

Association for Information Systems

AIS Electronic Library (AISeL)

Rising like a Phoenix: Emerging from the
Pandemic and Reshaping Human Endeavors
with Digital Technologies ICIS 2023

Digital Technologies and the Future of Work

Dec 11th, 12:00 AM

Understanding Digital Nomadism as an Employer Branding Signal

Julian Marx

The University of Melbourne, j.marx@unimelb.edu.au

Marie Langer

Paderborn University, marie.langer@uni-paderborn.de

Milad Mirbabaie

Paderborn University, milad.mirbabaie@uni-bamberg.de

Follow this and additional works at: <https://aisel.aisnet.org/icis2023>

Recommended Citation

Marx, Julian; Langer, Marie; and Mirbabaie, Milad, "Understanding Digital Nomadism as an Employer Branding Signal" (2023). *Rising like a Phoenix: Emerging from the Pandemic and Reshaping Human Endeavors with Digital Technologies ICIS 2023*. 18.

<https://aisel.aisnet.org/icis2023/techandfow/techandfow/18>

This material is brought to you by the International Conference on Information Systems (ICIS) at AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). It has been accepted for inclusion in *Rising like a Phoenix: Emerging from the Pandemic and Reshaping Human Endeavors with Digital Technologies ICIS 2023* by an authorized administrator of AIS Electronic Library (AISeL). For more information, please contact elibrary@aisnet.org.

Understanding Digital Nomadism as an Employer Branding Signal

Short Paper

Julian Marx

The University of Melbourne
Melbourne, Australia
j.marx@unimelb.edu.au

Marie Langer

Paderborn University
Paderborn, Germany
marie.langer@upb.de

Milad Mirbabaie

University of Bamberg
Bamberg, Germany
milad.mirbabaie@uni-bamberg.de

Abstract

The advancement of digital technologies and the wider acceptance of remote work have led to heightened expectations among knowledge workers. Nowadays, many individuals make career decisions based on the level of flexibility that is offered by employers. This paper explores to what extent the label of ‘digital nomadism’ is used and perceived as an employer branding signal in the context of corporate work. Preliminary findings from qualitative interviews with corporate employees that engage in nomadic work suggest that promoting digital nomadism as an employer is perceived as an attractive signal. However, the data also shows that employers are reluctant to send this signal to potential employees but rather use it internally to retain talent within the organization. The paper proposes a framework that informs signaling theory and puts forth a notion of digital nomadism as an employer branding signal for talent attraction and retention in organizations.

Keywords: Digital nomadism, employer branding, signaling theory, knowledge work

Introduction

Globalization, ongoing technological advancements, and post-pandemic reorientation have led to the popularization of new ways of working (Richter & Richter, 2020). In the corporate sector, remote work arrangements have gained unprecedented prominence. While in 2019 only 5.7% of employees worked from home, this number increased to 17.9% in 2022 (Census, 2022). Furthermore, the advent of Gen-Y and Gen-Z professionals combined with experiences of the pandemic precedent that alternative working models are viable led to shifting expectations within the workforce. Recent developments in flexible work arrangements (Ajzen & Taskin, 2021), 4-day workweeks (Veal, 2023), or regular ‘workations’ (Nash et al., 2018) are but three examples that show how expectations toward employers have changed. Ignoring those expectations can lead to a phenomenon called ‘brain drain’, that is, a substantial outflow of talented individuals, which could not only affect single organizations but also nation states (Docquier & Rapoport, 2012). Previously, unmet expectations in the knowledge work sector, among other things, have led to an increased interest in digital nomadism, which combines travel and work while leveraging the capabilities of information technology (Schlagwein, 2018b; Wang et al., 2020). Whereas digital nomadism has long been “romanticized” as a subversive worldview and lifestyle, it is now being “corporatized” (Bonneau et al., 2023). This means that increasing numbers of corporate employees adopt the idea of digital nomadism to organize their life and work (Marx et al., 2023).

