Psychological Underpinnings of the Work-Site Selection Process of Knowledge Workers

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Psychological Underpinnings of the Work-Site Selection Process of Knowledge Workers

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ABSTRACT

As a result of technological advances, knowledge workers have become increasingly mobile; people can perform work in a variety of new locations via an assortment of new working arrangements. Knowledge workers are now faced with the question of where to work. We argue that the process of work-site selection depends on the relationship between a variety of individual factors such as motivation, cognitive and affective evaluation, and regulatory focus as they interact with self-regulatory resources. Specifically, we use a dynamic interactionist perspective to integrate components of social exchange, self-determination, regulatory focus, and self-regulation theories. The resulting conceptual model contributes to the existing literature by integrating different theoretical sets of predictor variables and examining their effect on self-regulatory resources, which have implications for productivity and well-being. We discuss implications and avenues for future work exploring these relationships.

KEYWORDS

Knowledge workers; motivation; autonomy; flexible work arrangements; telecommuting

In a progressively competitive global market, leaders of organizations become increasingly concerned with the question, “How can we maximize employee productivity?” With the United States evolving from an industrial and manufacturing-based economy to a knowledge-based economy, the workforce is increasingly composed of knowledge workers or the creative class, whose jobs entail production of intangible creative or knowledge goods and services (e.g., Florida, 2002). This labor force typically performs work that is creative, difficult to quantify, loosely defined, emergent, and knowledge based. These workers are largely employed by or associated with knowledge-intensive firms (Alvesson, 2001). Examples of knowledge-intensive firms include software development, research and development, consultancy, banks, and other similar organizations (Alvesson, 2001).

Physical location is no longer an obstacle to the completion of work for knowledge workers, in that mobile technology development and adoption has removed the tether that used to require workers to report to a centralized work location (Nelson, Jarrahi, & Thomson, 2017). Additionally, the nature of knowledge work is such that the capacity to complete it travels with the knowledge worker (Bailey & Kurland, 2002). The increasing flexibility in potential work arrangements within an organization mirrors the growing organizational elasticity required by current economic conditions and the changing nature of work.

In fact, in recent times, flexible work arrangements (FWAs) have been one of the top family-friendly benefits, second only to dependent care programs (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2011; Gordon, 2014). FWAs refer to “arrangements that allow work to be accomplished outside of the traditional temporal and/or spatial boundaries of the standard workday” (Rau & Hyland, 2002, p. 117). With FWAs, such as telecommuting, employees perform job tasks outside of a primary or central workplace for at least a portion of their work schedule, using communication technologies to interact with people inside and outside the organization (Bailey & Kurland, 2002; Leung & Zhang, 2017). Because of the transition away from traditional bureaucratic practices that FWAs offer, FWAs are recognized for having the potential to modify family relationships, alter child care arrangements and educational institutions, shift the focus of wage bargaining, redistribute income to the technologically literate, affect spousal relations, and foster newer forms of employee independence and freedom (De Menezes & Kelliher, 2011; Leung & Zhang, 2017).

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To date, scholars have most commonly studied home-based telecommuting arrangements, but with broadening availability of Wi-Fi Internet access across a wider range of locations, home is no longer the only viable alternative work site. Many of these “alternative” environments have been referred to as “third places,” in that they are not private home (first place) or work (second place) locations, but constitute a third group of places in the public sphere, including places like coffee shops, libraries, parks, airports, and hotel lobbies (Oldenburg, 1991). Similarly, designers increasingly incorporate the same technologies into organizational campuses to offer a variety of work environment settings to be used by workers on an as-needed, rather than an assigned, basis (e.g., Google) (Grossman, 2002). The provision of a variety of work environments allows employees to find settings that are suited to their activity-based needs—a social space for impromptu meetings, a quiet space to read, and so on, in a “cave” and “commons” type of arrangement (Haynes & Price, 2004). Given these trends, organizational leaders have a menu of FWAs to choose from and incorporate into workplace practices—desk sharing, telecommuting, teleworking, and hot-desking.

While much of the work in the area of FWAs has examined schedule autonomy (see Allen, Golden, & Shockley, 2015 for a review), we focus on the less studied location autonomy component of FWAs. For example, we aim to understand how knowledge workers enact FWAs in making work-site selections. Specifically, we want to begin exploration of the research question, “What factors affect the decision process regarding where to work?” Acknowledging the complexity of navigating and incorporating new work arrangements into employee practices, we utilize several different theoretical perspectives to build a model of work-site selection processes. We argue that the process of work-site selection depends on the relationship between a variety of individual factors such as motivation, cognitive and affective evaluation, and regulatory focus as they interact with self-regulatory resources. Specifically, we use a dynamic interactionist perspective to integrate components of social exchange, self-determination, regulatory focus, and self-regulation theories. In turn, we highlight the implications for productivity and well-being for knowledge workers as a result of the work-site selection process. While we use the terms “employers” and “knowledge workers” throughout the article, the work-site selection process extends to a multitude of work relationships beyond full-time permanent work settings. For example, we expect similar work-site selection processes to apply in the context of startups, contract-based, and part-time employment arrangements, as well as for other similarly mobile workers including, but not limited to, freelancers, contractors, adjuncts, students, volunteers, interns, consultants, and temporary workers.

**Theoretical background**

**FWAs**

In practice, the definition of FWAs has been broad, encompassing a full range of arrangements, including simply accessing work e-mail and files from home and more complex structural alterations, including the ability to change the temporal and spatial boundaries of one’s job (Leung & Zhang, 2017). Furthermore, FWAs have gone by other names, such as telecommuting, telework, virtual teams, remote work, and distributed work (Allen et al., 2015). For the purposes of this research, we focus on the subset of FWAs that specifically alter the spatial boundaries—that is, arrangements that involve working away from the traditional office.

