

The effects of new ways of working (NWW) on employees' well-being and happiness. A theoretical overview

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Abstract

Purpose: New ways of working (NWW) is an emerging trend in contemporary organisations, driven by the need to be flexible and adapt quickly to changes. Thus, NWW provides employees with greater control over their working time, also increasing their autonomy with the support of ICTs. However, the adoption of flexible work arrangements can be a source of a wide range of concerns, which can influence employees' well-being and happiness at work. This research aims to develop an overall framework to guide future research on new flexible work models.

Methodology: This theoretical overview proposes to analyse the influence of e-demands (technostress, e-work-life balance, etc.) resulting from NWW adoption on employees' e-well-being (e-psychological well-being, e-emotional exhaustion, etc.) and e-happiness. To

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mitigate the potential negative effects of NWW practices, both organisations and employees should identify personal e-resources (e-psychological capital, e-work self-efficacy, e-psychological empowerment) and job e-resources (e-engaging leadership, e-work effectiveness) that can serve as effective moderators to promote employees' well-being.

Results: The proposed model attempts to provide an overview based on available knowledge about the relationships between e-demands, employees' e-well-being and personal and job resources in e-work contexts.

Practical implications: This research aims to shed light on the need for effective strategies to adapt the NWW to work environments characterised by higher levels of flexibility and the intensive use of ICTs, with the aim of guaranteeing employees' well-being, health and happiness, and achieving better results.

keywords: new ways of working; NWW; e-work; e-well-being; happiness at work

JEL Codes: I31; J24

1. Introduction

New ways of working (NWW) is an emerging and rapidly evolving trend in contemporary organisations given their need to be flexible and adapt quickly to changes (Charalampous et al., 2019). Working outside the conventional workplace (remote and hybrid work) is the answer to agile and dynamic work environments driven by new technologies, artificial intelligence and digitalisation (Coun et al., 2022; Van Steenbergen et al., 2018). These advances in digitalisation and ICTs have allowed employees to gain flexibility, autonomy and freedom to decide when (schedule), where (virtual or physical location), how (ICT tools) and how much they need or want to work (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Demerouti et al., 2014). This approach on NWW changes the traditional concept of the work environment, affecting physical workspace, technology, management practices, organisational culture (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Gerards et al., 2021) or the well-being and happiness of employees (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Bregenzer & Jimenez, 2021).

NWW practices can show 'a bright and a dark side' for employees and organisations. In principle, the design of flexible work arrangements that allow employees to manage their times and workplaces based on the use of new technologies can provide important advantages, such as improving work-life balance, reducing commuting times, facilitating effective and efficient communication, promoting effective workflows, supporting decision-making processes, or facilitating collaboration with supervisors and colleagues. All of this can have positive consequences on performance, productivity, job satisfaction, work commitment or employees' well-being (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Demerouti et al., 2014; Kotera & Vione, 2020; Van Steenbergen et al., 2018). However, the use of NWW is not without challenges that can disrupt the normal functioning of the work environment, such as permanent connectivity, poor adaptation to ICTs, interruptions and distractions, loss of social interaction, lack of sense of belonging, misunderstandings, conflicts or

isolation. These can negatively affect employees' social support, work commitment, social cohesion, knowledge sharing or job performance (Camacho & Barrios, 2022; Demerouti et al., 2014; Gerards et al., 2021; Kotera & Vione, 2020), and increase loneliness, stress or exhaustion (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Bregenzer & Jimenez, 2021; Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2012; Vione & Kotera, 2023). Therefore, there is an ongoing debate in the academic literature about the effects of NWW, specially about employees' well-being and happiness. For this reason, it is essential to address and deepen the study of the implications and consequences of NWW, as well as the potential responses of employees to NWW. To mitigate the possible negative effects of NWW on their well-being, employees may end up resorting to the use of job and personal e-resources to adapt to highly technological and demanding work environments. In this sense, choosing leadership styles adapted to e-work environments, increasing the sense of control when working remotely, building and developing digital resilience to cope with the risks inherent to e-work, or reinforcing employees' competencies and strengths to meet the requirements of remote work can be particularly valuable strategies to successfully implement NWW (Bregenzer & Jimenez, 2021; Schaufeli, 2015). No research has yet addressed the study of these specific relationships. Therefore, much more research that analyses the meaning, importance and implications of NWW for employees, organisations and society is required. At this point, an important research question arises: what are the effects of NWW practices on employees' well-being in e-work contexts? This theoretical overview aims to answer this question by developing a comprehensive and integrative model of the relationships between NWW implementation, employee well-being and happiness at work.

The proposed model has been built by establishing six phases through which variables of different nature have been added to conclude a complete and comprehensive model that goes from the most general (NWW implementation) to the most specific (employee happiness). The reason for choosing a theoretical overview, closer to theoretical rather than practical research, is the need to address theoretically novel concepts, in some cases unexplored, which have not been clearly tested in reality, and which need to be related through an integrating vision. In this way, in a first phase and based on previous research, it is necessary to evaluate the theoretical robustness of the intended relationships in order, in a second phase, to be able to test them in a real study context. This implies that both the variables and the measurement scales must be created, adapted and/or validated appropriately. Hence, this first phase allows for consolidating concepts, knowledge and relationships that must later be empirically tested in real study samples. The lack of knowledge about e-work contexts, especially in terms of human resource management, justifies conducting research on these characteristics.

