respondents say they work more paper-less, though almost 30% comment they often still work from printed documents. Almost 50% of the respondents partly or fully agree they share more data and ideas in the new environment, the other half is neutral or sees no changes. Most respondents partly disagree or disagree they use document tools such as Sharepoint more than before. This indicates that, though to a certain extent more ideas are shared (in tacit form), the capturing of data and ideas (in explicit form) still needs attention.
Variables | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
1. Satisfaction with NWOW | - | | | | | | | |
2. Openness | .06 | - | | | | | | |
3. Conscientiousness | .43** | .20 | - | | | | | |
4. Extraversion | -.28 | -.04 | -.34* | - | | | | 
5. Agreeableness | .16 | .53** | .38* | .11 | - | | | |
6. Neuroticism | -.22 | .09 | -.78 | -.18 | -.08 | - | | |
7. Colleague-focused choice | .32 | .04 | .46** | -.20 | .10 | .11 | - | |
8. Task-focused choice | .67** | .24 | .42** | -.30 | .24 | -.07 | .37* | -

Table 2 Correlation between factors that influence the satisfaction with NWOW

Table 2 shows (in column 1) that besides the task-focused choice - there is only one significant positive relationship (0.43, p<0.05) for personality traits and the satisfaction with NWOW; that is the relationship between conscientiousness and satisfaction with NWOW. Though in the Introduction re-
searches indicated a number of (significant) positive relationships, this research can only credit Had- 
don & Lewis (1994) for their observation that being able to work independent and disciplined (consci- 
entious) is an important characteristic for successful Teleworking, in this case satisfaction with the 
New Way of Working. The positive relationship between openness and flex-time and Teleworking, 
that Gainey & Clenney (2006) found, is small (0.06) and insignificant in this research. Also, the positive 
relationship between agreeableness and the attitude towards Teleworking, that Clark et al. (2012) 
found, is positive (0.16) but not significant in this research. The positive relationship with extraversion 
and satisfaction with open offices, that McCusker (2002) found, is not positive, but negative (-0.28), in 
this research.

This case does however endorse the findings of Clark et al. (2012), who found a significant negative 
relationship between neuroticism, or (highly) sensitive employees, and the attitude towards Telework-
ing, though the relationship in this case is not significant (-0.22). Apparently, the New Way of Work-
ing is not beneficial for all. The research of Slijkhuis (2012) on work structures and the effectiveness 
of NWOW, supports this finding; she found that persons with a high Personal Need for Structure 
(High PNS), do not perform well in the environment of the New Way of Working.

Finally, the choice for a colleague-focused or task-focused work location both have a positive rela-
tionship with the satisfaction with NWOW, though only the task-focused choice has a significant positive 
relationship (0.67, p<0.01). This is an interesting finding in the light of the previous result (for Bricks, 
figure 12), where most respondents say they base the choice of their work-location on the location of 
colleagues (from the same team or department), rather than task-based. The choice to work where col-
leagues are housed, may lead to more interaction, but also more distraction. This research indicates 
that, in the end, this choice may not lead to a higher satisfaction with NWOW. For conscientiousness, 
both choices for colleague-focused or task-focused work locations have a significant positive rela-
tionship to the satisfaction with NWOW. This leads to the conclusion that, being conscientious or (self)- 
disciplined, leads to a higher satisfaction with the New Way of Working, either when working among 
colleagues or on a task-based work location.