Alongside the risk of ‘brain drain’, which is connected to employee retention, employers also constantly face challenges in acquiring talent. The ‘war for talent’ due to demographic changes in Western societies has been proclaimed for more than a decade (Schaarschmidt et al., 2021). The risk of ‘brain drain’, the ‘war for talent’, and the rising expectations among the workforce emphasize the importance of *strategic employer branding* for organizations to remain competitive (Zacher et al., 2017). In this regard, the concept of employer branding refers to labor market rather than product market branding and encompasses all actions that contribute to attracting and retaining employees (Sivertzen et al., 2013). Prevailing research on this matter suggests that employees and job candidates interpret information related to human resources as signals about the characteristics of the organization as an employer (Taj, 2016).

Previous research suggests that signaling the availability of flexible work arrangements such as working-from-home can increase the perceived attractiveness of employers in the knowledge work sector (Onken-Menke et al., 2018). However, we do not know to what extent this holds true for hyperflexible arrangements involving digital nomadism. Most literature suggests that digital nomads are typically repelled by corporate structures (Kong et al., 2019), as digital nomadism—in addition to hyperflexible work arrangements—also involves an ideological component (Aroles et al., 2020). Yet we observe increasing cases of ‘corporate nomadism’, that is, organizational employees emulating digital nomadism (Marx et al., 2023). Consequently, the objective of this paper is to understand the field of tension that emerges for strategic employer branding to address rising expectations among the workforce, that is, combining qualities of digital nomadism and corporate work.

Background

The Corporatization of Digital Nomadism

Digital nomadism is a phenomenon that emerged in the early 2000s and embraces hyperflexible work and lifestyle choices of (mostly Western) knowledge workers. By leveraging information technology and geo-arbitrage, those professionals combine frequent moves with digital work (Richter & Richter, 2020; Schlagwein, 2018a). The definition of digital nomadism so far has included professions with a high level of institutional autonomy, such as entrepreneurs, freelancers, or gig workers (Hensellek & Puchala, 2021; Wang et al., 2020). However, an increasing number of organizations implement working models that resemble digital nomadism (Aroles et al., 2020). Those arrangements allow employees to travel open-end or in a dictated period while receiving benefits of being a permanent employee. As the high level of institutionalization of this practice deviates from the original idea of digital nomadism, it has also been referred to as ‘corporate nomadism’ (Fernández-Aráoz, 2022; Marx et al., 2023). As digital nomadism is tied to information technology use from remote locations, it is an opportunity for those organizational employees who typically engage in knowledge work.

Since corporate nomadism provides employees with the freedom to travel *and* a social safety net, it constitutes an attractive work arrangement for knowledge workers. Digital nomadism is typically associated with a high quality of life, since income sources correspond to Western standards while living expenses can be reduced in destinations such as Thailand, Indonesia, or Columbia (Schlagwein, 2018a). Corporations can also benefit from adopting digital nomadism economically, for example, through cost savings as a result of reducing office space (Frick & Marx, 2021; Marx et al., 2021) or higher employee productivity through remote work (Richter & Richter, 2020). Reservations about opening corporate practice to digital nomadism are grounded in the fear of losing managerial control and the resistance to cultural change (Frick & Marx, 2021). Since remote work has been widely adopted in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, the gap between corporate work and digital nomadism has diminished.

Despite an approximation of the two sides, an important issue for both corporate management and (nomadic) employees remains the identification with the organization. Whereas work identities typically emerge within the boundaries of an organization, research on digital nomadism has shown that individuals may as well construct alternative work identities outside of those boundaries (Prester et al., 2019). However, with increasing corporatization of digital nomadism, its image of a subversive subculture begins to fade (Aroles et al., 2020). Bonneau et al. (2023), for example, report instances of dis-identification of digital nomads with prevailing digital nomad narratives promoted online.

Digital Nomadism as an Employer Branding Signal

To attract and retain talent, many corporations strategically initiate employer branding campaigns. Ambler and Barrow (1996) define employer branding as “*the package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company*” (p.186). Employer branding can also enhance the corporate image and reputation (Sivertzen et al., 2013). The communication of employee benefits has often been viewed through the process of *signaling* employer attractiveness. This terminology goes back to Spence (1973), who describes how job applicants provide certain signals from which the employer can infer and decide whether to hire the applicant or not. Thereafter, signaling theory has been applied many times to understand how the willingness to work for a company can be influenced by information about the employer during recruitment activities (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005). Typically, applicants accept a job offer based on the information they have received that closely matches their needs and desires (Connelly et al., 2011). Therefore, corporations aim to reduce the information asymmetry between the actual job characteristics and the applicant’s expectations (Karasek & Bryant, 2012). According to Stiglitz (2002), information asymmetry occurs when “*different people know different things*” (p.470). A strategy to remedy this problem is to present convincing benefits that other potential employers are unable to offer or can only offer at high costs.