The contribution of this study is threefold: i) it offers an integrative review of the literature on NWW and its influence on employee well-being and happiness from a theoretical perspective; ii) it proposes a broad and comprehensive theoretical model that integrates old and new concepts on NWW, employee well-being and happiness

at work; and iii) it sheds light for future theoretical and practical research, whose results and conclusions should facilitate the decision-making by business managers.

The structure of the study is as follows. The second section contains the theoretical framework and develops an integrative and comprehensive model built by phases, including the study proposals for each of them; the third section points out the implications of the work; and the fourth section shows the main conclusions and future lines of research.

2. Conceptual framework

2.1. NWW practices and employees' responses

The Western labour market has undergone significant changes in recent decades, particularly in the light of globalisation and increased competition, forcing organisations to be flexible and adapt quickly to changes (Troilo, 2023; Van Steenbergen et al., 2018). A large number of organisations have adopted and implemented flexible working arrangements in response to agile and dynamic work environments driven by new technologies, artificial intelligence and digitalisation (Coun et al., 2022; Van Steenbergen et al., 2018). In this sense, remote work practices have grown steadily but slowly over the last decade (Tramontano et al., 2021). According to the 2022 Eurofound survey 'Fifth round of the living, working and COVID-19 e-survey: Living in a new era of uncertainty', 12% of European employees work remotely and 18% adopt a hybrid work style that involves working from home and the workplace interchangeably. In this same line, the survey developed in 2022 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 'Telework, hiring, and vacancies', states that 11% of American employees working in the private sector work remotely and 16% adopt a hybrid work style (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022). Thus, working outside the workplace (remote and hybrid work), rather than being an option, can be considered the most common working method in the near future.

Advances in digitalisation and ICTs have deeply influenced the way work is performed in organisations, allowing them to replace traditional ways of working to establish new ones that provide greater autonomy and responsibility to employees (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Monks et al., 2023). This means that employees can have flexibility, autonomy and freedom to decide when (schedule), where (office, home, commuting, workspaces, etc.), how (smartphone, email, videoconference) and how much they need or want to work (Alfes et al., 2022; Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Van Steenbergen et al., 2018).

The design of flexible work where employees can manage their time and workplace based on new technologies is known as 'new ways of working' (NWW) (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2012). HRM practices based on NWW offer employees greater freedom and independence through five facets, including (1) *time- and location-independent work*, which refers to the autonomy of employees to work when

and where they want, using ICTs; (2) *management of output*, which refers to the autonomy of employees in terms of work processes; (3) *access to organisational knowledge*, which refers to the possibility of accessing organisational knowledge easily and quickly at any time, as well as methods to connect, communicate and share knowledge with colleagues and superiors; (4) *flexibility in working relations*, which refers to flexibility in working relationships; and (5) *a freely accessible open workplace*, which refers to an open-plan office designed to promote interactions between employees (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Gerards et al., 2018). Thus, NWW is considered a flexible work style that allows employees to work at their convenience regardless of location, supported by (i) extensive use of ICTs to facilitate collaboration between employees working in different time zones and locations, and (ii) goal-oriented management practices to compensate for the lack of face-to-face interactions (Kotera & Vione, 2020). Flexible work arrangements therefore extend the traditional concept of work environment by modifying the physical workspace, the technology, the management practices and the work culture of employees (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Gerards et al., 2021), leading to significant transformations that can affect employees' well-being and happiness at work (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Bregenzer & Jimenez, 2021; López-Cabarcos et al., 2020).

NWW practices can show 'a bright and a dark side' for employees and organisations. In fact, their consequences on flexibility, autonomy and use of technologies are still unclear. In this way, previous research suggests a lack of consensus on the advantages and drawbacks of adopting more flexible work arrangements (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Van Steenbergen et al., 2018). The control of work time and workplace by employees can improve the quality of their work, giving them greater independence and allowing them to use their time more effectively (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2012). Thus, NWW can help employees with workflows, commuting times and work-life balance, which can have very positive consequences on their performance, productivity, job satisfaction, work engagement and well-being. All this can increase their work morale and mental health while reducing their work stress (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Boell et al., 2016; Kotera & Vione, 2020; Van Steenbergen et al., 2018). However, being able to choose when and where to work can make teamwork difficult, cause interruptions, hinder relationships with colleagues and supervisors, hamper professional development, increase responsibility, force permanent connections or lose the concept of structure, all of which can negatively influence social support, work-life balance, recovery from work, work engagement, social cohesion, knowledge sharing or job performance, provoking job isolation, work overload, fatigue, mental demands, feelings of loneliness or obsessive involvement in work (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Boell et al., 2016; Demerouti et al., 2014; Gerards et al., 2021; Kotera & Vione, 2020; Van Steenbergen et al., 2018; Vione & Kotera, 2023).

In turn, digitalisation and the use of new technologies allow employees to communicate effectively and efficiently, improving workflows, information sharing, responsiveness, availability of real-time information, decision-making, collaborations, work flexibility and work enjoyment, while reducing pressure and stress

(Demerouti et al., 2014; Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2012). Conversely, intensive ICT use can also lead to permanent connectivity and adaptation to digital tools, more interruptions and distractions and endless workdays with negative consequences for employees' well-being, work-life balance, stress and exhaustion, work engagement, motivation and productivity (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Boell et al., 2016; Bregenzler & Jimenez, 2021; Demerouti et al., 2014; Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2012; Van Steenbergen et al., 2018).

