Digital Presenteeism as a Stratified Signalling System

How Managers Interpret Digital Connectivity Behaviours Across Gender, Parenthood, and Ethnicity

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Abstract

As digital technologies and homeworking become more embedded in contemporary work, employees face growing pressure to remain constantly visible and responsive. Yet who benefits or bears the costs of these expectations are far from equal. Using a vignette experimental survey of 1,039 UK managers, we examine how managers interpret workers' digital presenteeism behaviours and whether these patterns vary by gender, parental status, ethnicity, and homeworking status. The findings show that while digital presenteeism consistently enhances managerial evaluations of workers, enhancing their career perspectives, its returns are stratified. It is workers whose commitment is most readily doubted, mothers and Black women, for whom digital signals operate as the most powerful correctives to prevailing managerial stereotypes, producing evaluative returns that exceed those of workers who already approximate the ideal worker image. Yet, although remote working bias is substantially reduced when workers engage in digital presenteeism, those who are already in precarious evaluative positions are penalised most when they set clearer digital boundaries whilst remote working. These patterns suggest that always-on digital behaviours are less a matter of individual preference or habit than a response to unequal managerial expectations, with the burden falling hardest on those least able to bear them.

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a steep rise in the use of digital technologies at work and the use of mobile devices for work purposes (Chung and Yuan, in review). For example, in 2021, 60% of workers across Europe used digital devices for work all the time (Eurofound, 2022), and a more recent survey found that 90% of EU workers rely on digital devices for their jobs (Gonzalez Vazquez et al., 2025). With it, we are increasingly seeing pressure on employees to remain constantly visible and responsive through work communication tools (Howcroft et al., 2024; Mazmanian et al., 2013), a phenomenon we refer to as digital presenteeism (Chung and Yuan, in review). In a recent report of workers across four European countries (Belgium, France, Italy, and Spain), it was found that over 80% received work-related communications outside their contractual working hours during a typical working week, with the vast majority (almost 9 out of 10) having responded to such communications (Eurofound, 2023).

Digital presenteeism behaviours hinder workers' ability to rest and physically and mentally detach from work (Sonnentag and Fritz, 2015), potentially harming both workers' well-being and company performance (Wajcman, 2015; Derks and Bakker, 2014; Büchler et al., 2020). Although some studies point to habits, personality traits, and other individual-level factors as explanations for workers' digital connectivity behaviours (Boswell and Olson-Buchanan, 2007; Schlachter et al., 2018; Tennakoon et al., 2013), an increasing body of research points to broader organisational cultures and workplace culture expectations that constrain workers' choices (Derks et al., 2015; Howcroft et al., 2024; Wajcman and Rose, 2011). In other words, digital presenteeism is increasingly being seen as a way for workers to signal work commitment, and motivation especially in professional and ideal worker settings (Foley et al., 2024; Howcroft et al., 2024; Mazmanian et al., 2013). In fact, even when managers acknowledge the negative consequences of an "always-on" culture and after-hours digital work connectivity,

they continue to view workers who engage in such behaviours more favourably (Buechel and Solinas, 2025).

The paper asks whether there is variation across population groups in how managers interpret workers' digital presenteeism behaviours as signals (Spence, 1973). Although such behaviours are often evaluated positively (Buechel and Solinas, 2025), their signalling value may depend on workers' social positions and their proximity to the ideal worker image (Correll and Ridgeway, 2006; Williams, 2000), resulting in compensatory, muted, or amplified effects (Pedulla, 2018). On the one hand, digital presenteeism may have stronger effects for groups such as mothers and racial minorities by functioning as a compensatory signal, compensating for the bias managers may hold against these workers' work devotion and commitment. On the other hand, these same behaviours may yield weaker or more ambivalent returns if they compound existing biases and are interpreted with suspicion, again due to the biased expectations managers hold about these workers' capabilities and commitment (Correll and Ridgeway, 2006).

Similarly, digital presenteeism behaviours may carry greater signalling value for workers who work remotely (Afota et al., 2023). Due to proximity bias, managers perceive those who are more 'visible' to them, namely, who they can see in the office more often, more favourably (Cristea and Leonardi, 2019), which puts remote workers at a disadvantage. Working from home may further signal to employers that workers have other responsibilities outside of work and may not be able to prioritise work (Williams et al., 2013; Chung, 2020), and live up to the ideal worker status(Acker, 1990; Williams, 2000). Remote workers engaging in digital presenteeism behaviours may act as a compensating signal against these biases by ensuring that workers are visible to their managers via online behaviours, compensating for the lack of visibility in the office. While studies examining the worker perspective indicate that homeworkers do indeed feel greater pressure to engage in digital presenteeism precisely for

these reasons (Afota et al., 2023; Chung and Yuan, in review), it remains unknown whether this compensatory mechanism translates into more favourable managerial evaluations in practice, a gap this paper addresses.

This paper explores these issues by asking the following questions: How do workers' digital presenteeism behaviours, specifically, how being responsive to work communications even outside regular work hours, shape managers' perceptions of workers' commitment, productivity and other performance indicators? Can digital presenteeism compensate for the bias remote workers face when working from home? How does this vary depending on the workers' gender, parental status and race? Most of the studies on digital presenteeism have been focused on workers' behaviours, limiting our knowledge of how managers view digital presenteeism behaviours. Manager's perceptions are crucial to measure as it evidences how pressures for digital presenteeism exist externally to the worker and show how individual behaviours are constrained by existing norms. Surveys directly asking managers their thoughts may not be effective, as managers themselves may be unaware of their hidden perceptions or may not feel that it is socially desirable to express them (Buechel and Solinas, 2025). This paper overcomes these limitations by using experimental vignette data that capture managers' evaluations of hypothetical workers' digital presenteeism behaviours in the UK in the summer of 2025.

Theoretical Background

Digital presenteeism and signals

Digital presenteeism refers to employees' felt compulsion to maintain a constant, instant, and visible online presence (responding to messages, writing emails, signalling availability across digital workspaces) both during and outside working hours, even when unnecessary. It draws together work on digital connectivity (see also, Russell et al., 2024) or work-related

smartphone/ICT use during non-work time (Schlachter et al., 2018; Derks and Bakker, 2014) with concepts of workplace telepressure, namely "the preoccupations with and urges for responding quickly to messages from clients, coworkers, or supervisors" (Barber and Santuzzi, 2015: : 172). Digital presenteeism is distinct from these adjacent concepts of digital responsiveness and after-hours connectivity, which may involve a single contained bout of activity at a discrete moment in time (Schlachter et al., 2018; Derks and Bakker, 2014). Rather, digital presenteeism captures the continuous, ambient pressure and obligation workers feel to remain digitally engaged throughout the day and beyond core working hours. It is further distinct in that it foregrounds the performative dimension of this behaviour: workers do not merely respond to messages, but signal their availability, dedication, and commitment to managers and colleagues as an audience (Goffman, 1959; Leonardi and Treem, 2020).

Digital presenteeism can act as an effective work tool to genuinely enhance company performance (ten Brummelhuis et al., 2021) and may even provide workers with a sense of more control over their work (van Zoonen et al., 2023). There are several reasons managers, in particular, may view workers who perform digital presenteeism more favourably. Firstly, rapid responsiveness enables immediate problem-solving and timely coordination. Prompt replies allow issues to be addressed as they arise, helping managers maintain workflow continuity and make swift decisions, which in turn reinforces perceptions of worker reliability and effectiveness (Perlow, 2012; Barley et al., 2011; Mazmanian et al., 2013). Secondly, instant responses to emails and messages, both during and especially outside working hours, can foster a heightened sense of emotional closeness, strengthening bonds and trust between colleagues (Rainie and Wellman, 2012). This can particularly help in work contexts where workers are not physically co-present, by fostering trust and shared understanding that support coordination and collaboration, making responsive workers appear more dependable and effective in remote and hybrid teams (Daft and Lengel, 1986; Wilson et al., 2006).

However, such behaviours can also be largely performative (Goffman, 1959), where digital presenteeism behaviour can function as a signal (Spence, 1973) workers deploy to demonstrate commitment and professionalism to managers and colleagues, rather than to meet genuine performance demands. As signalling theory argues (Connelly et al., 2025; Connelly et al., 2011; Spence, 1973), managers are unable to directly observe workers' productivity, commitment, or motivation in most workplace situations, and therefore rely on observable behaviours as proxies for these unobservable qualities. Previously, these signals included working long hours in the office, or the performance of working long hours as an indication of work devotion(Reid, 2015; Berdahl et al., 2018).

Digital presenteeism is a particularly effective signal for three reasons. Firstly, it is costly: engaging in continuous work communication during one's personal time requires workers not only to allow work to blur into their private life, but to willingly forgo rest and recovery times (Sonnentag and Fritz, 2015). This makes the signal credible, precisely because it is not costless to produce. Secondly, it is visible: unlike effort expended privately, digital communications leave observable traces across shared workspaces, creating an audience for the signal in managers and colleagues alike (Leonardi and Treem, 2020). Third, it is legible: the cultural meaning of after-hours digital availability is already established within most professional environments (Mazmanian et al., 2013; Perlow, 2012), where it is read as an indicator of dedication in the same way that long office hours once were (Reid, 2011; Reid, 2015). Digital presenteeism or constant digital connectivity activity has already been identified in the literature as the new symbolic ways workers perform digital ideal worker norms (Howcroft et al., 2024).