Furthermore, a signal must be relevant, observable, and alterable to be credible (Spence, 1973). Hence, offering the possibility to employees to engage in digital nomadism can be a credible signal as not every corporation can offer it to their employees while it may also be contractually recorded. For example, some corporations require employees to work core hours, which complicates traveling across time zones. If a nomadic employee is unavailable during core working hours due to time differences, the employee would not be able to do their work. This is an example for an increase in what is referred to as *signaling costs* (Connelly et al., 2011).

Previous literature on digital nomadism has introduced several theoretical framings of the phenomenon concerning economy, culture, and technology (Wang et al., 2018). Viewing digital nomadism through a signaling lens adds nuance primarily to the literature on economic framings but also touches upon technology (e.g., hardware provided by an employer) and culture (e.g., organizational culture). The relevance of signaling theory to understand the promotion of employee benefits in the digital era remains high (Gorbatov et al., 2018). While research on signaling theory explains the influence of many predictors on applicant attraction outcomes (Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005), other work has identified certain job characteristics to be influential for the retention of employees. For example, characteristics such as task significance, feedback, or autonomy influence employee motivation, performance, and job satisfaction (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Autonomy is not just a prime characteristic of digital nomadism (Prester et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2020) but also connected to job satisfaction and employee retention (Ives et al., 1980).

Research Design

Data Collection

To gain insights into this emerging phenomenon, we conducted 14 qualitative interviews with corporate employees (I1-I14) that have engaged in nomadic work in a corporate context (Myers & Newman, 2007). We defined four criteria, of which each potential respondent had to meet at least two. The criteria are: (1) they are not required to work on-site at any time, (2) they can work from a country of their choice, (3) they work for a company whose policy allows them to work from abroad for more than three weeks per year, (4) they are able to work from different countries with no restrictions imposed by the company/collaborate with teams and colleagues from different countries. We recruited interviewees through keyword searches on posts and profiles on professional social media such as LinkedIn. The interviews took place via video conference tools and the conversations were recorded and transcribed after permission was granted. The recordings were deleted after the analysis. We prepared a guideline that was structured into four parts. However, we remained open to deviate from the guideline if the conversation developed elsewhere.

In the first part, we asked general questions about the employing corporation and the professional role of the employee. By asking these general questions, we obtained an overview of the respondents and identified potential limitations. Since each context may largely influence how those individuals engage in nomadic work, we asked questions such as: “*did you work for another organization which offered to work from*

anywhere to some extent before?". In the second part, our questions addressed the possibilities and limitations for employees to work nomadically and focused on perceived autonomy. Moreover, we explored potential boundaries of offering nomadic work to employees: *"to what extent are you able to organize your own work and the way you work?"*. Part three consisted of questions aiming at the perception of employer branding signals. We asked how the interviewees became aware of their job offer to identify to what extent certain signals were successful and how important they were to them: *"When you were seeking employment, did you specifically look for opportunities to engage in nomadic work?"*. In the fourth part, we focused on signals that contribute to job satisfaction and employee retention. By doing so, we aimed to identify factors that influence the commitment of the interviewees to their employer: *"what do you value most about your job?"* By asking about the identification with the corporation, we intended to reveal insights about the success of employer signals and employer branding strategies that involved digital nomadism: *"does the option to work from anywhere increase your willingness to stay at your job?"*

The sample we draw on in this short paper consists of 6 female and 8 male interviewees with a mean age of 32.8 years. Their countries of origin ranged from Mexico, Ireland, to Germany and Spain. The interviewees were employees of different organizations and ranged in their positions within the organizations from lower to middle, to higher management. The mean interview length was 33 minutes.