Previous research underlines the paradoxical nature of NWW practices, with a particular emphasis on the following aspects: (1) NWW practices can affect work-life balance, both positively and negatively; (2) it is unclear whether NWW practices help to reduce or increase interruptions, ultimately affecting productivity; (3) it is unclear whether digital tools have a positive or negative influence on employees' well-being, and it is necessary, for example, to consider whether such an influence may lead to efficiency improvements or disruptions resulting from intensive ICT use; and (4) NWW may have a positive or negative influence on employees' satisfaction, based on whether such an influence may have positive or negative implications due to aspects such as greater flexibility or isolation, respectively (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Boell et al., 2016; Van Steenbergen et al., 2018). Positive effects aside, the debate in the academic literature has focused on the potential risks arising from the use of NWW and their influence on employees' well-being, which requires much more research.

2.2. Phase 1. e-Demands in e-work environments

NWW practices have significant implications on how work is understood and, more importantly, on the conditions of the work environment (López-Cabarcos et al., 2020). Such practices have transformed the nature and characteristics of traditional work by modifying aspects of 'when', 'where' and 'how' work is performed, affecting employees' perceptions of their job requirements, duties and responsibilities (Demerouti et al., 2014; Van Steenbergen et al., 2018), and leading them to experience new challenging and stressful demands and requirements. In this way, we define e-demands as all those requirements and characteristics of e-work that require prolonged physical and/or mental energies and, consequently, entail significant physiological and/or psychological efforts. This comprehensive model includes technostress and e-work-life balance as emerging e-demands in the digital work context, due to their potential influence on employees' well-being and their common presence in today's workplaces (Choi, 2023; Salanova et al., 2014).

NWW practices are supported by a wide range of ICTs that shape modern work, such as devices and applications that support business processes by providing new communication and collaboration tools (Berger et al., 2023). In this way, digitalisation and new technologies enable employees to adapt work schedules and workplaces to their needs through effective communication processes. ICTs can thus allow employees to access all knowledge generated within the organisation while they

can easily and quickly connect, communicate and share their own knowledge with colleagues and supervisors (Gerards et al., 2021). However, intensive use, poor adaptation, and/or increasing difficulties in managing ICTs can pose unsurmountable challenges that can lead to technostress (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Tarafdar et al., 2015). Technostress can be defined as stress arising from ICT use (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008). This unhealthy response to the mismatch between employees' resources and employees' demands in highly technological work environments can be caused by (1) *techno-overload*, which refers to a stressful situation where employees are required to work longer and faster than usual; (2) *techno-invasion*, which refers to constant connectivity that blurs the lines between work and personal life; (3) *techno-complexity*, which refers to the result of comparing employees' perceptions of the complexity of using technology and their lack of confidence in their technological skills; (4) *techno-uncertainty*, which refers to the pace at which software, hardware and computer networks are constantly changing; (5) *techno-insecurity*, which refers to the situation in which employees feel stressed due to the threat of losing their jobs to individuals with better knowledge of technology (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008; Tarafdar et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2023). These technostressors (together or separately) can lead employees to feel that they lack the necessary skills to use ICTs effectively or to adapt to new ones in their work, resulting in negative effects on productivity (Salanova et al., 2014; Tarafdar et al., 2007), emotional exhaustion (Singh et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2023), performance (Tarafdar et al., 2015), well-being (Truța et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023) or job satisfaction (Ragu-Nathan et al., 2008).

One reason for the increasing adoption of NWW in organisations is their potential to improve employees' personal and work-life balance (Demerouti et al., 2014). The flexibility and autonomy derived from NWW can help employees schedule their workdays to develop more work activities with higher quality in a healthy way (Demerouti et al., 2014). Thus, using ICTs to facilitate the choice of location and work schedule can help employees to reduce interference between work and family life (Grant et al., 2019; Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2012). However, NWW can also pose challenges that can blur the boundaries between work and family life (Demerouti et al., 2014), decreasing employee well-being. The e-work-life balance can be described as the online employees' ability to effectively manage the boundaries between work and non-work activities (Grant et al., 2019). The blurred work/family boundaries may be especially noticeable when flexible work styles are combined with intensive ICT use (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2012). In this sense, the increased use of ICTs may lead employees to devote more time to job-related activities than to family-related tasks (Camacho & Barrios, 2022). Constant interruptions, the need to be always connected and available, permanent messages and calls and/or compulsive behaviours to check emails are some examples that can make it difficult to disconnect from work and increase the 'interferences' between work and family life (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2012). Hence, despite technology can be an effective tool to facilitate work-life balance, its misuse can result in a poor work-family balance with negative consequences for employees, such as emotional exhaustion (Ten

Brummelhuis et al., 2012), work pressure (Demerouti et al., 2014) and difficulties in the work recovery process (Bregenzler & Jimenez, 2021).