While there has been a lack of consensus regarding definition and appellation, there are also critics and champions of spatially flexible work arrangements (Gajendran, Harrison, & Delaney-Klinger, 2015; Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2009). Among the critics, Almer and Kaplan (2002) and, more recently, Waber, Magnolfi, and Lindsay (2014) suggest that FWAs do not always result in greater performance. Instead, critics have pointed to negative outcomes of the blurring of work and home boundaries, such as work intensification, an inability to “switch off,” and increased stress, anxiety, and mental fatigue (Eddelston & Mulki, 2017; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Kellieher & Anderson, 2010). Additionally, they raise concerns of managerial control, such as the loss of face time as a proxy for performance, and diminishing task, interpersonal, and contextual performance (Gajendran et al., 2015). However, other researchers have linked FWAs to increased positive feelings toward the organization and commitment (Felstead & Henseke, 2017), higher job satisfaction (Felstead & Henseke, 2017), lower work–family conflict (Grover & Crooker, 1995), and improved work–family balance (Hill, Hawkins, Ferris, & Weitzman, 2001). Additionally, there is some evidence to suggest that telecommuters experience some positive effects regarding reduced health risks compared to non-telecommuters in many health dimensions, including alcohol abuse and tobacco use (Henke et al., 2016). Furthermore, only high-intensity telecommuters were at a slightly higher risk of experiencing higher stress than non-telecommuters (Henke et al., 2016).
When examining the mechanisms through which telecommuting intensity affects work-related well-being, Elst and colleagues (Elst et al., 2017) found that it is proximal predictors of well-being related to job characteristics, such as social support, participation in decision making, and task autonomy, that function as more influential predictors. This suggests the offering of FWAs is not as important to organizational and individual outcomes, such as productivity and well-being, as are the contextual and job characteristics for the employee using them. We posit that the experience of location autonomy through FWAs is one such critically important contextual and job characteristic affecting individual and organizational outcomes.

FWAs: the introduction of location autonomy

FWAs are situated within a long-standing conflict between scientific management and high-performance human resource practices (e.g., Peters & Waterman, 1982). The former philosophy assumes workers are shirkers and need to be watched and controlled in order to ensure productive activities, and the latter emphasizes empowerment to engage and motivate workers to do what is in the organization’s interest. Historically, scientific management and bureaucratization have pushed organization leaders to create relatively standardized work spaces to reduce costs and offer a certain degree of equality for workers of a job type. Complementing this approach, researchers identified optimum standardized work-space characteristics to boost worker performance and organizational outcomes across individuals (for a thorough review, see Spivack, Askay, & Rogelberg, 2010). In that context, not only did workers have to contend with the offerings of the assigned space in the performance of their work duties regardless of their individual needs, but also they had to willingly subject themselves to surveillance.

In contrast to this model, FWAs, as a new high-performance human resource practice, introduces a new form of autonomy—location autonomy. This form of autonomy creates a dynamic where workers are able to access a wide variety of “work environments” free from traditional forms of surveillance, and geographically distributed beyond the core organizational location. Now managers are unable to continue relying upon the traditional setup that facilitated surveillance of workers, and workers have to add navigating new work environment portfolios to their list of responsibilities. Rather, by conferring location autonomy to workers, managers use empowerment to engender worker cooperation and allow workers to discover the mix of environments that helps them realize their personal working optimum. In other words, unlike traditional arrangements that assigned uniform work spaces, FWAs that confer location autonomy allow individuals to find sites that enhance their ability to work effectively. Through personal experiences, workers learn which work sites are the most effective at enhancing desirable outcomes such as their own productivity and well-being.

Given the degree of change in practices and routines that arise through the incorporation of FWAs into an organization’s offerings, it is likely that there will be ongoing tensions between managers trying to sustain efforts to control and surveil geographically distributed workers and workers trying to incorporate new work sites into their practices. Although knowledge workers may be offered discretion in choosing where, when, and how to work, it is likely the workers will still face restrictions to the FWA options they can pursue. Knowledge workers’ perceived restrictions regarding the use of FWAs may arise from a number of sources that may include directly expressed policies or rules, informal rules about expressed policies (Kirby & Krone, 2002), their own internal control mechanisms, or even the desire to comply with others’ expectations (Spivack & Rubin, 2011). Both managers and workers will experiment and learn to navigate flexible location work structures and processes to establish new rules and norms. Through an ongoing sense-making process, the tensions surrounding FWAs are likely to influence whether or not workers choose to enact FWAs, as well as the types and variety of work sites available to and selected by workers (Weick, 1995). In support of the tensions inherent in FWAs, research suggests that FWAs often are underutilized by workers (Shockley & Allen, 2010), as correlations between program offerings and their actual use vary from .04 to .54 (Breauagh & Frye, 2006). To further examine the enactment of FWAs and specifically the work-site selection process, we turn our attention to a variety of psychological processes that are likely sources of influence. We build a model of these relationships and present them in the section that follows (Figure 1).

Theory building

FWAs and cognitive and emotional processes

People engage in cognitive and emotional evaluation processes to make sense of their work experiences (Ashkanasy, 2002; Bovey & Hede, 2001; Muchinsky, 2000; Weick, 1995). Workers invest substantial cognitive resources to understand, interpret, and engage in various actions to pursue their performance goals.
(Stubbart, 1989). Furthermore, research shows that workers’ informal understanding (formed based on cognitive and emotional processes) in the social context of the organization is more important than formal policies in influencing and shaping employee behavior (Kirby & Krone, 2002; Weick, 1995). In addition, evidence suggests that an employee’s interaction with others will strengthen interpersonal agreement regarding the meanings assigned to organizational events (Kirby & Krone, 2002).

As organizational researchers have pushed to include more considerations of emotions in work experiences, affective events theory was introduced to examine the impact of the series of “hassles and uplifts” for workers (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Together, the ongoing appraisal of these specific affective events impacts affective experiences and then leads to impact in attitudes, performance, and behavior (Ashkanasy, 2002; Ohly & Schmitt, 2015). Negative emotional experiences can lead to negative outcomes for workers and organizations alike. For example, researchers have found negative emotional reactions mediate the relationship between significant work events and daily counterproductive work behaviors (Matta, Erol-Korkmaz, Johnson, & Biçaksiz, 2014). Similarly, emotional experiences can lead to emotional exhaustion in the short run and to burnout and turnover without restorative experiences (Carson, Baumgartner, Ota, Kuhn, & Durr, 2017). By providing ideal working conditions, however, supervisors can improve positive affect and reduce negative affect (Ohly & Schmitt, 2015). To create ideal working conditions, supervisors can focus on creating an organizational climate that emphasizes development and learning, includes opportunities for goal attainment, offers problem solving and task-related success, minimizes obstacles to completing work tasks, and reduces ambiguity and insecurity (Ohly & Schmitt, 2015).