Data Analysis

We conducted our data analysis with software-supported coding techniques based. All interviews were recorded via MS Teams or screen recording and transcribed with the assistance of a software tool named *descript*. The interviews were conducted in English, German, and Spanish. The translation to English was supported by *DeepL* and the final transcripts were imported into *MAXQDA* as a qualitative data analysis tool. The interview data were analyzed using techniques of the grounded theory methodology (Gioia et al., 2013). First, we performed open coding to identify all relevant and interesting ideas in the data. Open codes were then compared and rationalized, which allowed us to eliminate similar or duplicate codes. As a result, 30 open codes were identified. Subsequently, further analysis grouped the open codes into higher-level codes which were then converted into 1st order concepts. When appropriate, we used certain 'constructs-in-use' referring to employer branding or signaling to inform our codes and/or themes. The data analysis process was iterative which enabled a revision of open codes and their aggregation into 1st order concepts. Eventually, 1st order concepts were grouped into 2nd order themes which then resulted in two aggregated theoretical dimensions. So far, the data structure we obtained is partitioned in the two aggregated dimensions *signaling for employee attraction* and *signaling for employee retention* (see Table 1).

1st order concepts	2nd order themes	Aggregate dimension
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The work outcome is controlled but not the process No micromanaging by anyone in the organization Employers expect employees to do their job <p><i>e.g., "I can manage everything myself. Accordingly, I only have the basic task of looking after the leads that you get and closing them." (I1)</i></p>	Attractiveness	Signaling for employee attraction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking companies that are hiring remotely through social media Using social media for the application process <p><i>e.g., "They had a jobs page on their website. The website was, I think the main place they went and then to their Instagram. And then I looked at GlassDoor and on LinkedIn I had a bit of a scroll through to see who the current team was." (I11)</i></p>	Perception	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of laptop, headphones, and other remote work tools <p><i>e.g., "It has become a very conscious instrument for employer branding, especially for the agency sector: Here's your laptop, here's your headphone, just be available." (I2)</i></p>	Digital infrastructure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive working atmosphere in the teams 	Culture	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good team cohesion through virtual and local events <p><i>“Apart from that, we also have a bot in our channel that builds weekly matches, especially for our ‘digital nomads’. This means that you are thrown together once a week, so to speak, and you meet with them once digitally to exchange ideas.” (I1)</i></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employees do not want to lose flexibility once they gained it • Social safety net has great personal significance for employees <p>e.g., <i>“For employee retention, [the possibility to work remotely is] a very, very important point. Especially once you’ve done it, once you’ve been allowed to do it, then you’re a bit hooked and want to do it again and again.” (I8)</i></p>	Commitment	Signaling for employee retention
Table 1. Data Structure		

Preliminary Findings

Digital Nomadism as a Signal for Employee Attraction

Contrary to our initial expectations, most of our interviewees reported that their employers do not actively promote the opportunity to engage in nomadic work in their job ads. In most companies, the idea of working from anywhere is based on trust, which is why it is not listed in job advertisements in advance. Therefore, the opportunity to engage in nomadic work has evolved and was not introduced overnight. Since the concept of digital nomadism is not as widely spread as other work arrangements, job ads contain terms such as ‘home office’ or ‘remote work’.

“We don't say it out loud, it's a lived work culture. It's not in any employee briefing, hey we allow digital nomadism for a certain period, but of course, it also depends on someone's performance, and of course, it's also a trust issue. An employee where I know 100% that this will work and I don't have to be in contact with him somehow, go for it, I don't have to be in contact [...]. I don't want to have to make this decision as an employer, I want the employee to make a good decision. And that's why it's not something that we push proactively. But in the application process, we do. We say that home office is possible. It is also possible to work from other countries because we also notice that there is a demand for it, and it is also something that we look for.” (I2)

Moreover, our findings suggest that our interviewees respond well to employer branding activities that signal high levels of trust and autonomy, flexibility, and digital competencies. Our data suggests that the expectations within the workforce are changing and so does the willingness of employers to align their employer branding activities with those expectations.

“I think with the generation that we have nowadays, we are all kind of nomads. And a job is no longer that you start working when you're 18 years old and work until you retire. It doesn't work like that anymore, which means you change employers super often anyway. In order to retain people in the long term, employers have to offer something like this, otherwise, people will leave. From my point of view, this increases the attractiveness by 100%, really in every respect. I think it's just like home office. If employers don't offer home office, they're already out of the game with the current shortage of skilled workers. These are the things you have to offer them.” (I9)

Especially in the acquisition process, the technology through which employer branding signals are transmitted is crucial. Our findings suggest that both employees and employers use social media to find job offers or employees that fit the idea of digital nomadism. Employers use social media to attract employees, for example by providing videos, in which current employees are interviewed, or to enable a fast application process. Employees are searching for respective companies that are hiring remotely through social media.