NWW is a set of HR practices aimed at providing employees with greater autonomy and control over their work schedule. However, the implementation of flexible work arrangements can also be the source of a wide range of difficulties for employees, such as work overload, interruptions, misunderstandings, conflicts or isolation, all of which can lead to unfavourable, stressful and complex e-work environments (Demerouti et al., 2014; López-Cabarcos et al., 2020). Accordingly, the following research questions arise in Phase 1:

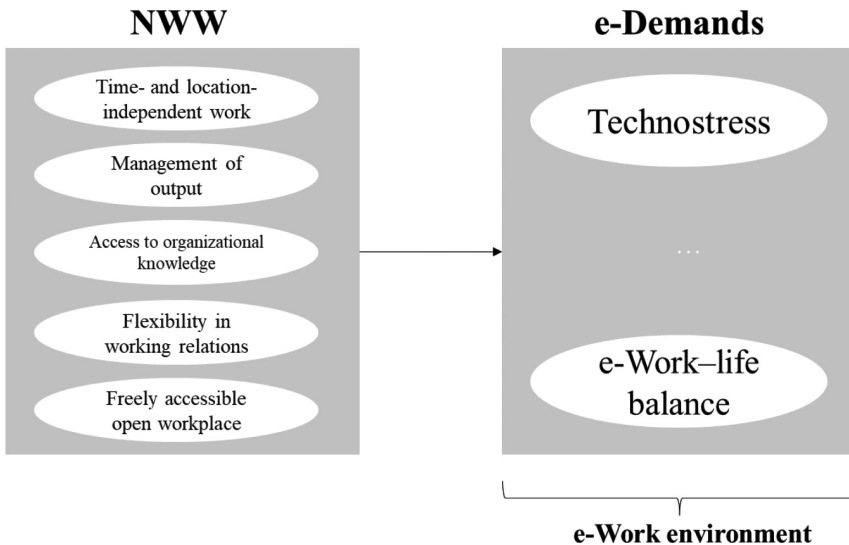
RQ1: What is the influence of NWW (time- and location-independent work, management of output, access to organisational knowledge, flexibility in working relations, freely accessible open workplace) on variables related to e-work environments?

RQ1a: Can NWW implementation lead to unfavourable, stressful and complex e-working environments?

RQ1b: Can NWW implementation lead to unfavourable situations characterised by work-life imbalances?

Figure 1 shows Model I.

Figure 1. Model I



2.3. Phase 2. Effects of e-demands on employees' e-well-being

The work environment plays a crucial role in the well-being of employees and, in turn, is the cornerstone of any well-functioning organisation. In this sense, prolonged

exposure to high demands and requirements at work can result in negative psychological and physical states that can negatively affect an individual's behaviour at work (Bregenzer & Jimenez, 2021). As flexible work styles are becoming more and more common, employees must know how to deal with potential challenges and risks that may have harmful effects on their well-being (Bregenzer & Jimenez, 2021; Wang et al., 2023). Social isolation, dependence on technology, demands for greater productivity, adaptation to new applications and workflows or constant interruptions are some examples of e-demands inherent to e-work environments that may hinder employees' capacity to respond adequately to their tasks and worsen their well-being (Grant et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2023). We define employee e-well-being as the 'overall state' (psychological, subjective and social) of being healthy, happy, pleased, comfortable and satisfied with one's work within e-work contexts. Previous research suggests that negative situations affecting employee well-being, such as burnout, psychological and subjective well-being, anxiety or mental health are associated with e-demands resulting from NWW implementation (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; Singh et al., 2022).

Job demands-resources theory (Demerouti et al., 2001) states that NWW can spark a stressful process that negatively influences employees' physical and psychological health (López-Cabarcos et al., 2020; Van Steenbergen et al., 2018). In e-work contexts, the adoption of NWW practices can expose employees to excessive e-demands such as work or information overload, technostress, interruptions, poor work-life balance or inadequate adaptation to new technologies, all of which can lead to emotional exhaustion and poorer e-psychological health (Demerouti et al., 2014). We define e-emotional exhaustion as feelings of fatigue, irritability and frustration, and the employee's lack of emotional resources to apply in e-work contexts. We define e-psychological well-being as the 'mental state' of being healthy, happy, pleased, comfortable and satisfied with one's work in e-work contexts. There is little prior research on the negative effects of e-demands on employees' emotional exhaustion and e-psychological well-being (Ten Brummelhuis et al., 2012; Truța et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023), as these are the two most common responses of employees in modern e-work environments. Hence, further research is needed on the complex relationships between NWW practices, e-demands and employees' well-being in e-work environments (Andrulli & Gerards, 2023; López-Cabarcos et al., 2020). Accordingly, the following research questions arise in Phase 2:

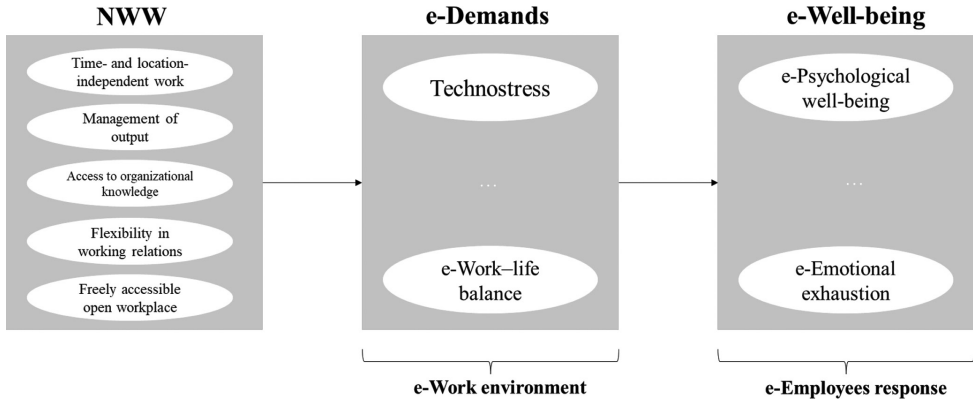
RQ2: What are the implications of e-challenges and e-demands involved in the NWW implementation on employees' well-being?