The meaning of what digital presenteeism signals represent, are rooted in the persistent ideal worker norm (Acker, 1990; Williams, 2000). The ideal worker norm holds that a worker is one who can devote themselves entirely to work, unencumbered by responsibilities outside it, is

considered ideal, someone who is genuinely committed and motivated to work – and accordingly deserving of promotions and career progression. Digital presenteeism acts as a mechanism through which workers symbolically perform this unencumbered worker identity. The instant, constant online availability beyond normal working hours presents an image of work devotion and the absence of competing demands outside of work, that is congruent with ideal worker expectations. Several studies confirm that workers, especially professionals, actively curate their digital presence to communicate dedication and professionalism to others (Mazmanian et al., 2013; Leonardi and Treem, 2020; Foley et al., 2024). Scholars have further argued how digital presenteeism behaviours of workers are shaped by organisational culture and norms that set standards for workers' behaviours, and the assumptions around what commitment and motivation looks like, rather than being driven solely by individual choice or habits (Derks et al., 2015; Howcroft et al., 2024; Wajcman and Rose, 2011).

There is now growing evidence that this signalling mechanism produces positive evaluatory results by managers and colleagues. Workers' presence in the online space, especially when it is instant, constant, and goes beyond the normal working hours, is likely to be perceived by managers as a sign of commitment and dedication to work (Howcroft et al., 2024; Mazmanian et al., 2013; Leonardi and Treem, 2020), particularly in contexts where other performance indicators are difficult to observe or measure (Elsbach et al., 2010). Recent experimental evidence confirms that managers evaluate workers who maintain constant digital connectivity more favourably than those who demonstrate detachment behaviours, independently of actual output (Buechel and Solinas, 2025). Based on this, we come to our first hypothesis;

H1*: Digital presenteeism behaviours are positively associated with managers' perception of workers' commitment and productivity and associated with a higher likelihood of promotion.*

Digital Presenteeism when remote working

While digital presenteeism can be understood as a way for all workers to signal their adherence to the ideal worker norm in contemporary workplaces (Howcroft et al., 2024), it may be particularly important for remote workers (Chung et al., 2024; Afota et al., 2023). In traditional office settings, physical visibility, namely, workers being seen by managers in the office, i.e. face time, functions as a primary mechanism through which workers signal commitment, productivity, and conformity to the ideal of the work-devoted employee (Cristea and Leonardi, 2019). In contrast, in remote or hybrid contexts where such embodied presence is absent, workers may instead need to rely on digital signals of availability (Leonardi and Treem, 2020; Foley et al., 2024; Afota et al., 2023), such as rapid responsiveness to emails, constant online activity, and response to out of hours communications, to demonstrate alignment with the expectations of the digital ideal worker.

These behaviours can be conceptualised as a broader process of *compensatory signalling mechanisms*. Despite policy discourses framing remote work as "smart working" policies (Angelici and Profeta, 2020), remote working continues to be socially constructed as a work–life balance accommodation, sustaining stigma that casts homeworkers as less committed or productive, and exposes them to career penalties (Kasperska et al., 2024; Wang and Chung, 2026). In this sense, working remotely sends a signal to managers that workers are unable to or unwilling to adhere to the ideal worker image of complete devotion to work (Williams et al., 2013). In this context, maintaining a constant online presence and availability functions as a visibility signal that may counter suspicions and the negative signal that remote work is associated with, namely with reduced effort, divided attention, or the prioritisation of family and personal life over work life (Afota et al., 2023). Digital presenteeism may thus operate as a corrective signal (Spence, 1973; Connelly et al., 2011), countering the negative inferences managers draw from remote work by providing observable evidence of availability and

dedication that the absence of physical presence would otherwise leave in doubt. In a similar vein, we expect that digital presenteeism behaviours of remote workers may be interpreted as a stronger indicator of commitment compared to the same behaviour for in-office workers. For office-based workers, their physical presence already satisfies much of the implicit requirement to display dedication. When office workers engage in additional digital displays of presence, for example, responding to messages after hours, or instant email responses, they may add little to their perceived commitment, since the spatial act of "showing up" continues to serve as the dominant form of signalling work devotion (Cristea and Leonardi, 2019). Therefore we come to the second set of hypothesis, around the association between remote working and digital presenteeism;

H2-1: *The positive relationships between digital presenteeism and perceived commitment, motivation and promotion chances are stronger for remote workers than for office-based workers.*

H2-2: *Digital presenteeism can compensate for the bias against remote workers with regard to perceived commitment, motivation and promotion chances.*

Variations across populations

Managerial evaluations are never neutral but rather shaped by long-standing gendered and racialised assumptions around the "ideal worker" (Acker, 1990; Berdahl et al., 2018). This explains why, while digital presenteeism can act as a mechanism through which workers signal commitment and conformity to the ideal worker norm, the interpretive value of digital presenteeism depends on managerial expectations and the social position of the worker performing it (Pedulla, 2018). Pedulla (2018) in his audit study of employer evaluation of job applications puts forward three potential mechanisms through which a secondary signal, such as unemployment history, interacts with prior beliefs about workers of different racial

backgrounds to shape hiring outcomes. Previous studies argued that either the scarring effect is similar for all groups (additive), or that the effects are stronger for certain groups where biases already exist (amplified congruence). Pedulla develops a third pattern, a muted congruence. For white workers, unemployment has a scarring effect on their application evaluation, but for Black workers this effect is muted, and unemployment does not impose any further penalties on their application. This is because for Black workers, as their social position is already met with racial bias by employers, unemployment merely confirms pre-existing assumptions rather than adding new negative information.

Similarly, we can expect *compensatory* and *muted* congruence in how digital presenteeism, or alternatively digital boundary setting behaviours, are seen by managers depending on the workers' gender, parental status, and ethnicity. As the "ideal worker" remains implicitly modelled on white (Berdahl et al., 2018) and male breadwinners who has a partner to carry out all of their reproductive labour (Williams, 2000; Müller and Chung, 2025), men, particularly fathers, and white workers may experience a form of *muted congruence* between their social identity and managerial expectations. Their commitment and productivity are taken as default, requiring little active signalling. As a result, digital presenteeism behaviours may add limited value, since they already fit the normative template of the ideal worker. Their digital presenteeism is read as consistent with, rather than compensatory to, pre-existing assumptions, and similarly, their detachment behaviours may not be penalised as strongly. By contrast, women, mothers, and ethnic minority workers tend to be seen with suspicion regarding their work commitment and productivity (Correll and Ridgeway, 2006; Castilla and Benard, 2010). Such workers may face heightened scrutiny of their dedication to work, particularly in remote work contexts that are often associated with flexibility, family orientation, or reduced commitment towards work (Chung, 2020; Munsch, 2016). Women are more likely to be perceived as having competing demands that constrain their availability and commitment to

work, while racial minority workers may be subject to biased assumptions regarding their ability or willingness to exceed formal job requirements (Berdahl et al., 2018). For these workers, digital presenteeism can function as a *compensatory signalling mechanism,* a way to counteract stereotypes and demonstrate that their commitment aligns with managerial expectations of the digital ideal worker. Rapid responsiveness, out-of-hours engagement, and continuous online presence may thus be interpreted as particularly meaningful indicators of motivation precisely because they contradict biased expectations of managers. In such cases, digital presenteeism may serve as compensatory signals that help them better align with the ideal worker norm, potentially yielding stronger positive returns on their evaluations than for their privileged counterparts.

In contrast, managerial biases may lead them to discount or misread the digital presenteeism behaviours of women or ethnic minority employees, interpreting constant online activity as a lack of efficiency, or having not carried out work during normal working hours (due to other competing demands and/or motivation issues), rather than as evidence of high motivation and dedication. Perceptions of workers' digital presenteeism behaviours can work where managers' biases are *amplified* (see also, Pedulla, 2018). From this perspective, digital presenteeism behaviours may be especially beneficial for workers who are already perceived as highly legitimate ideal workers, mainly men and white workers, as these behaviours reinforce existing assumptions of commitment. Conversely, when women, especially mothers, or ethnic minority workers engage in digital presenteeism behaviours, they may face weak returns, as their digital presenteeism behaviours are also met with suspicion and doubt. In other words, the *symbolic currency* of digital presenteeism may not translate evenly across social groups, reflecting how work practices are embedded within existing hierarchies of credibility and trust. This dynamic suggests that digital presenteeism is a *socially stratified signalling mechanism*: while it enables

some workers to accrue recognition and status, it may reinforce inequality for others by demanding greater effort to achieve equal legitimacy.

