

Leadership Excellence and Gender in Organizations

Differences in men and women's response to availability pressures: A structured equation model on the influence of perceived availability pressures on employees' boundary control, enacted boundary management strategy and work-home conflict


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Abstract (219 words)

Differences in Men and Women's Responses to Availability Pressures:

A Structured Equation Model on the Influence of Perceived Availability Pressures on Employees' Boundary Control, Enacted Boundary Management Strategy and Work-Home Conflict

This cross-sectional study among 163 knowledge workers in a case organization that has implemented workplace flexibility to support employees' work-life balance aims to contribute to the boundary literature by focusing on the moderating role of gender in the relationships between perceived work-related availability pressures, boundary control, enacted work nonwork segmentation (versus integration), and work-home conflict. Employing structured equation modelling and multiple group analysis, men's boundary control was shown to be vulnerable to colleagues' availability norms, whereas women's was not, possibly reflecting gender differences in role-identity salience. However, both genders were self-motivated to integrate work and nonwork roles more when this was in line with their supervisors' availability norms and colleagues' availability behaviors. Moreover, boundary control was positively associated with segmentation, which, in turn, was negatively associated with work-home conflict. Our findings suggest that traditional gender roles still play a role in individuals' interpretations of and responses to availability pressures. However, both genders' vulnerability to the (role modeling) norms and behaviors of colleagues may also reflect changes in contemporary gender and leadership relationships. This has implications for future research and HR policies in terms of the need to incorporate the roles of and support from supervisors, colleagues and teams as these are all important (f)actors when it comes to balancing workplace flexibility and health in gender-equal and sustainable employment relationships.

Keywords: availability culture; boundary control; boundary management; colleagues; gender; leadership; structural equation modelling; work-home conflict.