Both cognitive evaluation and affective events are especially important sources of information for workers in times of change in organizations (Bovey & Hede, 2001), such as the introduction of FWAs. For example, we suggest that the extent of location autonomy as experienced by knowledge workers is likely to vary depending on individual interpretation. Previously, Vallas (1988) highlighted the emergence of contradictory effects of technology across and within occupations—some aspects might offer the perception of greater autonomy, and others might increase suspicions of surveillance or control (Orlikowski, 1991). As such, cognitive and emotional evaluation involving formation, change, and perpetuation of understanding of organizational policies plays an important role in interpreting location autonomy in the form of FWAs (Seo, Bartunek, & Barrett, 2010). In other words, the extent to which workers feel free to choose work sites is likely to vary based on individual characteristics and their cognitive and emotional evaluations of FWAs and managerial intentions, both of which may be somewhat operating at unconscious levels (Cunningham & Zelazo, 2007; Winkielman & Bertrand, 2004). Hence, when discussing location autonomy, we are referring to perceived location autonomy, as it is the more psychologically relevant and actionable form of location autonomy in this context (Spivack & Milosevic, 2018). We submit that workers’ cognitive and emotional evaluations used in the ongoing sense-making of FWAs can prevent or assist workers during the conversion of performance intentions to effective results/actions (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Gagné & Deci, 2005; Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989).
Cognitive processes with respect to FWAs include aspects like beliefs regarding acceptability of using FWA, interpretation of FWA policies, and beliefs regarding the impact of FWAs on performance evaluations and workplace relationships. Affective events that result from the daily experiences with FWAs will also continue to impact attitudes toward FWAs and future behaviors. Therefore, simply considering workers’ intentions to use FWAs is not sufficient to guarantee the actual implementation and subsequent level of performance (Gordon, 2014; Seo et al., 2010). Instead, workers’ ongoing cognitive and affective processes likely play a substantial role in sustaining or modifying their continued attitudes toward and enactment of FWAs, and thus their work-site selection practices. We expect that cognitive and affective processes will underlie the ongoing sense-making and pursuit of FWAs and will thus impact the full work-site selection process. Therefore, we posit:

**Proposition 1:** Cognitive evaluation affects the entire work-site selection process, from perceptions of location autonomy, to interpretations of the meanings of work-site selections, to the beliefs in outcomes associated with certain work-site choices.

**Proposition 2:** Affective evaluation affects the entire work-site selection process, from emotional experiences tied to perceptions of location autonomy, to interpretations of the meanings of work-site selections, and to the outcomes associated with certain work-site choices.

**Social exchange relationships in FWAs**

Influenced by cognitive and affective evaluation, issues of identity and exchange relationships become important in understanding knowledge workers’ interpretation of and reaction to FWAs. FWAs, for now, are seen as unique arrangements that are afforded to a certain type of employee or particular categories of jobs (Donnelly, 2006; Kehoe & Wright, 2013). The availability of flexible options is not distributed equally among employed individuals. Rather, organizational leaders define which human resources are core and which are peripheral. Typically, human resources that are deemed peripheral are externalized, outsourced, or contracted for shorter periods of time, or hired only on a part-time basis (Broschak, Davis-Blake, & Block, 2008), while those highly skilled workers who are labeled “core” are given a more central and privileged position (Appelbaum & Batt, 1994). The result is a flatter hierarchy with the core group of autonomous and functionally flexible workers (Rubin, 1995). Therefore, knowledge workers who produce outputs considered core to the organization are more likely to be granted location autonomy through organizational policies and procedures, relative to other workers. Even within an organization that promotes the use of FWAs more broadly, they may still be unevenly distributed; one study showed that some supervisors apply policies inconsistently even within their work groups (Eaton & Bailyn, 2000). Indeed, telecommuting, as an FWA, is seen as “a nonstandard, customizable, and individually negotiated work arrangement” dependent on the worker–supervisor relationship (Gajendran et al., 2015, p. 358).

The unequal distribution of location autonomy through FWAs to workers in an organization creates a sense-making problem for a worker (Weick, 1995). The worker will have to cognitively and emotionally evaluate their “difference” in being granted location autonomy. Because location autonomy is likely granted only to those workers who are seen as core to the mission of the organization—a “professional” knowledge worker class—it has direct implications for the identity and self-verification processes of the worker (Swann, 1987; Thatcher & Zhu, 2006). For example, the workers will recognize that they have been differentially granted the FWA relationship because of their occupation of this “professional” knowledge worker class.

Similarly, the provision of FWAs to knowledge workers by their supervisors is likely to affect the exchange relationship (Gajendran et al., 2015). Social exchange theory suggests that when we perceive someone doing us a favor, we feel the need to repay that favor in kind (Blau, 1964). Location autonomy, like other forms of autonomy, can align individual and organizational interests, and also can be considered a valuable resource in an exchange relationship (Spivack & Milosevic, 2018; Gajendran et al., 2015). Under social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Cropazano & Mitchell, 2005), we expect that knowledge workers would perceive FWA as a privilege; consistent with other high performance work practices, knowledge workers would want to give back in kind to the organization/manager for that privilege. In the exchange relationship, knowledge workers would want to build trust in the use of FWA, and would experience felt obligation to perform well when taking advantage of these flexible work arrangements and also engage in other citizenship behaviors (Gajendran et al., 2015). The knowledge worker will likely perceive that the supervisor is granting the worker something “special” because of the class of worker this worker represents and will feel compelled to give something back in.
exchange, congruent with social exchange theory and leader member exchange processes (Gajendran et al., 2015). Additionally, through the process of self-verification, knowledge workers will want to behave in ways that demonstrate that they belong in this “special” class of workers through the successful performance of their work duties (Swann, 1987; Thatcher & Zhu, 2006). As a result, knowledge workers would select work sites to enhance organization productivity. This process may offer some explanation for previous findings of work intensification among telecommuting knowledge workers and also the turnover intentions of workers barred from telecommuting (Choi, 2018; Felstead & Henseke, 2017; Pérez-Zapata, Pascual, Álvarez-Hernández, & Collado, 2016). Thus, we posit:

**Proposition 3:** When knowledge workers perceive location autonomy as a privilege, in exchange they make work-site selections reflecting goals in sync with the organization, such as improved productivity.