4 Discussion and conclusions

4.1 Discussion
Performing case research on the satisfaction of the implementation of the New Way of Working al-
ways has its limits. In this case the company (had to) cut back on costs during NWOW implementa-
tion, probably leading to more negative results for the second floor review. Also additional research 
after yet another year was denied, making it impossible to draw conclusions on the satisfaction with 
the New Way of Working on an even longer time span. A larger population could have possibly led to 
statistically more significant relationships for the personality traits, such as found in literature, but be-
cause of the time-constraints for the participants, part B (the personality test) had to be omitted in the 
survey of the second floor. It would have also been better to have more than one case company, but 
finding organizations that are willing to participate in such time-consuming, and thereby costly, turned 
out to be challenging. Time is not only a limiting factor; people also forget what they previously said or 
answered. An analysis of the answers to the question ‘How did your attitude towards the New Way of 
Working change?’ showed that a number of the respondents, that participated in the ‘Before-N WOW’ 
review, were probably incorrect in their later responses. E.g. some answered they became more pos i-
tive, while previously they were already very positive. This may be yet another reason for the already 
discussed differences between the figures 8 and 10. The results of the analysis on the relationships be-
tween the personal traits and satisfaction with NWOW only partly supports previous research findings. 
Partly this ‘missing significance’ can be lead back to the size of the review, as a larger population of-
ten leads to more significant relationships. Another factor that may explain the differences is the gen-
der of the review group; 30 were male, only 4 female, 2 wished to remain anonymous. In Telework 
research relatively more people that work from home and part-time are women, who try to combine 
work and personal life.
4.2 Conclusions

The New Way of Working is impacting the way we work; it impacts satisfaction concerning our work and our work-life balance. To investigate the attitude towards NWOW, before and after the implementation, and the relationship with personality traits and work satisfaction, a case study was designed, showing the following results:

- In general, managers and employees have a positive attitude towards the implementation of the New Way of Working, and they remain positive after the implementation. Respondents that have a negative attitude towards the implementation of NWOW mostly work full-time at the office. The fear of losing their own desk in the new flexible open office environment could contribute to this negative attitude.

- Though about 75% of the respondents indicate they can perform their work well in the new environment, only 35% choose their work location based on the task they need to perform. Over 50% choose their work location based on the location of their colleagues, and 85% do not change their work location during the day. In this case, more task-based use of the workspace, one of the aspects of NWOW, has only partly been accomplished.

- It is positive that 85% of the respondents can work from any location, and over 60% work more paperless. Although the implementation of NWOW seems to have improved the sharing of ideas and data (in tacit form) to a certain extent, more use and storage (in explicit form) in a document management system has however not been accomplished.

- Though almost 50% of the respondents partly or fully agree they are working in a more flexible way, this is not supported by a more coaching role of management. The work has not become more result-oriented, and an improvement of work-life balance is only achieved by about one-third of the respondents. This shows that the manager-employee relationship, and a better work-life balance, has received insufficient attention in this implementation of NWOW.

- The study on the relationship between personality traits and the satisfaction with the New Way of Working shows only a significant positive relationship for conscientiousness. This indicates that (only) being (self)-disciplined leads to a higher satisfaction with NWOW.

- The choice for a colleague-focused or task-focused work location both have a positive relationship with the satisfaction with NWOW; the task-focused choice has a significant positive relationship. For conscientiousness both relationships are significant positive, leading to the conclusion that being conscientious, or (self)-disciplined, leads to a higher satisfaction with NWOW, either when working among colleagues or at a task-based work location.

The way in which organizations are able to cope with the changes that the implementation of the New Way of Working brings to their operation, will - to a certain extent - determine the satisfaction of their employees, and their future success. The contribution of this research to the (limited) literature in the field of NWOW is that the case shows that, in general, managers and employees are and remain positive towards NWOW. It appears to be however hard, to score well on all aspects of NWOW, limiting the actual effects of the implementation of NWOW. The personality test shows that NWOW may not be beneficial to all employees. In particular high neuroticism (sensitive) employees may struggle in the new work environment. Where high conscientiousness (self-disciplined) employees seem to thrive well, these employees may suffer under the newly-gained freedom. This puts an extra load on management, having to recognize those in need of more guidelines and structure, while at the same time coaching those who are able to better perform in the new environment.

Future research could include aspects such as improved worker productivity in relation to the implementation of NWOW, and the contribution of NWOW to organizational profitability. This research is only a first step, providing only a first glance of the future that will emerge when new ways of working are implemented throughout organizations worldwide. There will always be more information to explore and describe. The results of this study should therefore be used with care, as more future research on more cases should support these first findings.
References