Based on the discussion above, we come to two sets of competing hypotheses around the social stratified signalling mechanism of digital presenteeism behaviours of workers;

H3a-1: *The positive effect of digital presenteeism is stronger for women, especially mothers, and ethnic minority workers, than for men and white workers*

H3a-2: *The compensatory effect of digital presenteeism while remote working is stronger for women, especially mothers, and ethnic minority workers, than for men and white workers*

H3b-1: *The positive effect of digital presenteeism is stronger for men and white workers than for women, especially mothers, and ethnic minority workers*

H3b-2: *The compensatory effect of digital presenteeism when remote working is stronger for men and white workers than for women, especially mothers, and ethnic minority workers*

Data and Methods

Data and sample

Data for this study were collected via Focaldata, an established survey company in the United Kingdom, through their online panel. We used an online vignette experiment administered to 1,039 managers in the UK, defined as individuals having responsibility for at least one employee. Vignette experiments are particularly well-suited for examining the managerial decision-making process because they allow researchers to isolate the causal effects of specific employee characteristics and behaviours while holding all other factors constant, thereby reducing social desirability bias and unobserved heterogeneity that often affect observational or self-reported data (Auspurg and Hinz, 2014; Wallander, 2009). This approach has been

widely used in prior research to study bias, stereotypes, and evaluative decision-making in organisational and labour market contexts (Auspurg et al., 2017; McDonald, 2019; Wang and Chung, 2026). This approach was necessary also due to the study design, where we wanted to tease out the effect of digital presenteeism across gender/parental status and racial status of workers, having controlled for all other characteristics. Although real world data of companies and HR performance indicators may be useful, it would have been impossible to draw such large data which would fit this design criteria in such large sample sizes.

The sample was restricted to managers working in white-collar office-based roles to ensure the relevance of digital presenteeism and remote working to the evaluation scenarios. Table 1 presents the demographic and employment characteristics of the survey respondents. Managers in our sample were relatively young, with over half aged 25–34 (51.2%), followed by those aged 35–44 years (24.9%). The gender distribution was balanced, with 51.8% identifying as male and 48.2% as female. Most managers hold a degree-level qualification or higher (83.8%) and report having children (86.9%). The vast majority of managers are in permanent positions (94.4%) and are employed in the private sector (79.9%). Over 90% work in medium or large organisations with 50 or more employees. Work location varies across the sample: two out of five workers report never working from home, nearly half engage in occasional remote work (46.2%), and a small minority work mainly (12.4%) or entirely remotely (1.9%), which generally reflects the larger UK economy. Finally, most managers are married or cohabiting (81.0%), and almost 90% report that their partner is also in paid employment.

Because this study uses an experimental vignette design with random assignment of worker characteristics, survey weights are not applied in the main analyses. In experimental research, causal estimates do not depend on sample representativeness but on randomisation, and treatment effects have been shown to generalise well across samples with different demographic compositions (Coppock et al., 2018). However, as a robustness check, we

estimated models using post-stratification weights based on the UK Labour Force Survey managerial population (Appendix Tables A1, A10-A16).

Characteristic	Category	Percent
Age	18–24	1.7
	25–34	51.2
	35–44	24.9
	45–54	12.3
	55–64	7.0
	65+	2.8
Gender	Male	51.8
	Female	48.2
Education	Below degree	16.2
	Degree level or above	83.8
Parental status	Non-parent	13.1
	Parent	86.9
Employment type	Permanent	94.4
	Temporary/Fixed	5.6
Sector	Public	20.1
	Private	79.9
Company size	Fewer than 10	1.6
	10 to 49	7.9
	50 to 249	34.5
	250 or more	56.0
WFH status	Never	39.5
	Occasionally	46.2
	Mainly	12.4
	Always	1.9
Workplace culture	Office-based	61.0
	Hybrid	33.1
	Home-based	5.9
Relationship status	Married/Cohabitating	81.0
	Others (e.g., single, divorced/separated)	19.0
Partners' employment status	Unemployed	10.5
	Employed	89.5

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Vignette characteristics

The vignettes varied across five key characteristics. By varying the hypothetical worker's name, we experimentally manipulated the worker's gender (male (David) vs. female (Sarah)) and

ethnicity (White (Walker) vs. Black (Okoye)[1]). Note that we did not change the first names of the workers who we signal as Black to ensure that they are perceived as Black workers, rather than signalling migration status. This name-based signalling approach has been widely used in experimental and audit studies to examine gender and racial bias in evaluation and decision-making contexts (Bertrand and Mullainathan, 2004; Correll et al., 2007). Third, the vignette indicated whether the worker was a parent (two children) or not to explore the variation across parenthood status. Fourth, it was noted that the worker was working in the office or working from home 2-3 days a week, which is the most common number of days workers work from home in the UK (Chung and Yuan, 2025; Aksoy et al., 2025). Finally, the vignette specified whether the worker is performing digital presenteeism or not. In the vignette we use the following text to indicate digital presenteeism *"**They are responsive** to emails and other work messages, even outside of core working hours, such as evenings and weekends."*. This set up combines the worker being responsive to emails and the fact that workers are engaging in work communications outside of working hours. Those who are not responsive are noted as "***They do not respond** to emails or other work messages outside of their core working hours, such as evenings and weekends, **unless it is an emergency**."* In this case, we are focusing mostly on the non-responsiveness of work communications outside of normal hours. The vignette has gone through cognitive testing and piloted with 30 initial respondents to check that respondents understand the content.

Crossing these five attributes resulted in 32 unique vignette profiles. Each manager evaluated a single vignette, randomly assigned, to minimise cognitive burden and to prevent learning, carryover or contrast effects across vignettes. Each vignette profile was evaluated by multiple

[1] The first names have been selected to ensure there are no other signalling through the names such as class. Last names were chosen for their relative neutral associations with regards to class and regions for Walker, and Okoye is a common Nigerian last name. We have chosen Okoye due to the large Nigerian diaspora in the UK.

respondents, with the number of evaluations per profile ranging from 20 to 47. As shown in Table A2 in the Appendix, the vignette attributes are evenly distributed. Approximately half of the workers are described as men (50.1%) and half as women (49.9%); similarly, about half are White (50.5%) and half Black (49.5%), with near-equal distributions for parenthood status (52.5% parents), work location (50.2% working from home), and digital presenteeism (48.7% yes). We checked correlations among gender, ethnicity, parental status, work location, and digital presenteeism, which were all very close to zero (see Table A3 in Appendix). This indicates that each respondent had an equal probability of receiving any vignette condition, producing balanced distributions across dimensions and supporting the internal validity of the experimental design (Coppock et al., 2018).

Outcome variables

After reading the vignette, managers were asked to evaluate the hypothetical worker on multiple outcomes commonly used to capture performance assessments indicators drawn from similar studies (Correll et al., 2007; Rivera and Tilcsik, 2016; Rudman and Glick, 2001; Wang and Chung, 2026). These included perceived commitment, productivity, collegiality, time management skills, and promotion prospects. To capture managerial expectations associated with ideal worker norms, we also asked whether managers expected the worker to work beyond their contracted hours when job demands required it. Prior research has shown that the perceived willingness or ability to work long hours functions as a key indicator of commitment and career potential within organisations (Cha and Grady, 2024), reflecting deeply embedded ideal worker expectations rather than purely hours worked per se. Accordingly, managers' expectations regarding workers' willingness or ability to work extended working hours are interpreted here not simply as assessments of temporal availability, but as broader evaluations of workers' perceived capacity to prioritise work, assume demanding and career-enhancing

assignments, which can result in positive career outcomes. The vignette text and survey questions are reported in Tables A4 and A5 in the Appendix.

The outcome variables were initially measured using an 11-point scale (0–10). Since the responses were highly skewed and some values were rarely chosen, the scale was converted into a five-point Likert scale by combining similar response values. (0–2 = 1, 3–4 = 2, 5–6 = 3, 7–8 = 4, 9–10 = 5). This approach is consistent with prior research indicating that respondents do not reliably distinguish among a large number of response options and that fewer categories can yield comparable reliability and validity (Dawes, 2008; Revilla et al., 2014). It also ensured consistency with the five-point measure of expectations regarding long-hours work, which was collected on a five-point measure. However, later as a robustness check we compare the results to the analysis using the 11-point scale. As shown in Table 2, respondents generally rated the hypothetical employees positively: commitment (M = 4.10, SD = 0.91), productivity (M = 4.08, SD = 0.88) were highest, while collegiality (M = 3.85, SD = 0.92) and promotion recommendations (M = 3.92, SD = 1.06), and time management skills (M = 3.99, SD = 0.98) were slightly lower but still above the scale midpoint. Expectations regarding long-hours work also fell in the moderate range (M = 3.05), indicating that managers anticipated average levels of working beyond regular hours.