Strength of an individual’s exchange ideology is likely to play a role in the relationship between cognitive processes and the work-site selection process (Cropazano & Mitchell, 2005). Responses made by individuals in exchange situations vary. Some of this variance can be attributed to differences in the strength of individual exchange ideology. For example, Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) found a stronger relationship between perceived organizational support and absenteeism among individuals with high exchange ideology. Subsequent studies found that having a high exchange ideology also strengthened the relationship between perceived organizational support and felt obligation (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001). As mentioned already, location autonomy can be considered a valuable resource in an exchange relationship, and knowledge workers would perceive FWAs as a privilege (Gajendran et al., 2015). This effect will be greater for those individuals with a stronger individual exchange ideology.

**Proposition 4:** Strength of exchange ideology will moderate the relationship between social exchange and work-site selection, such that a stronger social exchange ideology will lead to a stronger positive relationship between social exchange and work-site selection.

Through the mechanisms presented here, cognitive and emotional appraisals of FWAs, and specifically the perception of location autonomy granted to the worker, affect the social exchange relationship at work. However, perceptions of location autonomy also affect motivation processes within the individual. We discuss these mechanisms in the next section.

**Perceived location autonomy and motivation**

Cognition and emotion affect motivation through perceptions of autonomy (Sherman & Smith, 1984). Specifically, there is an interplay of individual motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and external factors such as organizational policies and rewards (Sherman & Smith, 1984). On the one hand, feeling and perceiving constraints through organizational policies and procedures diminishes intrinsic motivation, while on the other hand, feeling and perceiving freedom increases intrinsic motivation (for a review, see Sherman & Smith, 1984). This corresponds with the job characteristics model (e.g., see Hackman & Oldham, 1975), in that having autonomy has positive effects on motivation processes of workers. In fact, scholars across a broad array of social science disciplines have demonstrated that both workers and organizations benefit when workers perceive having high levels of work autonomy. Organizations notice gains in productivity, quality, and financial performance, and experience reduced turnover, increased organizational commitment, and higher levels of organizational citizenship behavior (Appelbaum, Bailey, Berg, & Kalleberg, 2000; Gajendran & Harrison, 2007; Kehoe & Wright, 2013; Peng, Hwang, & Wong, 2010; Rubin & Brody, 2005). At the individual level, workers with high autonomy, especially those with high growth needs orientation, experience improved mood, well-being, and creativity (e.g., see Amabile, 1989; Shalley, Gilson, & Blum, 2009). Perceived location autonomy operates as other forms of job autonomy, as recent research shows that higher levels of perceived location autonomy are linked to more intrinsic forms of motivation (Spivack & Milosevic, 2018).

**Motivation and self-regulatory processes**

Self-determination theory (SDT) combined with self-regulatory theory offers an attractive rationale for autonomy’s link to these positive outcomes for workers and the organization (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 1991; Ryan & Deci, 2000). SDT highlights the range of motivation a worker can experience, from intrinsic to extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation refers to the engagement in an activity due to the inherent satisfaction associated with it; extrinsic motivation refers to the engagement in an activity in order to attain a separate desirable outcome; amotivation refers to no motivation toward an activity (Ryan & Deci, 2000).
Complementing SDT, self-regulatory theory explains the effort individuals must invest in transforming their desires into behaviors that meet their long-term goals. More specifically, self-regulation theory (Schmeichel & Baumeister, 2004), which is closely tied to ego depletion theory (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998), suggests that people possess limited resources to self-regulate behavior. That is, people have finite means to direct themselves to activities that are congruent with their long-term goals. The pursuit of these long-term goals is more beneficial but, perhaps, more depleting than satisfying shorter term urges.

In the workplace, many activities consume self-regulatory resources, including engaging in emotional labor (Trougakos, Beal, Cheng, Hideg, & Zweig, 2015), behaving in accordance with procedural fairness rules (Johnson, Lanaj, & Barnes, 2014), and maintaining awareness to identify and resolve emerging problems (Lin & Johnson, 2015). Because work-site selection is embedded in the context of an organization that may be fraught with tensions between the worker’s and the organization’s desires, we posit that work-site selection represents another activity that can deplete self-regulatory resources.

Proposition 5: Work-site selections in line with organizational goals can deplete knowledge worker resources when such choices require self-regulation.

Furthermore, the amount of resources required to bring behavior in line with organizational expectations is affected by the degree to which an individual is intrinsically motivated to perform the work activity. Workers high in intrinsic motivation will not require additional resources to behave in ways that benefit the organization, as those goals are already shared and intrinsic to the individual’s aims (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Instead, it is those workers with less intrinsic forms of motivation who must draw upon self-regulatory resources to align themselves with organizational aims; self-regulatory resources enable the worker to engage in the required organizational activities despite these behaviors conflicting with the individual’s intrinsic desires and preferences. SDT refers to this process of converting extrinsic motivation to self-determined behavior through processes of internalization and integration. Here, internalization refers to incorporating values or regulations from the external requirements into oneself, while integration refers to the process of making external regulation a part of the internal regulation processes, such that it originates with an individual’s sense of self or identity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In this way, extrinsic motivation lies on a continuum that reflects the degree to which one has internalized and integrated regulation related to an activity; this lies on a continuum related to the extent to which an individual experiences motivation resulting from an internal (self-determined) or external locus of control (not self-determined), or even amotivation when there is no regulation (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Ryan & Deci, 2000). This continuum also reflects the amount of regulatory resources invested in the performance of a behavior, such that fewer resources are needed to enact the behavior when the motivation type most resembles intrinsic motivation and more resources are needed as the motivation type approaches amotivated (Meyer, Becker, & Vandenbarghe, 2004). In the case of work-site selection among knowledge workers, we would expect that more intrinsically motivated workers would require fewer self-regulatory resources to make work-site selections in line with organizational expectations, such as achieving productivity goals as compared to extrinsically motivated workers. Reflecting this logic, we specifically posit:

Proposition 6: Compared to extrinsically motivated knowledge workers, more intrinsically motivated knowledge workers will consume fewer regulatory resources in the pursuit of work-site selections that support organizational goals.