“I was open to jobs that are in this city or jobs that are remote or flexible. And then I made a list of companies that I know are hiring remotely. Most of that is usually through LinkedIn. When you see the job search and hit remote, then you can see what companies are hiring.” (I6)

The technological equipment that allows for nomadic work can also be an employer branding signal within the acquisition process. To be able to offer nomadic work, it is necessary to provide equipment, such as a laptop, a smartphone, and headphones. This enables the employees to achieve a certain level of availability regardless of the organization's physical location. If employees work as digital nomads in a foreign country but manage their work from a single location, employers often cover the cost of specific equipment needed for nomad work.

Digital Nomadism as a Signal for Employee Retention

After the hiring stage, it is essential for employers to continue to send signals to retain employees in the company. Our findings suggest that, with respect to digital nomadism, signals that express the importance of organizational culture, autonomous decision-making, well-being, and digital competencies are received as quite positive. The latter includes access to digital technologies, which allow employees to keep in touch with their team members or colleagues (e.g., through virtual meetings) and to complete their work regardless of hardware and location. Especially for digital nomads, who depend on being able to work from anywhere at any time, connectivity must always be guaranteed. Many interviewees reported that, once digital nomad arrangements were introduced to corporate work, a relaxed work environment arises, which strengthened the organizational culture. Employees value those benefits so much that they develop a more positive attitude towards the company and their jobs. This positive work environment is supported by social initiatives that are delivered both on-site and virtually.

"We have meetings on-site. That just means, with us it's a "Beerting". That is once a month a "get together", where you then go to celebrate together or do an activity together, Christmas market for example. Apart from that, we also have a bot in our channel that builds weekly matches, especially for our digital nomads. This means that you are thrown together once a week, so to speak, and you meet with them digitally to exchange ideas." (I1)

Moreover, since not many corporations (publicly) offer the option to work nomadically, our interviewees are convinced that those that do have a competitive advantage. Most of them would choose their next employer based on the extent to which they can maintain a nomadic lifestyle and receive the benefits of corporate employment. This also includes the decision to stay with a particular company.

"I think if I didn't have the opportunity, I would have thought about quitting my job several times now so that I could travel again. It is just a big priority for me. I really like doing it, and I'm noticing that right now when I'm abroad. Sure, the environment is more difficult, I'd say, to work in, but I'm still extremely productive, just because I also somehow fully appreciate the moment in which I have such an opportunity. I also somehow want to prove to myself that it works and that it is good." (I7)

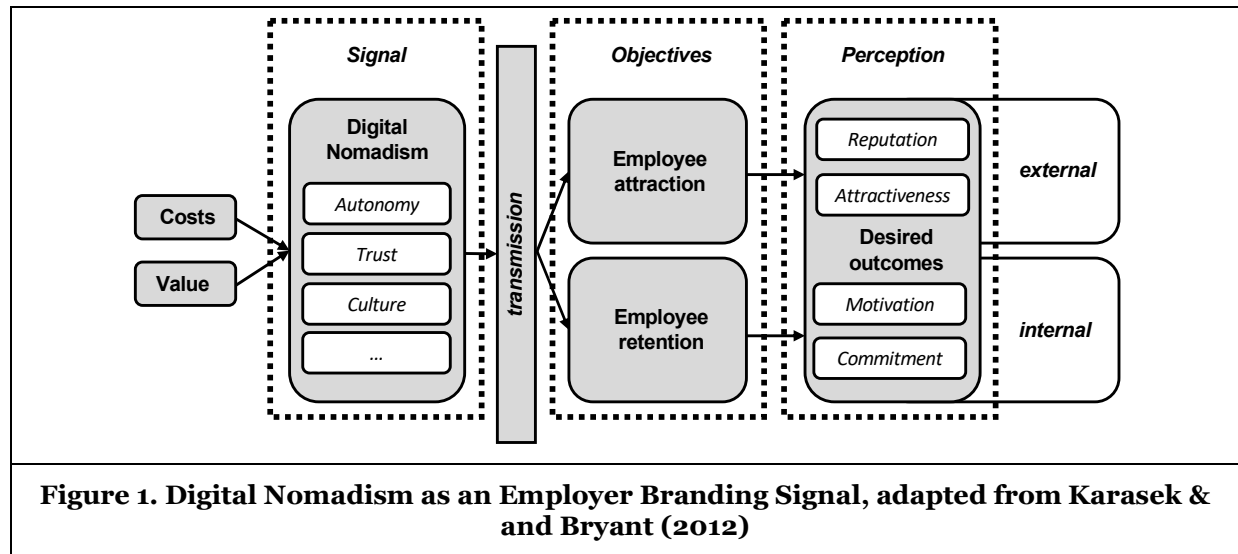
Our data also reveals that a digital nomad policy can go beyond the mere luxury of providing just another benefit to a demanding workforce. Nomadic work can also mean being able to work anywhere not out of desire but necessity. One interviewee expressed her gratitude and appreciation for her employer to enable her to work while she had to find refuge from war. In this situation, not having the structures in place to offer nomadic work could have very negatively impacted her livelihood.