Variable	Mean	SD	Range
Commitment	4.10	0.91	1–5
Productivity	4.08	0.88	1–5
Collegiality	3.85	0.92	1–5
Promotion	3.92	1.06	1–5
Time management	3.99	0.98	1–5
Expectation: Long hours	3.05	1.10	1–5

Table 2. Managers' ratings and expectations of employee performance

Results

Main effect of digital presenteeism

The multivariate regression models (Table 3) examined the effects of employees' digital presenteeism on managers' evaluations and expectations, controlling for other worker characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, parenthood status, and work location. Digital presenteeism emerged as a strong and consistent predictor across nearly all outcomes. Employees described as digitally present received substantially higher scores in commitment (Coeff = 0.649, $p < .001$), productivity (Coeff = 0.456, $p < .001$), collegiality (Coeff = 0.497, $p < .001$), and promotion prospects (Coeff = 0.689, $p < .001$). Managers also expected digitally present workers to work longer hours (Coeff = 0.326, $p < .001$), indicating that digital presenteeism not only signals performance and dedication but also reinforces assumptions about employees' willingness to go beyond their contractual hours, which we interpret as a further indicator of managers' perception of worker commitment and adherence to the ideal worker norm. This provides strong support for Hypothesis 1, which indicates that digital presenteeism increases managers' perception of workers' commitment, productivity and future career potential. Remote working patterns also showed a clear and consistent influence on managerial evaluations. Employees working from home 2–3 days a week received significantly lower ratings than otherwise identical workers who work only in the office across several outcomes, including commitment (Coeff = –0.142, $p < .01$), productivity (Coeff = –0.108, $p < .05$), collegiality (Coeff = –0.127, $p < .05$) and promotion prospects (Coeff = –0.133, $p < .05$). This confirms other studies on flexibility stigma (Kasperska et al., 2024; Wang and Chung, 2026), showing a persistent penalty for remote workers in managerial assessments of dedication and promotability. Other worker characteristics, such as gender, ethnicity, and parental status, did not show significant associations with any of the managerial evaluations or expectations.

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Commitment	Productivity	Collegiality	Promotion	Time management	Expectation: Long hours
Digital presenteeism (Digitally present)	0.649 ***	0.456 ***	0.497 ***	0.689 ***	0.091	0.326 ***
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.062)	(0.061)	(0.068)
Gender (Women)	0.039	0.091 +	0.026	0.029	0.069	-0.007
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.062)	(0.061)	(0.067)
Ethnicity (Black)	0.245	-0.017	0.011	-0.004	0.044	-0.035
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.063)	(0.061)	(0.067)
Parenthood (Parents)	-0.033	-0.040	0.033	0.041	0.024	-0.010
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.062)	(0.061)	(0.068)
Work location (WFH)	-0.142 **	-0.108 *	-0.127 *	-0.133 *	-0.034	-0.030
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.063)	(0.061)	(0.068)
Constant	3.842 ***	3.902 ***	3.636 ***	3.615 ***	3.891 ***	2.932 ***
	(0.071)	(0.070)	(0.070)	(0.082)	(0.081)	(0.087)
R-squared	0.137	0.075	0.081	0.112	0.004	0.023
N of observations	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Table 3. Multivariate regression of worker evaluations and expectations

The interaction between digital presenteeism and remote working

Next, we examine whether digital presenteeism can offset the negative impact homeworking has on workers. To do this, we created a work visibility profile variable combining digital presenteeism (present vs. absent) with work location (office-based vs. WFH): (1) digitally present office workers, (2) digitally present WFH workers, (3) digitally absent office workers (reference group), and (4) digitally absent WFH workers.

Table 4 and Figure 1 present the results of multivariate regressions examining how combined digital presenteeism–work location predicts managerial evaluations. We can see that digital presenteeism behaviours remove the bias that homeworking workers experience somewhat. Compared with digitally absent office workers, digitally present WFH workers were rated substantially higher in commitment (Coeff = 0.508, $p < .001$), productivity (Coeff = 0.349, $p < .001$), collegiality (Coeff = 0.373, $p < .001$), promotion prospects (Coeff = 0.555, $p < .001$), and were more likely to be able to work long hours when necessary (Coeff = 0.297, $p < .001$). However, when we compare digitally absent WFH workers with digitally absent office workers, evidence of flexibility stigma remains. Even among digitally absent workers, homeworkers were less likely to be perceived as committed (Coeff = –0.156, $p < .10$), productive (Coeff = –0.171, $p < .01$), and collegial (Coeff = –0.215, $p < .01$) compared to their counterparts who are also do not engage in digital presenteeism behaviours yet come into the office. Similarly, as Figure 1 shows, even among workers who engage in digital presenteeism, those who WFH received lower evaluations with regards to their perceived commitment (Coeff = –0.127, $p < .10$) and promotion (Coeff = –0.125, $p < .10$) chances in comparison to those who worked in the office, although the significance level was just outside the traditional level. This highlights that although digital presenteeism can remove the bias managers hold against remote workers, the bias is not eliminated. With regards to the strength of digital presenteeism, Table A6 in the Appendix provides partial support for the hypothesis that the effect of digital presenteeism is

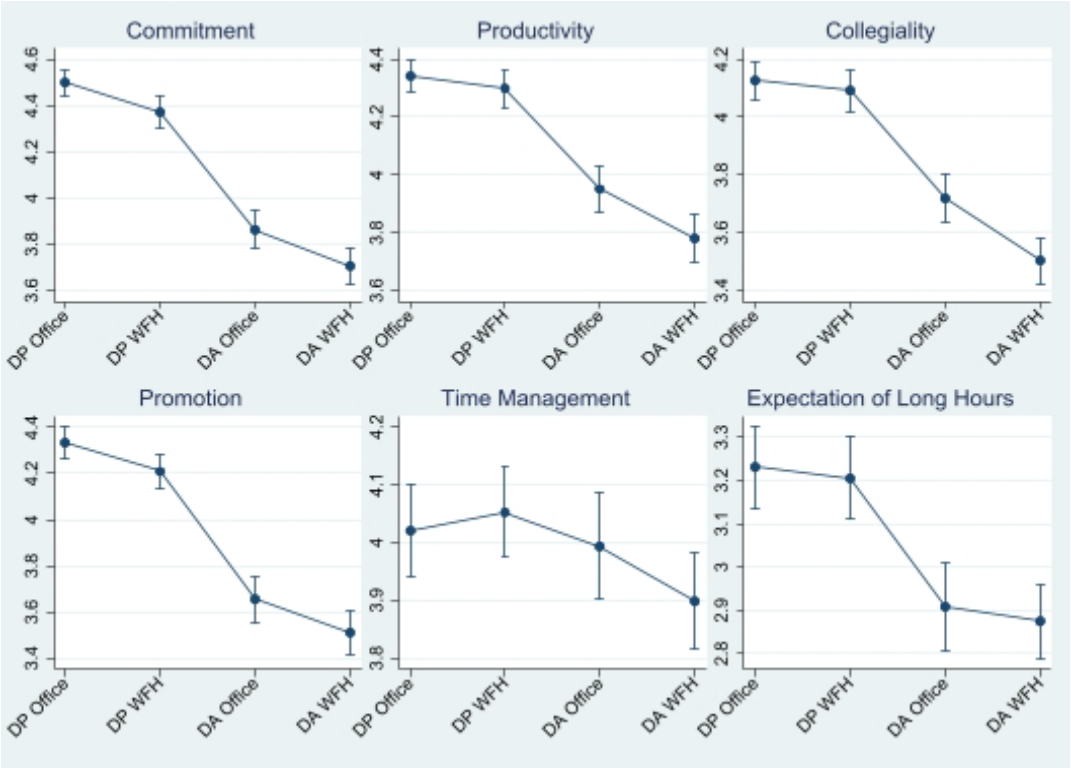
stronger for those working from home compared to office workers in the case of collegiality (Interaction = 0.180, $p < .10$). For others, although the interaction coefficients are positive, their effects are outside the significance levels. Therefore, we partially accept Hypothesis 2-1 and Hypothesis 2-2.

Table 4. Multivariate regression of worker evaluations and expectations

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Commitment	Productivity	Collegiality	Promotion	Time management	Expectation: Long hours
Digital presenteeism–Work location (ref. = Digitally absent Office workers)						
Digitally present Office workers	0.635 ***	0.392 ***	0.407 ***	0.680 ***	0.027	0.322***
	(0.074)	(0.072)	(0.075)	(0.087)	(0.089)	(0.100)
Digitally present WFH workers	0.508 ***	0.349 ***	0.373 ***	0.555 ***	0.059	0.297 ***
	(0.078)	(0.076)	(0.080)	(0.091)	(0.088)	(0.100)
Digitally absent WFH workers	-0.156 +	-0.171 **	-0.215 **	-0.142	-0.096	-0.034
	(0.083)	(0.084)	(0.083)	(0.099)	(0.090)	(0.095)
Gender (Women)	0.039	0.093 +	0.030	0.030	0.072	-0.006
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.062)	(0.061)	(0.068)
Ethnicity (Black)	0.025	-0.016	0.013	-0.004	0.045	-0.035
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.063)	(0.061)	(0.067)
Parenthood (Parents)	-0.034	-0.044	0.028	0.040	0.021	-0.010
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.062)	(0.061)	(0.068)
Constant	3.850 ***	3.935 ***	3.682 ***	3.619 ***	3.924 ***	2.934 ***
Adjusted R-squared	0.137	0.077	0.083	0.112	0.005	0.023
N of observations	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Figure 1. Effects of digital presenteeism and work location on six managerial outcomes



Note: Predicted values are based on the regression models reported in Table 4. DP = digitally present; DA = digitally absent. Office and WFH indicate work location. Lines indicate 83% confidence intervals[2].