Once self-regulatory resources are expended, people are more likely to choose activities that make them feel better in the short term as these offer immediate gratification and replenishment, though these activities often come at the expense of people’s longer term goals (Baumeister, Heatherton, & Tice, 1994; Schmeichel & Inzlicht, 2013). Additionally, when self-regulatory resources are in short supply, decision-making processes become impaired and people have difficulty considering their potential courses of action (Baumeister & Heatherton, 1996). In this state, it is likely that people will struggle to resist their urges and instead engage in behavior demonstrating a lack of thought (Fennis, Janssen, & Vohs, 2009). In support of these theoretical arguments, researchers have shown that resource depletion can lead to a variety of negative behaviors for individuals, such as impulsive overspending (Vohs & Faber, 2007), overeating by dieters (Vohs & Heatherton, 2000), and prejudicial responding (Richeson & Shelton, 2003).

Just as resource depletion leads to negative behaviors and outcomes for individuals, so too do various negative outcomes arise for workplaces as a result of resource depletion. Some outcomes of resource depletion in workers include decreases in task and other citizenship behaviors (e.g., Lin & Johnson, 2015;
Trougakos et al., 2015) and increases in unethical and deviant behaviors (e.g., Christian & Ellis, 2011; Lin, Ma, & Johnson, 2016), such as abuse of workers (Mawritz, Greenbaum, Butts, & Graham, 2017). Depleted workers may also be inclined to choose tasks that are easier to complete to achieve a faster sense of achievement and potentially some replenishment, even if their pursuit may mean forgoing investment in the longer term tasks that are more important to the accomplishment of longer term goals (Dahm, Glomb, Manchester, & Leroy, 2015).

Given these past findings, we would expect that depleted knowledge workers would make work-site selections that offer replenishment and other short-term benefits instead of those that further their long-term performance goals. In this way, we posit that there is a moderation relationship between the amount of self-regulatory resources available and the translation of motivation to work-site selections that are aligned with longer term organizational goals (such as enhanced productivity) versus shorter term individual goals (such as enhanced well-being).

**Proposition 7:** The ability of workers to self-regulate their work-site selections to effectively pursue organizational goals will be moderated by having adequate regulatory resources available to do so. We expect depleted resources to lead to more emphasis on work-site choices that offer well-being outcomes rather than productivity outcomes.

Researchers have shown that resource loss is a stronger predictor of psychological outcomes than resource gains (Hobfoll, Stevens, & Zalta, 2015), making efforts to stem resource depletion a meaningful endeavor. To this end and to counter the effects of resource depletion, researchers have identified means for replenishing resources. Some of these means for replenishment include experiencing high autonomy (Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2006) and taking breaks throughout the day (Trougakos, Beal, Green, & Weiss, 2008). By having autonomy, or the discretion over effort investment at work and the ability to choose when to take breaks, the need for resource recovery is reduced (Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2006). In other words, workers are better able to manage the process of resource expenditure in the process of working when they have higher levels of autonomy, buffering against fatigue and resource depletion during the work day (Sonnentag & Zijlstra, 2006).

Another source of replenishment or protection of resources may be the environment itself. Hobfoll and colleagues also coined the term caravan passageways to describe access to resource-rich environmental conditions that promote resilience and protect individual resources (Hobfoll, 2012; Hobfoll et al., 2015). While they described resource rich environments on a community scale, some of the key elements may be useful in defining resource-rich work environments that may offer resource replenishment to workers, such as safety, elements of leisure or play, nontoxicity, green spaces, and appropriate crowding (Hobfoll et al., 2015). In fact, some environments, called “restorative environments,” have been recognized for their ability to restore resources for attentional processes (Berto, 2005). Based on these prior works, we posit that work sites themselves vary in their resource offerings or the extent to which they are resource depleting versus resource replenishing, simply by occupying the space, regardless of the work activities undertaken within them.

**Proposition 8:** Work sites vary along a continuum from resource depleting to resource replenishing.

Through the varying qualities of the environments themselves, we suggest that workers are able to use location autonomy to buffer against resource depletion by making choices about where to work, in addition to the expenditure of effort in their work day. Because of the resource-replenishing benefits of autonomy, combined with the resource replenishing qualities intrinsic to some environments that can be used as work sites, we expect perceived location autonomy to similarly buffer against resource depletion in the work-site selection process. For example, a worker may be able to use location autonomy to choose to work in an environment that meets his or her needs in accomplishing an organizational goal—an environment that also offers a serene view while working on a stressful task—and through that serene view, may reduce his or her resource expenditure compared to working in similarly appropriate work environment that happens to also be overly complex or involves lots of distracting elements. Therefore, we posit:

**Proposition 9:** Knowledge workers with higher perceived location autonomy experience less resource depletion as a result of choosing work sites than those with low perceived location autonomy, as they are able to preferentially select work sites with resource-replenishing qualities when needed in the performance of work tasks.

**Motivation, regulatory focus, and work-site selection**

Regulatory focus theory adds to the discussion regarding motivation and self-regulatory processes by describing how people self-regulate through two different
regulatory systems that accommodate different needs in goal pursuit (Higgins, 1997, 1998; Higgins & Spiegel, 2004). The general premise is that people work to minimize divergences between actual and desirable end states while maximizing the divergences between actual and undesirable end states. In other words, they seek to maximize pleasure and minimize pain (Higgins, 1997, 1998). Furthermore, end states can be expressed as ideals or “oughts,” such that ideals represent what the individual wants to be/achieve, and “oughts” represent what others expect or want the individual to accomplish. The pursuit of ideals is associated with a promotion focus in efforts to satisfy nurturance needs, while the pursuit of “oughts” is associated with a prevention focus in efforts to satisfy security needs (Meyer et al., 2004). Researchers have recognized the overlapping nature of self-determination, self-regulatory, and regulatory focus theories, and have worked to integrate them for an understanding of goal-directed behavior (e.g., Meyer et al., 2004). Similar to mechanisms of self-regulation in SDT, the pursuit of one’s ideals relates to having a promotion focus, and comes from desires congruent with those internal to the individual, whereas pursuing “oughts” relates to the prevention focus and derives from goals or obligations that come external to the individual (Meyer et al., 2004). In this way, we again expect that promotion goals will consume fewer self-regulatory resources than prevention goals because of the intrinsic alignment with an individual’s desires. However, an exploration of regulatory focus adds to the discussion by elucidating how an individual frames the work-site selection decision, which is recognized for impacting choices.