"I came to Germany after I left Ukraine when the war started. It was very hectic. I had to find a place where I wanted to stay. That's basically why I travel. Usually, you inform the HR manager if you would like to go to another country. In my company, we have the infrastructure to work anywhere so I have employment in any new country. But it is my responsibility to make sure that I am being compliant and not jeopardizing the residency taxation, for example." (I14)

Discussion

The preliminary findings of this interview study indicate that employees who were offered to work nomadically perceive various signals that might lead to a change in their attitude towards the employer. Potential theoretical constructs that relate to those signals include, but are not limited to, trust, autonomy, organizational culture, and work-life balance. As nomadic work presupposes high levels of trust within an employer-employee relationship (Frick & Marx, 2021), employees feel empowered to make their own decisions. As a result, they benefit from a large degree of perceived autonomy, which allows them to develop both personally and professionally (Prester et al., 2019). However, employees must adapt to this level of

autonomy and engage in self-management practices. Moreover, we found signals related to work-life balance and well-being to be perceived as positive in the context of nomadic work. Nomadic employees can mostly adapt their workplace and hours according to personal needs (Marx et al., 2023). The continuing employment for one corporation can give employees a sense of security as they are able to continue their jobs even if they (must) spent time abroad. The perceived signals generally lead to a positive attitude toward the employer. Our findings emphasize the need to send signals about nomadic work on the right transmission “frequency”. At least for talent attraction, this frequency was ideally met by using social media since this was the venue where both candidates and employers could get into an exchange organically. Potential theoretical relationships between signal, objectives, and perception are shown in Figure 1.



Our interviewees reported to be less motivated by monetary incentives as opposed to freedom and autonomy (Richter & Richter, 2020). This finding might hint at different motivators that drive corporate nomads in comparison to digital nomads and is not self-explanatory given the strong focus on economic incentives in digital nomad literature (Schlagwein, 2018a). Whereas the latter phenomenon has been found to involve strong economic motivators such as geo arbitrage or the absence of salary cap in self-employed work, corporate nomads sign up for a fixed but consistent salary. Moreover, our data suggests that the fear of corporate management to end up with employees that are less committed to a single employer (Frick & Marx, 2021) is not justified. In fact, the opposite might be the case. What is displayed in Figure 1 is the result of abductively theorizing our preliminary coding with what we know from signaling theory (Karasek & Bryant, 2012; Spence, 1973) and about job characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). Our theoretical model extends the literature by transferring an existing signaling framework (Karasek & Bryant, 2012) to the context of corporate nomadism. First, we add that organizations can borrow digital nomad values concerning autonomy, trust, or culture to signal attractiveness. Second, the model allows a differentiation of employee attraction and retention, which we found to be to different channels of signaling in the context of corporate nomadism. Third, we suggest that digital nomadism as an internal signal (i.e., for the purpose of employee retention) triggers perceptions about motivation and commitment, whereas external signaling (i.e., for the purpose of attracting talent) aims at outcomes relating to reputation and attractiveness. Our findings imply that the relationship between organizations and nomadic employees affords different levels of signaling costs, value, and information asymmetry than the traditional context of corporate work in which signaling theory was developed.