Variation across population groups

Next, we explore the variation in the association between digital presenteeism and managers' evaluation across gender and parental status (Table 5) – distinguishing between mothers (reference group), fathers, childless women and childless men, and gender and ethnicity (Table 6) – distinguishing between white women, white men, Black women (reference group), and Black men. Digital presenteeism was generally associated with higher evaluations across most outcomes (as seen in Table 3), yet these benefits differed by gender and parental status, especially for commitment, time management, and promotion prospects. In Table 5, the

[2] Figures in this paper report 83% confidence intervals instead of 95% confidence intervals to make visual comparisons across vignette conditions easier. Overlap between 95% confidence intervals can be misleading because two estimates may still differ significantly even when their 95% intervals overlap. Following Goldstein and Healy (1995) and Payton et al. (2003), we use 83% confidence intervals as a visual guide: when these intervals do not overlap, this roughly corresponds to a statistically significant difference at the 5% level. Formal inference is based on the regression estimates reported in the tables.

positive effect of digital presenteeism on promotion potential (Interaction = −0.389, $p < .05$) and time management (Interaction = –0.467, $p < .01$) was smaller for fathers compared with mothers. Similarly, the impact of digital presenteeism on favourable ratings for childless women was weaker than when mothers engaged in digital presenteeism, with regards to manager's evaluation of their commitment (Interaction = –0.354, $p < .05$), time management (Interaction = –0.375, $p < .05$), and to a lesser extent promotion (Interaction = –0.296, $p < .10$). A similar pattern emerged where childless men's digital presenteeism resulted in weaker positive effects on manager's evaluations of the worker, especially with regards to promotion opportunities and time management, although the differences were not statistically significant. These findings confirm our expectation that digital presenteeism sends stratified signals depending on the population group (see Figure 2). For fathers and childless workers, and in this case, especially childless women, constant availability is more readily assumed, and their adherence to the ideal worker norm is expected. Therefore, the additive value of digital presenteeism is weaker for these groups. In comparison, for mothers, managerial assumptions hold that mothers are unable to commit to the job as much as other worker groups due to assumed responsibilities outside of home, namely housework and childcare responsibilities. In fact, comparing the digitally absent childless women to mothers, we can see that the former is likely to obtain statistically higher evaluations with regard to commitment and productivity. However, when mothers engage in digital presenteeism, it deviates from the manager's assumed bias and provides a stronger *compensatory* effect on their evaluation scores. On the other hand, with regards to promotion prospects and time management, although comparing digitally absent groups there are no differences between population groups, when comparing evaluation scores among workers who engage in digital presenteeism, mothers fare better than other population groups (results available upon request). In other words, in our vignette scenario, when other factors are held constant, digital presenteeism may provide mothers with

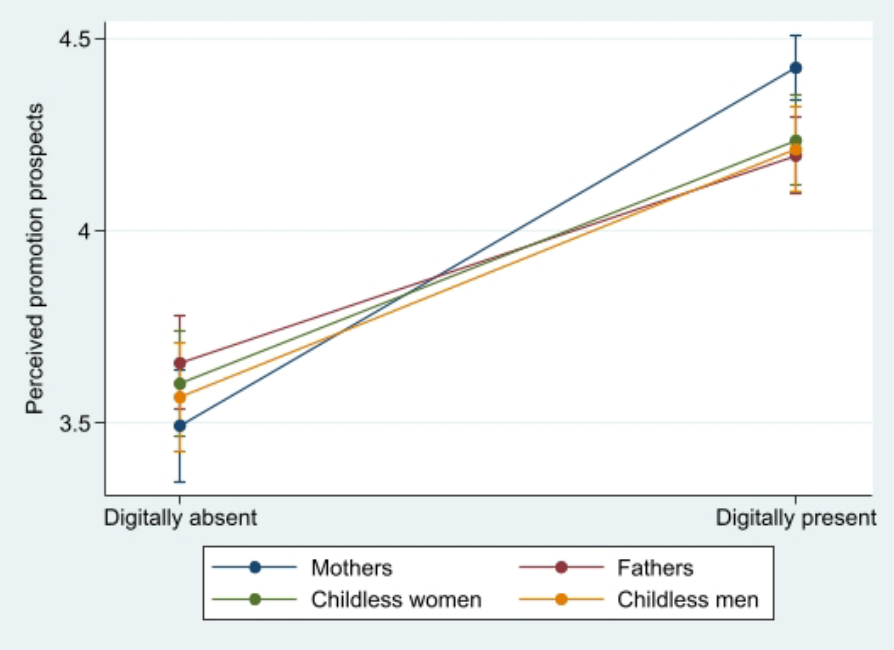
an added advantage with regards to manager's perception of mother's time management abilities and their potential promotion opportunities. This leads us to consider beyond the compensatory effect but may even receive a *devotion bonus*. Because managers hold particularly low prior beliefs about mothers' capacity for work devotion and digital availability, the same behaviour that merely confirms competence for other groups functions as a powerful and unexpected counter-signal for mothers, producing evaluative returns that exceed that of other groups. It is still the bias against mothers and their capacity for work that amplifies the signal value of their digital presenteeism, with a lower assumed baseline, there is a greater evaluative leap when that assumption is violated (Correll et al., 2007; Pedulla, 2018; Spence, 1973).

Table 5. Effects of digital presenteeism and gender–parenthood status on worker evaluations and expectations

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Commitment	Productivity	Collegiality	Promotion	Time management	Expectation: Long hours
Digital presenteeism (ref. = Digitally absent)						
Digitally present	0.784 ***	0.505 ***	0.507 ***	0.929 ***	0.360 **	0.451 **
	(0.110)	(0.110)	(0.105)	(0.122)	(0.120)	(0.137)
Gender–parental status (ref. = Mothers)						
Fathers	0.064	0.004	-0.026	0.162	0.171	-0.058
	(0.118)	(0.119)	(0.111)	(0.138)	(0.124)	(0.132)
Childless women	0.230 *	0.189	-0.012	0.107	0.174	0.020
	(0.117)	(0.119)	(0.122)	(0.145)	(0.129)	(0.137)
Childless men	0.007	-0.106	-0.111	0.072	0.022	0.130
	(0.129)	(0.132)	(0.118)	(0.147)	(0.138)	(0.138)
Digital presenteeism × Gender–parental status						
Digitally present × Fathers	-0.155	-0.087	-0.045	-0.389 *	-0.467 **	-0.077
	(0.149)	(0.148)	(0.149)	(0.167)	(0.167)	(0.188)
Digitally present × Childless women	-0.354 *	-0.199	-0.094	-0.296 +	-0.375 *	-0.252
	(0.149)	(0.148)	(0.159)	(0.178)	(0.174)	(0.193)
Digitally present × Childless men	-0.035	0.097	0.097	-0.285	-0.238	-0.212
	(0.155)	(0.159)	(0.150)	(0.179)	(0.174)	(0.194)
Ethnicity (ref. = White)						
Black	0.019	-0.021	0.011	-0.007	0.041	-0.035
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.063)	(0.061)	(0.068)
Work location (ref. = Office)						
WFH	-0.147 **	-0.111 *	-0.127 *	-0.132 *	-0.032	-0.035
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.05)	(0.062)	(0.061)	(0.068)
Constant	3.772 ***	3.904 ***	3.700 ***	3.565 ***	3.845 ***	2.909 ***
	(0.098)	(0.100)	(0.090)	(0.117)	(0.105)	(0.111)
R-squared	0.143	0.080	0.083	0.117	0.013	0.028
N of observations	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Figure 2. Effects of digital presenteeism and gender–parental status on promotion prospects



Note: Predicted values are based on the regression model for promotion prospects reported in Table 5. Lines indicate 83% confidence intervals

Table 6 and Figure 3 show whether the effect of digital presenteeism on employee evaluations varied across gender and ethnic groups, with Black women as the reference group. Digital presenteeism enhanced the promotion potential of Black women significantly more compared to when white women (Interaction = −0.350, $p < .05$) and white men (Interaction = −0.440, $p < .05$) engaged in digital presenteeism. A similar result could be found comparing Black men (Interaction = −0.317, $p < .10$), although the significance level falls just outside the traditional boundaries. This finding is similar to that found for mothers, where managers may assume that Black women are unable or unwilling to be readily available for work. Thus, when Black women engage in digital presenteeism, it can act as a stronger compensatory mechanism and result in a larger evaluative bonus. In contrast, for groups such as white workers, digital presenteeism may be more expected and fit with the assumptions managers have, resulting in a smaller shift in their evaluation ratings. Yet, again, on the other hand, our results can also indicate that the penalties of not performing digital presenteeism is stronger for Black women