How knowledge workers view the choice of where to work is likely to be impacted by their motivational state, which will then influence their regulatory focus. For example, more intrinsically motivated workers are more likely to focus on their ideal environments for engaging in their work activities, while extrinsically motivated workers are more likely to focus on where they “ought” to work. Specifically, intrinsically motivated knowledge workers will look to seek pleasure through work-environment choices via a promotion focus, while extrinsically motivated knowledge workers will seek to avoid punishment through their work-environment choices. Regulatory focus has also been linked to sensitivity to positive and negative information and experiences (Lanaj, Chang, & Johnson, 2012). In particular, a promotion focus makes an individual sensitive to the presence or absence of positive cues, which can affect emotional and cognitive appraisals. As an example, receiving a positive cue, such as an appreciative e-mail from a supervisor for performance recognition, can elicit feelings of cheerfulness, while not receiving such an e-mail when it is expected can lead to feelings of dejection (Lanaj et al., 2012). Meanwhile, a prevention focus sensitizes individuals to the presence or absence of a negative outcome, like a verbal reprimand, such that when they do not receive one, it can lead to calm, but if they do receive one, it can lead to frustration or agitation (Lanaj et al., 2012).

Furthermore, through these processes and experiences, and as a result of having different regulatory foci, we would expect different behaviors to follow. For example, research has shown that a prevention focus (the pursuit of “oughts”) is associated with more distinct rules to follow regarding behavior, such that there are clear criteria governing behavior. In contrast, a promotion focus (the pursuit of ideals) is more abstract and allows for interpretation and exploration, and can be changed to offer an increasing source of challenge to the individual (Meyer et al., 2004). As a result, individuals with a prevention focus likely make behavioral decisions to satisfy the minimum requirements, while individuals with a promotion focus likely make behavioral decisions to maximize accomplishment (Higgins, 1998). Additionally, researchers have found that having a promotion focus enhances creativity (Friedman & Foerster, 2001; W-H. & Chiu, 2002).

In the work-site selection process, we would expect regulatory focus to impact the work-site selection process by impacting resource expenditures as well as the goals associated with work-site selections. For example, congruent with our previously introduced proposition 6, we’d expect promotion-focused workers to require fewer regulatory resources in the pursuit of “ideal” work sites to meet organizational needs and goals, as this pursuit is aligned with their individual goals, compared with prevention-focused workers. Additionally, we would anticipate that prevention-focused workers will be intent on identifying work sites that meet the minimal criterial specified by the organization so that they can comply with expectations and “oughts.” In contrast, we expect promotion-focused workers to be more interested in exercising creativity in work-site selections, such that they will explore a wider variety of work sites to identify the most productive ones to achieve organizational goals.

**Proposition 10: Self-regulatory processes will mediate the relationship between regulatory focus and work-site selection.** Promotion-focused workers engage in different self-regulatory processes, including the investment of fewer self-regulatory resources, in work-site selection
than prevention-focused workers. We expect promotion-focused workers to be interested in exploring and finding highly productive work environments, while prevention-focused workers will prioritize finding work sites that are less likely to result in negative workplace consequences (such as negative management reaction).

Outcomes of work-site selections

In the preceding theory building section, we have introduced a number of propositions that have implications for goals of work-site selections and therefore are tied to outcomes of the work-site selection process. Specifically, we spoke to trade-offs between productivity and well-being, as well as trade-offs between resource depletion and resource replenishment. Here, we reiterate those relationships and explain how we posit that the process unfolds in driving these outcomes.

First, we explained numerous pathways toward higher levels of productivity through work-site selections. For example, we expect knowledge workers with higher levels of perceived location autonomy to feel more driven to accomplish productivity goals through work-site selections in exchange for the privilege of that additional element of job control granted by their supervisor. Another pathway to higher levels of productivity would be expected through more intrinsically motivated knowledge workers, as making work-site selections to boost productivity would be in concert with their individual desires. Similarly, workers with a promotion focus would be more likely to search for optimal work sites that offer higher productivity outcomes. Finally, knowledge workers with ample self-regulatory resources would be more likely to make the necessary self-regulatory investments to choose work sites that meet organizational goals for productivity.

Second, there are several pathways that would lead to higher levels of personal well-being for knowledge workers through their work-site selection process. For example, knowledge workers who experience higher levels of perceived location autonomy may be buffered somewhat from the depletion of regulatory resources in the work-site selection process, as autonomy is often a source of such positive protection. Individuals who are more intrinsically motivated often experience boosts to well-being at the same time as they work to enhance their performance because their individual goals are in sync with organizational goals. Therefore, knowledge workers who are more intrinsically motivated and more promotion focused are more likely to enjoy positive impact to their well-being as a result of their work-site selections. Interestingly, regulatory resources can impact well-being of knowledge workers through very different mechanisms. First, workers with ample regulatory resources will experience fewer decrements to well-being as a result of their work-site selections. But second, knowledge workers without adequate regulatory resources will likely make short-term decisions that benefit their individual well-being while at the same time hindering their organizational productivity. This would only operate in the short term, as it is likely to result in negative outcomes from their supervisor. Similarly, extrinsically motivated workers and prevention-focused workers may only work to satisfy minimal criteria to be in compliance with organizational goals, so instead, they may allow themselves to pursue work sites that offer some well-being benefits simultaneously, if this does not come at the expense of meeting organizational goals.

Third, resource depletion is likely to result from work-site selections via a number of pathways. First, experiencing lower levels of perceived location autonomy will diminish self-regulatory resources available in work-site selections, and therefore could contribute to greater consumption of regulatory resources. Workers with more extrinsic forms of motivation will require more self-regulatory resources to perform work tasks that meet organizational goals, because of the investment required to align their individual goals with organizational goals.

Fourth, resource replenishment is likely to result from various mechanisms. First, higher levels of perceived location autonomy give the knowledge worker access to more resources, such as more variety in resource replenishing environments and more control over the work-site selection process. These aspects can lead to higher levels of resource replenishment. Also, more intrinsically motivated workers are more likely to also be more promotion focused and be personally rewarded through successful work-site selections. As a result, these positive experiences of effective work-site selections plus positive outcomes resulting from these choices can replenish self-regulatory resources.