RQ2a: What are the implications of e-demands arising from NWW implementation (e.g. technostress, e-work-life balance) on employees' well-being (e.g. e-psychological well-being, e-emotional exhaustion)?

RQ2b: Can e-demands resulting from NWW implementation (e.g. technostress, e-work-life balance) act as mediators of employees' well-being (e.g. e-psychological well-being, e-emotional exhaustion)?

Figure 2 shows Model II.

Figure 2. Model II



2.4. Phase 3. Effects of e-well-being on employees' e-happiness

Happiness, a highly valued goal in organisations, has become increasingly important in recent years as organisations have become more interested in the well-being of their employees (Fisher, 2010; Singh & Aggarwal, 2018). NWW provide employees with greater autonomy and flexibility, which may initially help to reinforce the idea that these variables could contribute to positive emotions and employees' e-wellness (Kortsch et al., 2022). We define e-happiness at work as a set of positive emotions employees experience in e-work contexts. Employees who are happy at work are those who feel that they have a meaningful work experience involving enjoyment, positive emotional experiences, pleasant feelings and pleasure, all of which can lead them to experience a sense of fulfilment, engagement and satisfaction with their work and work environment (Jha et al., 2023; Salas-Vallina et al., 2017). However, the disadvantages associated with NWW implementation can cause employees to experience negative emotions, develop unfavourable attitudes and experience discomfort towards work, which can evolve into unhappiness. E-employees who experience disconnection, social isolation, lack of social interactions, interference between work and family life or low recognition due to intensive ICT use may encounter adverse effects on their mental/physical health and work engagement, depletion of their energy or under-valuation of their work.

NWW practices also allow employees to work remotely at their own discretion with ICT support, thereby enhancing communication and collaboration with colleagues and managers through videoconferencing, messaging or other applications. Precisely, employees' performance is linked to the quality of the relationships and positive interactions they have with their colleagues, and sometimes these

relationships may require additional efforts to foster engagement, well-being and, ultimately, happiness. According to job demands-resources theory, NWW can spark an enriching/stressful process that – through decreasing/increasing e-demands and increasing/decreasing e-well-being – develops positive/negative experiences capable of strengthening/damaging employees' happiness at work. To date, no research has analysed the effect of NWW on employees' happiness in e-work contexts. This fact, together with the significant relevance and complexity of NWW and their still uncertain implications on employees and organisations, justifies the need for much more scientific research in this field. Accordingly, the following research questions arise in Phase 3:

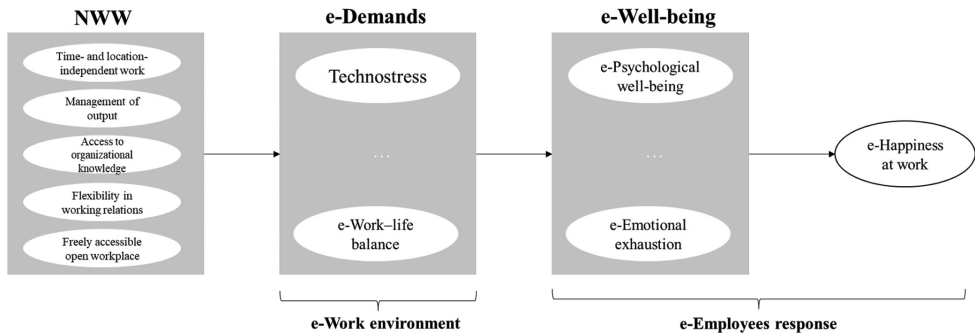
RQ3: What are the implications of e-challenges and e-demands involved in the implementation on employees' happiness at work?

RQ3a: What are the implications of e-demands arising from NWW implementation (e.g. technostress, e-work-life balance) and the variables related to employees' well-being (e.g. e-psychological well-being, e-emotional exhaustion) on employees' happiness at work?

RQ3b: Can e-demands resulting from NWW implementation (e.g. technostress, e-work-life balance) and the variables related to employees' well-being (e.g. e-psychological well-being, e-emotional exhaustion) act as mediators of employees' happiness at work?

Figure 3 shows Model III.