In addition to that, our study contributes to the debate on digital nomadism within the IS literature. Exploring the theoretical mechanisms behind signaling certain employer and job characteristics with the digital nomadism label will allow us to better understand how employer-employee relationships evolve in hyperflexible corporate work arrangements (Kong et al., 2019). Moreover, our study adds to previously defined theoretical framings of digital nomadism (Wang et al., 2018). Here, we show that the demarcation between economic, cultural, and technological framings is not as crisp as suggested. For example, although the motivation to use digital nomadism as a signal might be primarily economic, transmitting those signals

is governed by technology (e.g., social media). Furthermore, although sending this signal can be assessed as economically beneficial, it might be rejected by management for cultural reasons (Frick & Marx, 2021).

From a practical point of view, this study stresses the point that promoting digital nomadism in a corporate environment can lead to competitive advantage through attracting talent for firms that have low signaling costs and no loss in value from incorporating nomadic work. Our data shows that, at least in our sample, the signal of promoting nomadic corporate work is perceived as attractive. However, the data also confirms that employers are reluctant to use nomadic work externally as a signal to potential employees. In the internal domain this signal is more likely to occur. A surprising finding was that in extreme situations, being capable of offering nomadic work can support employees in overcoming local threats to their welfare.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The purpose of this study was to better understand how digital nomadism can constitute an employer branding signal in the context of corporate work. Preliminary findings suggest that offering nomadic work is perceived as attractive. At the same time, the signal is more likely to be communicated to retain rather than to attract talent. The study is limited by the bias of the sample towards IT-related industries. However, it promises valuable points of reference to contribute to existing theory.

This paper comes with some limitations we want to address in the next steps. First, the design of the interview guide may have steered the interviewees in a certain direction with regards to job satisfaction. Another limitation of our work is the recruitment via LinkedIn, as this could possibly limit the representativeness of the study. To further develop this study, we aim to recruit a company with a digital nomad policy and an active employer branding campaign to serve as case study for more grounded theory development. Since the data presented in this short paper focuses on the perception of signals by nomadic employees, the next logical step will be to include an employer perspective empirically. Moreover, we intend to delve deeper into potential negative side effects of using digital nomadism as an employer branding signal. This could include discouragement or discrimination of certain groups to apply for jobs. Future research might also incorporate quantitative metrics such as the number of job applications or survey data to investigate how signaling nomadic work affect the perception of the firm.

References

- Ajzen, M., & Taskin, L. (2021). The re-regulation of working communities and relationships in the context of flexwork: A spacing identity approach. *Information and Organization*, 31(4), 1-15.
- Ambler, T., & Barrow, S. (1996). The employer brand. *Journal of Brand Management*, 4(3), 185-206.
- Aroles, J., Granter, E., & Devaujany, F.-X. (2020). 'Becoming mainstream': the professionalisation and corporatisation of digital nomadism. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 35(1), 114-129.
- Bonneau, C., Aroles, J., & Estagnasié, C. (2023). Romanticisation and monetisation of the digital nomad lifestyle: The role played by online narratives in shaping professional identity work. *Organization*, 30(1), 65-88.
- Census. (2022). *The Number of People Primarily Working From Home Tripled Between 2019 and 2021*. <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2022/people-working-from-home.html>
- Connelly, B. L., Certo, S. T., Ireland, R. D., & Reutzel, C. R. (2011). Signaling Theory: A Review and Assessment. *Journal of Management*, 37(1), 39-67.
- Docquier, F., & Rapoport, H. (2012). Globalization, Brain Drain, and Development. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 50(3), 681-730.
- Ehrhart, K. H., & Ziegert, J. C. (2005). Why Are Individuals Attracted to Organizations? *Journal of Management*, 31(6), 901-919.
- Fernández-Aráoz, C. (2022). The Rise of the "Corporate Nomad". *Harvard Business Review*. <https://hbr.org/2022/03/the-rise-of-the-corporate-nomad>
- Frick, N., & Marx, J. (2021). Integrating digital nomads in corporate structures: Managerial contemplations. *Proceedings of the 54th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, 2111-2120.
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research: Notes on the Gioia Methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1), 15-31.