As would be expected of a dynamic interactionist model, we show how these outcomes then form a feedback loop in the process model we have developed. Particularly, the outcomes of productivity, well-being, and resource depletion/replenishment will impact future regulatory resources available to knowledge workers in the process of work-site selection (see corresponding arrow in Figure 1). Interestingly, Hobfoll (2001) identifies a phenomenon called loss spirals, which can stem from an activity that leads to resource depletion, which then reduces the resources
available for the next threat or loss to confront an individual. From our model, we can foresee both positive and negative spirals related to resources in the work-site selection process (Figure 2). Although, as we have previously mentioned, losses are more psychologically detrimental to individuals (Hobfoll et al., 2015), we can imagine both spirals would have important long-term implications to organizations.

Specifically, we can foresee a negative resource loss spiral. A negative resource loss spiral could involve an extrinsically motivated worker with low levels of perceived location autonomy, who would then be more likely to have a prevention focus, experience more negative affective and cognitive evaluations, and thus, consume more self-regulatory resources in organizational goal pursuits through work-site selections. As a result of more extensive investments in work-site selections that conform to organizational expectations, the knowledge worker would experience greater resource depletion, which through a loss spiral would then likely lead to negative psychological outcomes of exhaustion, dissatisfaction, reduced performance, reduced organizational commitment, reduced accomplishment, and eventually, burnout and higher turnover intentions (Carson et al., 2017; Örtqvist & Wincent, 2010).

We could also see a contrasting positive resource replenishment gain spiral. Such a spiral could involve an intrinsically motivated worker with high levels of perceived location autonomy, who would then be more likely to have a promotion focus, experience more positive affective and cognitive evaluations, and thus, consume fewer self-regulatory resources in organizational goal pursuits through work-site selections. As a result of requiring fewer resource investments in converting motivation into work-site selections aligned with organizational goals while also being predisposed toward exploration of the most beneficial work sites for the performance of work tasks, the knowledge worker would likely experience greater resource replenishment and buffering from resource loss. Through a gain spiral, this pattern would then likely lead to more positive psychological outcomes, insulating the knowledge worker from experiencing exhaustion, dissatisfaction, reduced performance, reduced organizational commitment, reduced accomplishment, and eventually, burnout and higher turnover intentions (Carson et al., 2017; Örtqvist & Wincent, 2010).

Discussion

Many organizations are attracted by benefits of flexible, mobile, and remote work arrangements due to reduced real-estate costs. Simultaneously, workers seem to find FWAs attractive due to the increased flexibility and greater control over their work performance. As organizations have implemented FWAs, they have had mixed results with respect to their use (Breaugh & Frye, 2006; Shockley & Allen, 2010) and the organizational and individual outcomes associated with their use (Gajendran et al., 2015; Kossek et al., 2009).

Through this research, we make several contributions. First, given the conflicting results associated with offering FWAs, we sought to develop a model examining the psychological underpinnings of the

![Figure 2. Positive (resource gains) and negative (resource losses) spirals of work-site selection.](image-url)
work-site selection process in hopes that it would offer some explanation regarding these variable outcomes. In this article, we explore the crucial roles of perception, emotion, cognition, and motivation in the work-site selection process. In the context of a mobile workforce comprised of knowledge workers, the multidisciplinary perspective offered here provides insight into how enacting FWAs is constrained and augmented by psychological factors, which in turn affect work-site selections and offer significant implications for productivity and well-being. We go beyond the simple idea that granting workers access to FWAs will increase organizational performance. Instead, by integrating numerous theories, we offer clarity in how granting workers more location autonomy through FWAs may or may not lead to worker and organization goal alignment and hence, desirable outcomes through the work-site selection process.

Second, we integrate numerous theories and perspectives to study the several direct and indirect paths through which perceived location autonomy derived from FWAs in organizations influences the process of work-site selection. First, we acknowledge the overriding and ongoing influence of cognitive and emotional evaluation throughout the process, from first unconscious reactions to FWAs, to interpreting the meaning of FWAs, to discerning the expectations for whether and how they may be enacted, to the interpretation and sense-making based on outcomes associated with their use. Second, through social exchange theory, we highlight how the interpretation of the granting and constraining of location autonomy will influence the work-site selection process. Third, through an integration of self-determination, self-regulation, and regulatory focus theories, we are able to examine the microlevel transformation of motivation into behavioral intent and work-site selection goals. More specifically, we discuss how the process of self-regulation and the ongoing management of regulatory resources influences the translation of motivation into work-site selections. We acknowledge that emotional and cognitive evaluations, perceptions of location autonomy, and qualities intrinsic to the work sites themselves can all serve as sources of resource depletion or resource replenishment. In so doing, we move beyond the explicit assumption that motivation drives work-site selection, and instead, we show that there is a dynamic interactionist experience occurring in the work-site selection process. Particularly, knowledge workers are engaging in a complex process of ongoing cognitive and emotional evaluation of current and past experiences related to FWAs and resultant perceptions of location autonomy, while also managing the process of self-regulation, which all together have a direct impact on the process of work-site selection and the outcomes of those selections.

Third, through the resultant framework we developed to illustrate the varied outcomes that may arise for the individual and the organization through the work-site decision process, we provide actionable insights. Because of the variability in outcomes, practitioners and future researchers need to recognize that the implementation of flexible working arrangements matters. We discuss specific steps organizations can follow in the practical implications section that follows.

**Limitations**

As is the nature of theory-building work, and while we drew on extant research to develop the model, the relationships proposed here are in need of empirical testing and validation. We present some ways to empirically test the model here. Similarly, while we present numerous theories and perspectives to study how FWAs in organizations influence the process of work-site selection, it is potentially incomplete. For example, there are many other theories, like social network theory (Scott, 2000) and work–family border theory (Clark, 2000), which could offer additional insights into the relationships we have proposed. We suggest that to fully understand FWAs and performance, researchers need to expand the scope to include all work groups that might be affected when an individual adopts FWAs. When researchers consider managers, support staff, vendors, clients, and others, theory-building efforts can progress holistically. For example, social network theory (Scott, 2000) could highlight the influence of the nature of dyadic relationships and communication patterns both among colleagues from the work context and among individuals beyond the work domain in the work-site selection process. Similarly, work–family border theory (Clark, 2000) would provide a look at other domain members’ influence in the work-site selection process, as well as the preference of the knowledge worker in integration or segmentation of work versus nonwork domains, which could have significant influence on the work-site selection process.