Figure 3. Model III



2.5. Phase 4. The moderating role of job and personal e-resources

At this point, what seems clear is that NWW practices have a ‘dark’ side (e.g. isolation, loss of sense of belonging, lack of preparation and experience in flexible work models, poor adaptation to ICTs or lack of skills to work confidently in e-work contexts) that may hinder the achievement of employees' well-being and

happiness at work. For this reason, the availability of job and personal resources is particularly valuable to successfully implement NWW (Bregenzler & Jimenez, 2021; Schaufeli, 2015). We define e-engage leadership as behaviours that encourage, reinforce and foster relationships to motivate employees to improve their involvement in e-work contexts. They can shape employees' e-demands, and thus employees' well-being and happiness at work, by managing and allocating job resources in the workplace. Likewise, improving the sense of control concerning one's e-work can enable employees to be more autonomous in decision-making processes, exert influence at work and perform tasks meaningfully (López-Cabarcos et al., 2020). We define e-psychological empowerment as a set of psychological states necessary to feel a sense of control over one's work in e-work contexts. It can make employees more proactive, improve workflows and effectively help them achieve their objectives (Coun et al., 2022; López-Cabarcos et al., 2020). Thus, e-psychological empowerment can be considered a valuable tool for motivating employees to successfully perform their tasks by giving a sense of control over their work (López-Cabarcos et al., 2020). Hence, both e-engaging leadership and e-psychological empowerment can act as effective motivational tools in the workplace, improving employees' e-well-being and reducing the negative effects of e-demands associated with NWW. To date, no research has analysed the moderating role of e-engaging leadership and e-psychological empowerment in the relationship between NWW and the e-demands resulting from them.

The rapid advancement of technologies used in work practices, coupled with increased employee autonomy and responsibility for work organisation issues, requires employees to know how to manage and schedule their work and priorities, define work/life boundaries, identify their responsibilities, reshape work collaborations in virtual environments and improve their ICT skills (Consiglio et al., 2023; Tramontano et al., 2021). If they lack the necessary skills and competencies, they may need to draw on their personal resources to cope with the technology-related demands of the NWW (López-Cabarcos et al., 2020). e-Work self-efficacy refers to a set of competencies such as e-skills, trust building, self-care, remote social skills and remote emotional self-efficacy to cope with stressful or challenging demands (Tramontano et al., 2021). It can enable employees to build and develop digital resilience to mitigate the potential risks of adopting remote work practices. We define e-psychological capital as a psychological state characterised by feelings of optimism, hope and resilience associated with flexible work styles. It can enhance employees' personal resources and core strengths to cope with adversity in e-work environments (López-Cabarcos et al., 2020). Thus, e-work self-efficacy and e-psychological capital can be valuable tools for improving and reinforcing e-employees' competencies and strengths to meet the requirements and demands derived from e-work environments. Therefore, both can act as personal protective resources for e-employees, enabling them to mitigate the negative consequences of excessive e-demands derived from NWW, while enhancing their e-well-being. To the best of our knowledge, no research

has analysed the moderating role of e-work self-efficacy and e-psychological capital in the relationship between e-demands and employees' e-well-being in e-work contexts.

NWW enable employees to manage their work schedules and workplaces through the use of innovative technologies. Their capacity to handle these aspects by themselves plays a critical role in setting suitable objectives, ensuring the achievement of objectives and establishing performance standards. e-Work effectiveness refers to the necessary skills, competencies and self-management of e-workers to set work objectives and achieve the intended performance (Grant et al., 2019). It can provide the skills and competencies required for e-working practices. In this way, e-work effectiveness can be a valuable tool for motivating employees to successfully perform their tasks by allowing self-management of their own work. Therefore, e-work effectiveness can act as a motivational tool in the workplace, enhancing employees' e-happiness by buffering the loss of physical and mental energy resulting from NWW practices. To the best of our knowledge, no research has analysed the moderating role of e-work effectiveness in the relationship between employees' e-happiness and the negative effects of NWW e-demands on employees.

According to job demands-resources theory, personal and job e-resources can act as 'buffers' for the complex negative relationships between NWW practices, high e-demands and employees' e-well-being. To date, no research has analysed the moderating effect of these personal and job e-resources on employees' happiness and wellness resulting from NWW practices. The results of this study can surely contribute to the advancement of knowledge on NWW, e-demands, e-resources, as well as to the improvement of the well-being of e-employees. Accordingly, the following research questions arise in Phase 4:

RQ4: What role do job and personal resources in e-work environments play on employees' well-being and happiness at work?

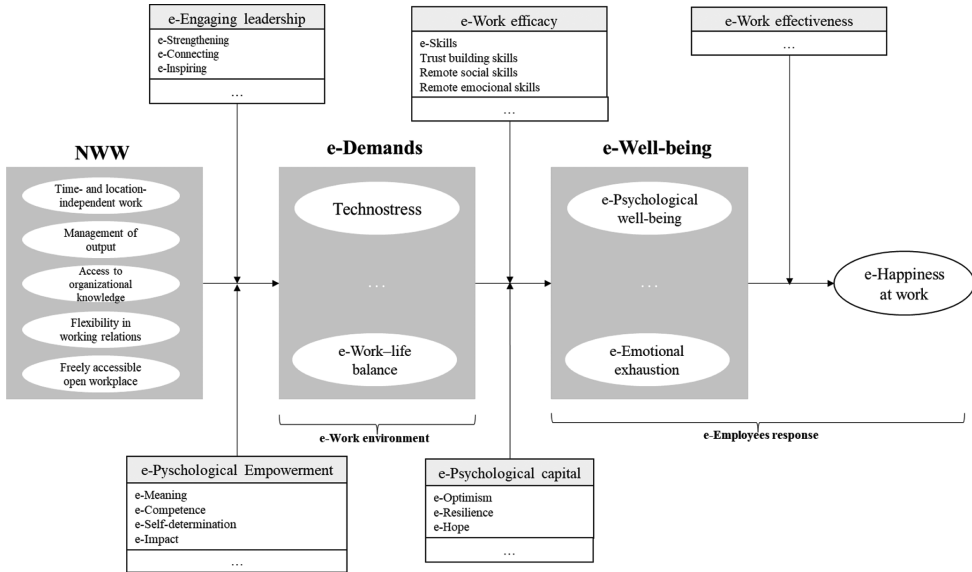
RQ4a: Can job (e.g. e-engaging leadership) and personal (e.g. e-psychological empowerment) resources act as moderators in the relationship between NWW (time- and location-independent work, management of output, access to organisational knowledge, flexibility in working relations, open and freely accessible workplace) and e-demands (e.g. technostress, e-work-life balance)?