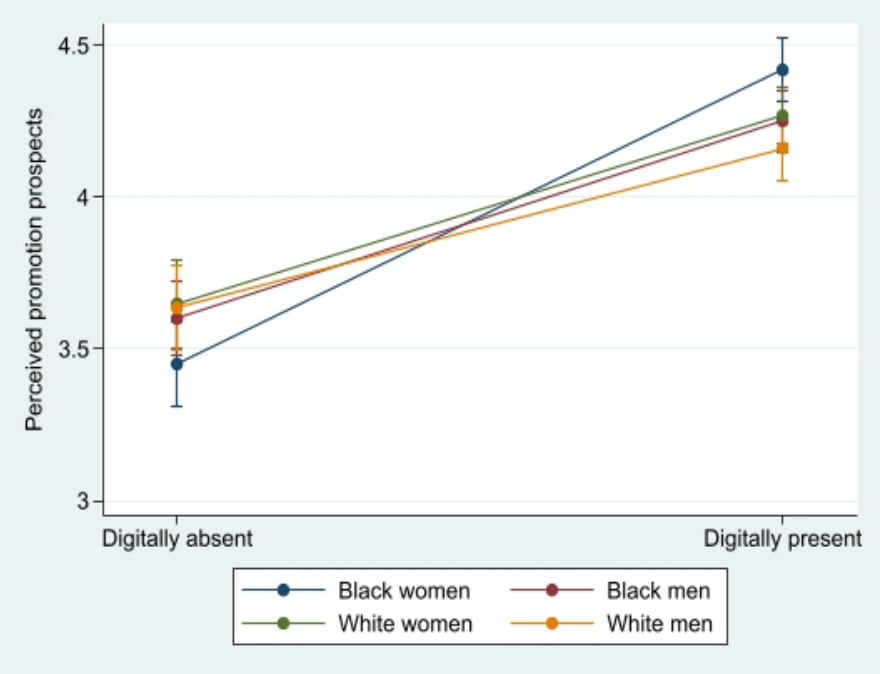
compared to other groups, for whom the gap between being digitally present and digitally absent does not yield as big of a penalty. When comparing manager's evaluation of worker groups who engage in digital presenteeism, we find that there is a statistical difference between black women and white men, where the former receives a more positive evaluation with regards to promotion prospects. This confirms again that in certain cases, beyond the compensatory mechanism, there is even a devotion bonus when Black women go against manager's assumptions around their behaviours. In sum, we partially accept Hypothesis 3a-1 and reject Hypothesis 3b-1.

Table 6. Effects of digital presenteeism and gender–ethnicity status on worker evaluations and expectations

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Commitment	Productivity	Collegiality	Promotion	Time management	Expectation: Long hours
Digital presenteeism (ref. = Digitally absent)						
Digitally present	0.536 ***	0.373 ***	0.463 ***	0.968 ***	0.130	0.426 **
	(0.103)	(0.103)	(0.111)	(0.126)	(0.126)	(0.141)
Gender–ethnicity (ref. = Black women)						
Black men	-0.140	-0.210 +	-0.173	0.149	0.018	0.100
	(0.112)	(0.111)	(0.114)	(0.134)	(0.122)	(0.131)
White women	-0.137	-0.043	-0.064	0.200	-0.035	0.175
	(0.117)	(0.119)	(0.122)	(0.145)	(0.130)	(0.137)
White men	-0.140	-0.102	-0.003	0.184	-0.015	0.103
	(0.119)	(0.120)	(0.118)	(0.142)	(0.131)	(0.133)
Digital presenteeism × Gender–ethnicity status						
Digitally present × Black men	0.131	0.191	0.197	-0.317 +	-0.061	-0.085
	(0.144)	(0.145)	(0.152)	(0.171)	(0.167)	(0.192)
Digitally present × White women	0.155	0.071	0.005	-0.350 *	0.094	-0.179
	(0.149)	(0.149)	(0.158)	(0.177)	(0.175)	(0.195)
Digitally present × White men	0.163	0.064	-0.064	-0.440 *	-0.196	-0.129
	(0.150)	(0.151)	(0.155)	(0.180)	(0.182)	(0.196)
Parenthood (ref. = Non-parents)						
Parents	-0.028	-0.037	0.035	0.029	0.017	-0.015
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.063)	(0.062)	(0.068)
Work location (ref. = Office)						
WFH	-0.145 **	-0.111 *	-0.128 *	-0.125 *	-0.032	-0.027
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.063)	(0.061)	(0.068)
Constant	3.976 ***	4.027 ***	3.715 ***	3.498 ***	3.959 ***	2.819 ***
	(0.087)	(0.085)	(0.095)	(0.108)	(0.100)	(0.109)
R-squared	0.139	0.077	0.085	0.118	0.008	0.025
N of observations	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Figure 3. Effects of digital presenteeism and gender-ethnicity on promotion prospects

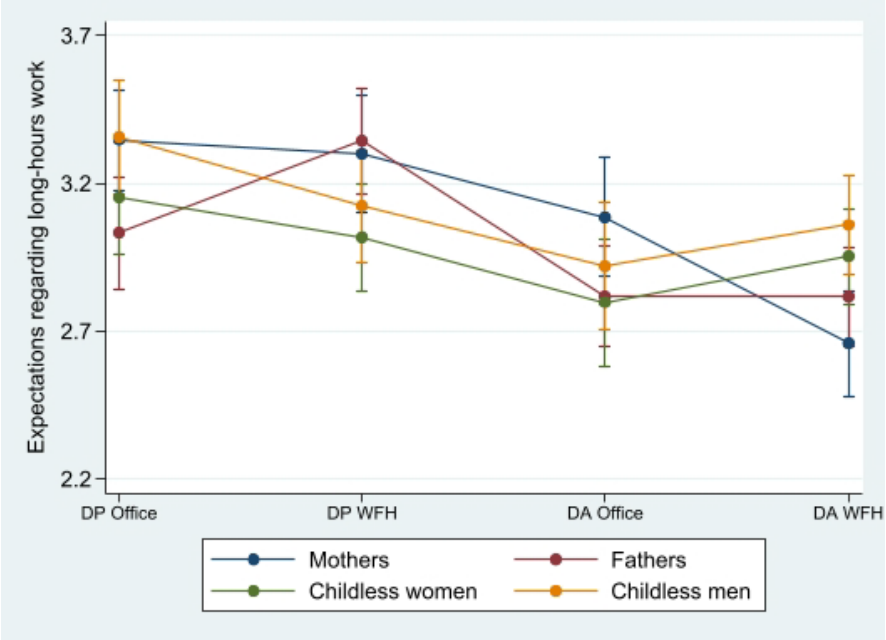


Note: Predicted values are based on the regression model for promotion prospects reported in Table 6. Lines indicate 83% confidence intervals

Next, we examine whether the compensatory effect of digital presenteeism when working from home is stronger among particular population groups. To do this, we estimated interactions between digital presenteeism, work location, and employees' gender and parental status and gender and ethnicity (full results in Table A7 in Appendix). As illustrated in Figure 4, for childless workers, there is not much difference in the way managers expect workers to work longer hours, when necessary, across the different homeworking and digital presenteeism behaviours. For fathers, it is the digitally present fathers who work from home, perhaps even more than digitally present fathers who work in the office, that managers expect to put in longer hours of work. This reflects the findings from previous studies that have indicated that men, especially fathers who work remotely and other types of flexible working, end up working longer hours (Glass and Noonan, 2016; Kim, 2020; Lott and Chung, 2016). This may be

because they may be expected to be able to better work longer hours due to reduction of commuting times, combined with gender norms for male breadwinning roles, results in managers expecting fathers to utilise blurred boundaries between work and family to expand work (Clark, 2000; Chung, 2022). On the other hand, when examining mothers, manager's expectations towards mothers' ability to work longer hours does not change significantly when they work in the office or when they work at home but engage in digital presenteeism. However, it is the combination of working from home and not engaging in digital presenteeism that sets them apart where employers do not expect long hours work. When comparing managerial evaluation towards workers who are digitally absent and working from home, mothers were significantly less likely to be considered to be able to work long hours compared to other populations, especially childless workers (results available upon demand). This again is based on the assumption that mothers have competing demands at home (Blair-Loy, 2009), and working from home combined with digital disconnection from work may be seen as a strong signal for managers of mothers' unwillingness or inability to adhere to the ideal worker norm. Rather than managers protecting mothers from overwork, this can be considered a sign of benevolent sexism (Glick and Fiske, 1996) which limits women's career progression due to employer's assumptions around the levels of commitment mothers are able to give to work.