- Gorbatov, S., Khapova, S. N., & Lysova, E. I. (2018). Personal Branding: Interdisciplinary Systematic Review and Research Agenda. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 1-17.
- Hackman, J. R., & Oldham, G. R. (1975). Development of the Job Diagnostic Survey. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60(2), 159-170.
- Hensellek, S., & Puchala, N. (2021). The Emergence of the Digital Nomad: A Review and Analysis of the Opportunities and Risks of Digital Nomadism. In *The Flexible Workplace* (pp. 195-214).
- Ives, B., Hamilton, S., & Davis, G. B. (1980). A Framework for Research in Computer-Based Management Information Systems. *Management Science*, 26(9), 910-934.
- Karasek, R. A., & Bryant, P. C. (2012). Signaling Theory: Past, Present, and Future. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, 11(1), 91-99.
- Kong, D., Schlagwein, D., & Cecez-Kecmanovic, D. (2019). Issues in Digital Nomad-Corporate Work: An Institutional Theory Perspective. *Proceedings of the 27th European Conference on Information Systems*, 1-16.
- Marx, J., Stieglitz, S., Brünker, F., & Mirbabaie, M. (2023). Home (Office) is where your Heart is: Exploring the Identity of the 'Corporate Nomad' Knowledge Worker Archetype. *Business & Information Systems Engineering*, 65, 293-308.
- Marx, J., Stieglitz, S., Mirbabaie, M., Sauer, T., & Frowerk, J. (2021). The Identity of Born Virtual Organizations: Exploring the Role of ICT. *Proceedings of the 42nd International Conference on Information Systems*, 1-17.
- Myers, M. D., & Newman, M. (2007). The qualitative interview in IS research: Examining the craft. *Information and Organization*, 17(1), 2-26.
- Nash, C., Jarrahi, M. H., Sutherland, W., & Phillips, G. (2018). Digital nomads beyond the buzzword: Defining digital nomadic work and use of digital technologies. *Transforming Digital Worlds: 13th International Conference*, 207-217.
- Onken-Menke, G., Nüesch, S., & Kröll, C. (2018). Are you attracted? Do you remain? Meta-analytic evidence on flexible work practices. *Business Research*, 11(2), 239-277.
- Prester, J., Cecez-Kecmanovic, D., & Schlagwein, D. (2019). Becoming a digital nomad: Identity emergence in the flow of practice. *Proceedings of the 40th International Conference on Information Systems*, 1-9.
- Richter, S., & Richter, A. (2020). Digital Nomads. *Business and Information Systems Engineering*, 62(1), 77-81.
- Schaarschmidt, M., Walsh, G., & Ivens, S. (2021). Digital war for talent: How profile reputations on company rating platforms drive job seekers' application intentions. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 131, 1-20.
- Schlagwein, D. (2018a). "Escaping the rat race": Justifications in digital nomadism. *Proceedings of the 26th European Conference on Information Systems*, 1-7.
- Schlagwein, D. (2018b). The History of Digital Nomadism. *International Workshop on the Changing Nature of Work (CNoW)*, 1-5.
- Sivertzen, A.-M., Nilsen, E. R., & Olafsen, A. H. (2013). Employer branding: employer attractiveness and the use of social media. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 22(7), 473-483.
- Spence, M. (1973). Job Market Signaling. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 87(3), 355-374.
- Stiglitz, J. E. (2002). Information and the Change in the Paradigm in Economics. *The American Economic Review*, 92(3), 460-501.
- Taj, S. A. (2016). Application of signaling theory in management research: Addressing major gaps in theory. *European Management Journal*, 34(4), 338-348.
- Veal, A. J. (2023). The 4-day work-week: the new leisure society? *Leisure Studies*, 42(2), 172-187.
- Wang, B., Schlagwein, D., Cecez-Kecmanovic, D., & Cahalane, M. C. (2018). Digital Work and High-Tech Wanderers: Three Theoretical Framings and a Research Agenda for Digital Nomadism. *Proceedings of the 29th Australasian Conference on Information Systems*, 1-12.
- Wang, B., Schlagwein, D., Cecez-Kecmanovic, D., & Cahalane, M. C. (2020). Beyond the factory paradigm: Digital nomadism and the digital future(s) of knowledge work post-COVID-19. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems*, 21(6), 1379-1401.
- Zacher, H., Dirkers, B. T., Korek, S., & Hughes, B. (2017). Age-Differential Effects of Job Characteristics on Job Attraction: A Policy-Capturing Study. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 8, 1-11.