**Suggestions for research**

While the conceptual limitations mentioned in the preceding represent additional opportunities for future research, there are a number of other opportunities to further this research worth mentioning here. First, we recognize that there are several individual-level
characteristics, such as demographic characteristics, physical attributes (e.g., disabilities which may influence ability to access or use a variety of work settings), personality traits, and work values, which likely play important roles in the model. For example, we speculate that many different personal characteristics would affect cognitive and emotional evaluation processes or exchange rules. For example, individuals from older generations that did not grow up with the technology that enables FWAs may see their effective use as more daunting than younger generations more familiar with and accustomed to incorporating technology into their living and working practices. Similarly, there is a need to explore how Big-Five personality dimensions interact with the offerings of FWAs to affect work-site selection processes. It is likely that motivation and self-regulatory processes manifest themselves differently across personality types, resulting in different work-site selection practices and performance outcomes (Barrick & Mount, 1991). It would be worthwhile to devote more research to these topics.

Another important avenue of research is to develop a typology of work sites that are available for workers to choose from and how those fit in the model. For example, individual differences may influence preferences for the different types of work sites, different work sites may be perceived to be within the bounds of those permitted or restricted by FWAs, and the qualities inherent to the environments themselves may impact the resource depletion/enhancement experienced by the workers that use them. We expect that the field of interior design and space programming may help ascertain the generalizability of this concept. Flexibility in work-site selection is a multidimensional concept and covers a wide area of arrangements and options. To illustrate, organizations could be flexible in terms of the workload or how it is allocated (part-time jobs; job sharing), in work place/space where the work is done (telecommuting, virtual office, gym coffee shops), in work time (flextime schedule, compressed work week, and shift work), or at what activity level the worker may complete the work (while sitting, standing, or working out). Although our article focuses on location autonomy of FWAs, the model could be furthered by including these other dimensions. We submit that our assertions may have similar relationships with these dimensions, but a nuanced variance cannot be ruled out. This is an area that could be addressed in future research.

Along with ideas for conceptual development to enrich the model that we propose here, we conclude that there is a clear need for further qualitative and quantitative empirical research. First, qualitatively, we believe detailed case studies of organizations would help not only in building and refining theory, but also in examining rates of use and the actual costs and benefits involved with spatially flexible work arrangements. Complimenting case studies, other qualitative research studies, in forms such as interviews or focus groups that examine the extent to which “real choice” is open to workers, should include information on the context in which FWAs are introduced, as well as the psychological perceptions of the workers.

Second, quantitative empirical studies that test all, or part, of the conceptual framework presented here are important for exploring the extent to which the proposed conceptual relationships between cognition, emotion, motivation, and resource depletion have predictive power. To do so, we recommend a longitudinal design, such as through the use of an ecological momentary assessment protocol to measure emotional and cognitive states as well as perceived level of regulatory resources (e.g., current feelings of depletion or need for replenishment) alongside the work-site selection process.

**Practical implications**

Incorporating technology to enable FWAs seems a relatively easy endeavor, while the actual implementation of FWAs and the requisite adjustments to work processes, human resources (HR) practices, organizational culture, and possibly even revisions to the business model offer more formidable challenges. Our use of a dynamic interactionist perspective to integrate mechanisms of social exchange, self-determination, regulatory focus, and self-regulation theories illustrates the complexity of the work-site selection process as tied to the outcomes of productivity, well-being, and resource depletion/replenishment. By highlighting the interplay of trade-offs between productivity and well-being alongside trade-offs between resource depletion and resource replenishment, we acknowledge the individual nature of the links between FWAs and outcomes relevant to individuals and organizations alike. This framework provides justification for the diverse outcomes that can arise from the implementation of FWAs both within the same organizational context and across organizations.

Developing an understanding of the complexity of these relationships assists management in evaluating its own performance in the implementation and
management of FWAs in their organization. As we have illustrated, FWAs entail much more than employers simply granting workers freedom to work from different locations; it affects work processes, organizational culture, communication styles, and other behaviors. Hence, we move the discussion away from the simple assertion that granting workers access to FWAs will increase organizational performance and/or reduce costs. Instead, managers need to conceptualize the association between work-site selections and productivity as more than a choice–outcome relationship—it involves the interplay of a variety of factors.

Specifically, when implementing FWAs, and as is the case in any organizational change program, unless proper care is taken to design the initiative to achieve a particular goal and implement it in a planned manner, the change may bring about no performance gain and/or negative outcomes. While there is ample evidence that FWAs can provide benefits to both employers and workers, in order for FWAs to succeed, businesses must alleviate employee concerns and may wish to focus on facilitating the conversion of extrinsic to intrinsic motivation through the social environment (Teixeira, Patrick, & Mata, 2011). To do this, Teixeira et al. (2011) recommend offering ample autonomy to support goal pursuits, limiting use of pressure and control, creating contexts that offer ideal challenges that are not overwhelmingly difficult, and providing a warm and accepting climate that rewards experimentation by accepting failures as well as successes.

In the context of FWAs and work-site selection, this could be accomplished in several ways. First, employers could work to ensure workers perceive higher levels of location autonomy. This could be done through establishing a culture supportive of FWAs and encouraging broad-based participation, for example. Second, employers could educate knowledge workers regarding the variety of work sites they may wish to consider and encourage experimentation with a wide variety of work sites. Workers could be encouraged and rewarded for discovering their own personal best environments for work, and not responding negatively to failures when they occasionally occur. Via these methods, employers would, in essence, be employing a promotion-focused posture toward FWAs, whereby the framing of use of FWAs is positive and highlights positive challenges for workers with opportunities for great rewards. In so doing, employers could try to shift knowledge workers to the positive spiral “track” of the work-site selection process. We recommend that organizations consider these factors when incorporating FWAs into their organizational practices.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have introduced a model of work-site selection that highlights the complex interactions between offering FWAs, perceived location autonomy, social exchange, self-determination, regulatory focus, and self-regulation theories. This model offers some explanation for the differential outcomes that have been observed with respect to worker productivity and well-being. We also propose some actionable insights from the model regarding building a supportive climate and implementing FWA-supportive practices to enhance the positive outcomes associated with their availability and effective use. And finally, we have introduced a number of areas that we believe represent exciting and fruitful areas for future research.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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