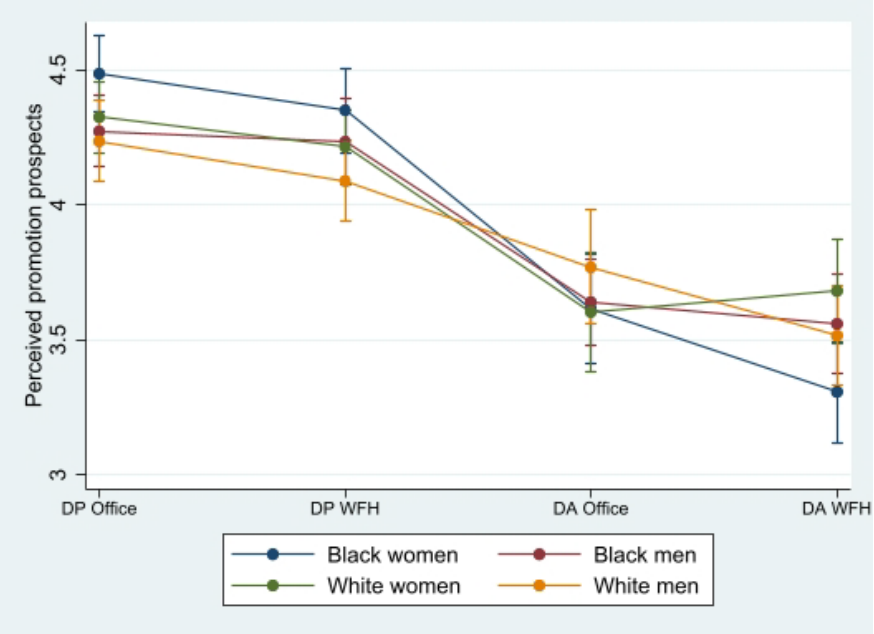
Figure 4. Expectations regarding long-hour work by digital presenteeism, work location, and gender–parenthood status



Note: Predicted values are based on the regression model for expectations of long-hours work reported in Appendix Table A7. Lines indicate 83% confidence intervals

A similar form of moderation emerged in the gender–ethnicity analyses (Full tables in Table A9 in the Appendix), particularly for promotion ratings. As shown in Figure 5, the evaluative penalty of being digitally absent is there for all worker population groups. However, the effect is stronger for Black women compared to other groups, especially when working from home. For all other groups – namely, white men, white women and Black men, when they are already digitally absent, working from home does not seem to add any additional penalty for workers– indicating a muted congruence. However, for Black women there seems to be an *additive effect* of the penalties they experience when working from home and being digitally absent at the same time. Examining managerial evaluation towards digitally absent WFH workers, Black women received the lowest evaluations, with significant differences between Black women and white women. Put differently, the compensatory power of digital presenteeism is stronger for Black women, especially when working from home, yet so are the penalties of not engaging in digital presenteeism. Taken together, the findings indicate that the compensatory value of digital presenteeism when remote working varies across groups where potentially the more marginalised groups may benefit most, partially accepting Hypothesis 3a-2, rejecting 3b-2

Figure 5. Promotion prospects by digital presenteeism, work location, and gender–ethnicity status



Note: Predicted values are based on the regression model for promotion prospects reported in Appendix Table A9. Lines indicate 83% confidence intervals

Robustness checks

To ensure the robustness of our findings, we re-estimated all models using post-stratification weights derived from the UK Labour Force Survey managerial population, adjusting for the overrepresentation of younger and more highly educated respondents in our sample. The weighted results are reported in Appendix Tables A11–A16, and they are highly consistent with the unweighted results. Digital presenteeism remains positively and significantly associated with managers' perceptions of most outcomes, and the WFH penalty also persists and is, in some cases, stronger after weighting (e.g., from −0.127 to −0.208 for collegiality; from −0.133 to −0.238 for promotion prospects). The gender–parental status interactions indicate that the relative advantage mothers receive from digital presenteeism, compared with fathers and

childless women, becomes somewhat larger after weighting (e.g., father–mother difference increases from −0.389 to −0.521 for promotion prospects and from −0.467 to −0.524 for time management; the childless women–mother difference increases from −0.354 to −0.504 for commitment). However, the gender–ethnicity interactions become less precisely estimated: for example, the negative promotion-prospect interactions for white women and white men remain similar in size but fall from conventional to marginal significance.

As an additional robustness check, we assessed whether the results were sensitive to the recoding of the outcome variables from the original 11-point scales to five-point scales. The results were substantively unchanged, and the overall pattern of findings was consistent with the main analyses (results available upon request). Full distributions of the original 0–10 outcome measures are reported in Appendix Table A17.

We also conducted randomisation balance checks to assess whether managers assigned to the digitally present and digitally absent vignette conditions differed systematically in their observed characteristics, including gender, age, education, parenthood, sector, contract type, and respondents' own WFH status. As reported in Appendix Table A18, there were no statistically significant differences between managers assigned to each vignette type.

Discussion

As digital technologies and remote work become increasingly central to contemporary workplaces, employees face mounting pressure to remain visible and responsive on online workspaces (Howcroft et al., 2024; Chung and Yuan, in review; Wajcman and Rose, 2011). While these behaviours may be positive as they signal commitment and productivity, resulting in positive career outcomes (Buechel and Solinas, 2025), they also risk reinforcing existing inequalities, as managers interpret digital presence through gendered, racialised, and parental-

status lenses (Correll et al., 2007; Castilla and Benard, 2010). Using a large-scale vignette experiment with 1,039 UK managers, this study examined how managers interpret digital presenteeism signals in both remote and office contexts and how these evaluations are shaped by the workers' gender, parental status, and ethnicity. We find that managers consistently evaluate hypothetical workers who engage in digital presenteeism more positively across multiple performance dimensions; namely, commitment, productivity, collegiality and they are more likely to be recommended for promotion. Managers also viewed the worker as being more likely to be able to work longer hours when needed – which we view as managers perception of the worker's ability to sacrifice for the company when the need arises, which can lead to positive career outcomes. The positive effect of digital presenteeism was so strong that it largely reduced the bias managers held against workers working from home, although not eliminating it. These results confirm previous studies that indicate that visibility and always-on behaviours in digital workspaces function as contemporary extension of the traditional ideal worker behaviour, acting as a strong signal of work commitment and motivation to managers, especially in work settings where workers work remotely (Howcroft et al., 2024; Afota et al., 2023). However, when workers worked from home and set up clearer digital boundaries, they were likely to face the highest levels of penalties with the two signals being additive.

The strength of the digital presenteeism signals is not equal across population groups. Mothers appear to benefit more from digital presenteeism signals as it may go against managerial expectation towards mothers, given their assumed childcare responsibilities. In contrast, childless men and women, as well as fathers, engaging in digital presenteeism does not result in similar additive effects on their evaluation. This may be because their commitment is often assumed and the additional signal of commitment and motivation is muted. Similarly, ethnic minority workers, particularly Black women, reap greater benefit from digital presenteeism, indicating that managerial interpretations are filtered through longstanding assumptions about

who constitutes the ideal worker. What is more, the compensatory effect of digital presenteeism when working from home also seem to vary depending on the workers' gender, parental status, and ethnicity. We found that mothers who were working from home and did not engage in digital presenteeism who were more likely than other populations to be seen as unable to work longer hours when needed. On the other hand, fathers who work from home and engaged in digital presenteeism were seen as most likely to be able to put long hours in at work. Similarly, it was especially Black women who were working from home and did not engage in digital presenteeism behaviours that were more likely than other groups to be penalised for their behaviours with regards to promotion opportunities. For other groups, not engaging in digital presenteeism resulted in relatively similar levels of evaluation – regardless of whether the worker worked from home or not.

These findings underscore how digital presenteeism acts as a stratified signalling mechanism in a compensatory way. Manager's existing biases and assumptions shape the signalling power of workers' digital presenteeism behaviours. On the one hand, digital presenteeism's signalling value may be stronger for workers whose work capacities are expected to be met with biases, namely mothers, ethnic minority workers, and those who work from home, or a combination of these. This explains why studies have shown that it may be especially ethnic minority workers and mothers who may feel a more pressure to engage in digital presenteeism behaviours (Chung and Yuan, in review; Chung et al., 2024). However, on the other hand, our results also show that the inability to engage in such behaviours can also result in a stronger penalisation of these groups which could potentially amplify existing inequalities in the labour market. This theoretical ambiguity deserves further attention. The compensatory mechanism and the amplified penalty are two sides of the same coin which our data provide a rather mixed conclusion. When mothers and Black women show larger evaluative gains from digital presenteeism, this could mean either that digital presenteeism works as a stronger signal for

them to counter any managerial assumptions about their commitment, or that the cost of not performing digital presenteeism is costly for them than compared to other groups. The results shown in Figures 2 and 3 provide stronger support for the *compensatory effect*, if not the *devotion bonus* where mothers and Black women have a slight competitive advantage when engaging in digital presenteeism, although there is no significant difference between the population groups in the baseline where digital presenteeism behaviours are absent. Our findings in the WFH analyses, however, lend stronger support to the *amplified penalty* interpretation, where the combination of remote working and digital absence produces particularly severe penalties specifically for mothers and Black women.