RQ4b: Can job (e.g. e-work efficacy) and personal (e.g. e-psychological capital) resources act as moderators in the relationship between e-demands (e.g. technostress, e-work-life balance) resulting from implementation NWW (e.g. e-implementation) and employees' well-being (e.g. e-psychological well-being, e-emotional exhaustion)?

RQ4c: Can job resources (e.g. e-work effectiveness) act as moderators in the relationship between employees' well-being (e.g. e-psychological well-being, e-emotional exhaustion) and employees' happiness at work?

Figure 4 shows Model IV.

Figure 4. Model IV



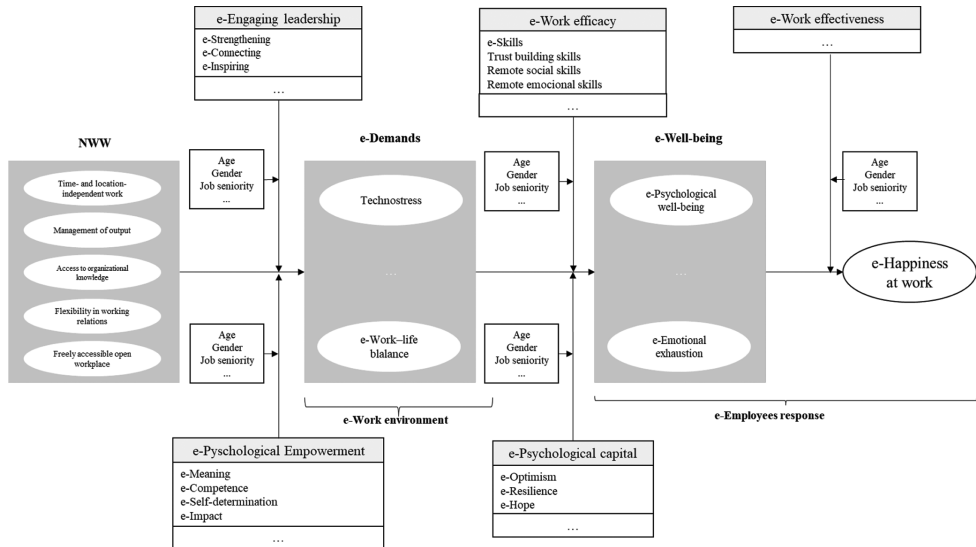
2.6. Phase 5. The moderating role of demographic variables

Several demographic variables, including age, gender or job seniority, can constrain the effects of job and personal resources on each of the proposed moderating relationships. According to the Eurofound survey (2022), 14% of women and 10% of men work entirely from home, while the frequencies are very similar for hybrid work (18% for women and 19% for men). In terms of age groups, 30% of employees over 65 work from home. This rate drops to 13% for employees under 25. For employees between 25 and 49, the rate is 26% and for those between 50 and 64, it is 24%. Regarding hybrid work, between 30 and 44 years old is the most common age group (23%). No corresponding information is available on other variables such as job seniority, which could be very relevant for our model. To the best of our knowledge, no research has analysed the moderating role of demographic variables in the moderating relationships discussed above. Therefore, it might be interesting to analyse the effect of second-order moderating relationships (demographic variables such as gender, age or job seniority on first-order moderating relationships). Accordingly, the following research questions arise in Phase 5:

RQ5: Which and how do demographic variables (e.g. age, gender, job seniority) influence the proposed moderating relationships?

Figure 5 shows Model V.

Figure 5. Model V



2.7. Phase 6. Control variables

Control variables such as sector, country, organisational culture or percentage of hours worked remotely may also constrain the proposed model. In this sense, the Eurofound survey (2022) points out that hybrid work is more common in financial services (36%) and public administration (32%) work contexts. This may be because the tasks, duties and responsibilities assigned to these types of jobs can be relatively easily adapted to flexible work arrangements, making them more prone to adopt hybrid work practices. In contrast, employees in sectors such as transport, retail, hospitality, construction, agriculture, manufacturing and mining are the most likely to never work remotely. Moreover, previous research has found that public administration employees have fewer opportunities to use NWW than their counterparts in the private and semi-public sectors (Giauque et al., 2023). In Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands or Sweden, it is common to work at least half of the time from home (Eurofound, 2022).

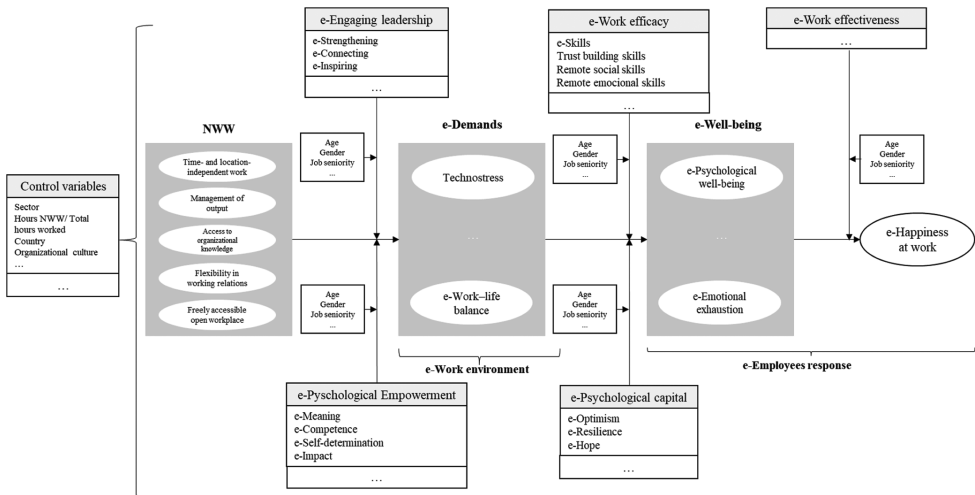
The adoption of flexible working arrangements must be consistent with HR practices regarding variables such as organisational climate, strategy or organisational culture. In this sense, the beliefs and values shared by the members of organisations can influence their behaviours (Cornu, 2022), which are beyond the formal control systems and procedures established. Precisely, one of the most important spaces for creating and spreading fundamental norms, values and beliefs in organisations is the workplace (Elsbach & Bechky, 2007). However, the fact that employees can decide where and when they work may lead them to face difficulties and challenges

in building organisational culture, since they are not in the same physical space and may lack the opportunity to engage in interactions with colleagues or superiors, hindering informal socialisation (Cimperman, 2023). All this could have very negative consequences on knowledge sharing, creativity or trust. Conversely, digitalisation and technologies can also clearly facilitate connectivity and the creation of virtual collaborative platforms where teams can have a workspace to transparently transmit the organisational culture. Again, the potentially paradoxical nature of NWW practices is emphasised. Besides sector, control or organisational culture, it is also important to consider other control variables, such as the proportion between the number of hours worked through flexible working arrangements and the total number of hours worked. To the best of our knowledge, no research has analysed the effect of all these control variables on all variables and the previously defined relationships. Accordingly, the following research questions arise in Phase 6:

RQ6: Which and how do control variables (e.g. NWW hours/total hours worked, country, organisational culture) influence the proposed model?

Figure 6 shows Model VI.

Figure 6. Model VI



3. Conclusions, implications and future lines of research

Modern organisations must address the ‘dark side’ of NWW practices and promote healthy and sustainable organisations where employees’ well-being and happiness are priorities. Specifically, this theoretical overview proposes, through an integrative review of the literature, a broad and comprehensive model that integrates new concepts on an emerging trend such as NWW and happiness at work.

Traditional variables in human resource management, such as happiness at work, emotional exhaustion, psychological capital, psychological empowerment or engaging leadership must be rethought and, where appropriate, redefined to be considered in e-work contexts. Human resource managers must be attentive to the changes that NWW entail in people management to take advantage of all their positive effects and avoid the negative ones. The trend towards increasingly technological environments is unquestionable; therefore, it is urgent to adapt people management policies and practices to a new reality, in which well-being and happiness remain fundamental.

From a theoretical perspective, this research aims to shed light on the consequences of NWW for employees, organisations and society. Thus, by building a comprehensive phase-by-phase theoretical model and integrating old and new variables, this research seeks to delve into the implications of NWW on employees' well-being and happiness at work. Knowing that NWW can show a 'bright and dark side' for employees and organisations, from a practical perspective, this research confirms the need to design effective strategies to guarantee sustainability, health, engagement and performance if NWW are adopted. Specifically, precise technology and training should be provided to ensure that employees can perform their tasks correctly; efficient communication processes between colleagues and supervisors should be fostered; social relationships based on trust should be encouraged; and virtual collaborative workspaces should be promoted. These approaches could contribute to enhancing employees' e-well-being and improving the quality of services offered. Strengthening employees' personal and job resources, giving them tools that promote autonomy and flexibility and helping them to develop new competencies and skills to adapt to e-work contexts can help e-employees to better cope with and adapt to e-work demands. Therefore, human resource managers should prioritise developing formal policies and practices that help employees establish boundaries between work and family life, taking into account their needs but enabling them to achieve work goals and objectives. Organisations can implement training programmes to ensure that workers fully understand the implications of NWW on their health, safety and well-being, promoting the development of skills and competencies tailored to the new job requirements. NWW must create work environments with healthy and happy employees who are capable of achieving better results at all levels.

The scope of this study provides an opportunity for future research. From a theoretical perspective, future research could include other types of job demands (e.g. active-destructive leadership), other job resources (e.g. social and supervisor support) or other organisational variables (e.g. role conflict, resilience, work engagement) to delve into the influence of NWW practices on other outcomes (e.g., job performance, extra-role behaviours, job satisfaction). From a practical perspective, it would be interesting to test all the proposed theoretical models by applying them to real samples. Furthermore, it would also be of interest to apply the proposed models in different sectors, industries or geographical areas, in order to highlight their idiosyncrasies and generalise the results obtained across all research.

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