This distinction matters for how we understand the implications of our findings. If the amplified penalty interpretation is correct, this entails that disadvantaged workers can face much harsher penalisation for setting work-family boundaries (Kossek, 2016) and not engaging in digital presenteeism behaviours. Despite its negative consequence for mental health and well-being (Sonnentag and Fritz, 2015; Derks and Bakker, 2014), setting clearer boundaries with regards to digital connectivity behaviours may become an even bigger risk for workers who already deviate away from the ideal worker image purely due to their demographic characteristics (see also, Chung et al., 2024). We could consider that the compensatory or devotion bonus interpretation is correct, and that digital presenteeism can be potentially considered a tool through which marginalised workers can partially overcome structural disadvantage they face in the labour market. However, even in this scenario, we also know that mothers and Black workers, Black women more specifically, are precisely those who are limited in their capacity to engage in such activities due to other competing demands like childcare for mothers(Blair-Loy, 2009), and emotional energy used due to the racism workers face for black workers (TUC, 2022). Digital presenteeism therefore represents an additional and unequal burden: an implicit expectation that falls most heavily on those already carrying the greatest weight in the

workplace, and for whom the cost of non-compliance is steepest (Chung and Yuan, in review). This suggests that even when digital presenteeism functions as a compensatory strategy, it may in practice constitute an additional and unequal pressure on workers who already deviate from the ideal worker norm. Rather than workers freely choosing to engage in these activities to address existing biases, it can function as yet another mechanism through which certain workers are pushed to the margins of the labour market (Buechel and Solinas, 2025; Correll and Ridgeway, 2006; Acker, 1990), potentially widening existing inequalities in the labour market.

Conclusions

Using a large-scale vignette experiment with 1,039 UK managers, this study demonstrates that digital presenteeism functions as a stratified signalling mechanism, one that consistently enhances managerial evaluations across outcomes, compensates for remote working bias, yet distributes its costs and penalties unequally across gender, parental status, and ethnicity in ways that risk deepening rather than reducing workplace inequality.

This paper has several limitations. First, our study focuses on UK managers and may not generalise to other national or cultural contexts. Yet, the gender racial bias in the UK is similar to that of many other industrialised countries, as is the extent to which work is increasingly becoming digitalised. Therefore, the result of this study is likely to be applicable to other country settings. However, additional studies across different country and cultural settings will be useful not only to examine whether similar conclusions can be made, but also to see which contexts may help alleviate these patterns. Second, while vignette experiments provide strong internal validity for understanding perceptions, they may not fully account for real-world managerial decision-making processes or team dynamics. This is especially true as our vignette

scenario was limited in the contextual settings, we could provide to our respondents given the restrictions of the survey length. For example, the relative weak flexibility stigma observed in this data to other previous studies (e.g., Kasperska et al., 2024; Wang and Chung, 2026) may reflect the strong signalling power of digital presenteeism in the vignette design, where responsiveness cues were presented as highly salient and at the end of the vignette. Future studies should employ more detailed vignette designs and different variations of vignette designs with different positioning of the digital presenteeism behaviours, and potentially varying other cues that may be reflective of worker's productivity and commitment to test for the relative importance of digital presenteeism in managerial evaluation of workers. Also, when possible and ethics allow, researchers should aim to use real-world HR data, e.g., promotions, pay and bonus levels, remote working data – e.g. building office entry tag data, and digital behavioural data, e.g., speed of response, out of normal working hours/weekend online behaviours, to examine how managers evaluate workers in practice. Finally, although the sample is weighted to approximate the UK managerial population did not result in varying results, overrepresentation of younger, highly educated and private-sector respondents may influence the generalisability of findings.

Nonetheless, this study has important theoretical and practical implications. First, our study integrates signalling theory/self presentation theory(Spence, 1973; Goffman, 1959) with expectation states theory (Correll & Ridgeway, 2006) contextualised in the ideal worker norm (Acker, 1990), to show that signal interpretation cannot be understood independently of the racialised and gendered assumptions receivers hold about the sender (Pedulla, 2018). The same signal, constant digital availability and after-hours responsiveness, carries different informational value depending on who sends it, because managerial prior beliefs about commitment and work devotion are themselves structured by gendered and racialised assumptions about who constitutes the ideal worker. As Pedulla (2018) has explored for

negative signals, we show how signals that may provide more positive evaluations may also be shaped differently by social status of the sender, based on biased assumptions around the environment and capacities, and workers' priorities. The results of our study also provide policy implications for government and companies. It indicates that organisations should be aware that digital visibility can inadvertently reinforce existing inequalities. Those already aligned with normative expectations of the ideal worker (men, fathers, white employees) may experience lower risk of evaluative penalties when they set healthy boundaries between work and private lives. Whereas mothers and ethnic minority employees must expend greater effort to signal their commitment and competence, as failure to do so may result in greater penalties, especially when remote working. As hybrid and remote work continue to expand, organisations must recognise that expecting and rewarding constant digital availability risks reproducing inequality and harming worker well-being without clear productivity gains. Policies that protect employees' right to time and mental space away from work, such as the right to disconnect (Regier, 2026), or clear organisational or team level agreements on expectations around availability (Whillans et al., 2024), limits on after-hours communication, and evaluation criteria that decouple performance from visibility, will be essential for fostering more equitable and sustainable workplaces. Without such interventions, constant availability is likely to shift from an implicit expectation to an entrenched organisational norm, with consequences for equity, workers' well-being, and organisational performance.

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Appendix

Table A1. Comparison of unweighted and weighted samples

Variable	Unweighted (%)	Weighted (%)
Gender		
Man	51.64	53.25
Woman	48.36	46.75
Age		
18-24	1.45	1.41
25-34	51.35	21.76
35-44	25.00	29.38
45-54	12.36	24.80
55-64	9.85	22.65
Education		
Below degree	16.22	37.49
Degree level of above	83.78	62.51
Company size		
Fewer than 10	1.64	8.94
10 to 49	7.92	21.28
50 to 249	34.27	24.75
250 or more	56.18	45.02
Sector		
Public	19.88	27.74
Private	80.12	72.26

Table A2. Descriptive statistics of vignette attributes

Characteristic	Category	Percent
Gender	Male	50.1
	Female	49.9
Ethnicity	White	50.5
	Black	49.5
Parental status	Non-parents	47.5
	Parents	52.5
Work location	Office	49.8
	WFH	50.2
Digital presenteeism	Digitally absent	51.3
	Digitally present	48.7

Table A3. Pairwise correlations among vignette attributes

	Gender	Ethnicity	Parental status	Work location	Digital presenteeism
Gender	1				
Ethnicity	-0.0144	1			
Parental status	-0.0048	-0.0332	1		
Work location	-0.0183	-0.0433	-0.0455	1	
Digital presenteeism	-0.0183	-0.0359	-0.0170	-0.0702	1

Table A4. Vignette text

David (Sarah) **Walker** (Okoye), aged 35, has **no children** (two young children), and holds a master's degree in Economics and Management. He/She works **in the office** (from home) on a regular basis. He/She **is responsive to** (does not respond to) emails and other work messages, even outside of core working hours, such as evenings and weekends.

Table A5. Survey questions

Outcomes	Questions
Commitment	How would you rate this worker's work commitment?
Productivity	How would you rate this worker's productivity?
Collegiality	How would you rate this worker's collegiality?
Promotion	Would you suggest this worker for a promotion?
Time management	How would you rate this worker's time management skills?
Expectation regarding long-hours work	What is your expectation towards this worker to carry out the following activities outside of their normal working hours (e.g. before 8 am, after 6 pm, on weekends, or on holidays)?

Table A6. Effects of digital presenteeism and work location on worker evaluations and expectations

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Commitment	Productivity	Collegiality	Promotion	Time management	Expectation: Long hours
Digital presenteeism (ref. = Digitally absent)						
Digitally present	0.635 ***	0.392 ***	0.407 ***	0.680 ***	0.027	0.322 **
	(0.074)	(0.072)	(0.075)	(0.087)	(0.089)	(0.100)
Work location (ref. = Office)						
WFH	-0.156 +	-0.171 *	-0.215 *	-0.142	-0.096	-0.034
	(0.083)	(0.084)	(0.083)	(0.099)	(0.090)	(0.095)
Digital presenteeism × Work Location						
Yes × WFH	0.030	0.128	0.180 +	0.017	0.128	0.009
	(0.105)	(0.105)	(0.109)	(0.124)	(0.122)	(0.136)
Gender (ref. = Men)						
Women	0.039	0.093 +	0.030	0.030	0.072	-0.006
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.062)	(0.061)	(0.068)
Ethnicity (ref. = White)						
Black	0.025	-0.016	0.013	-0.004	0.045	-0.035
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.063)	(0.061)	(0.067)
Parenthood (ref. = Non-parents)						
Parents	-0.034	-0.044	0.028	0.040	0.021	-0.010
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.062)	(0.061)	(0.068)
Constant	3.850 ***	3.935 ***	3.682 ***	3.619 ***	3.924 ***	2.934 ***
	(0.079)	(0.077)	(0.076)	(0.091)	(0.088)	(0.094)
R-squared	0.137	0.077	0.083	0.112	0.005	0.023
N of observations	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Table A7. Interaction among digital presenteeism, work location, and gender-parental status

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Commitment	Productivity	Collegiality	Promotion	Time management	Expectation: Long hours
Digital presenteeism–Work location (ref. = Digitally absent office workers)						
Digitally present office workers	0.875 ***	0.535 ***	0.587 ***	1.030 ***	0.458 **	0.262
	(0.145)	(0.147)	(0.137)	(0.174)	(0.172)	(0.192)
Digitally present WFH workers	0.682 ***	0.511 ***	0.400 **	0.892 ***	0.486 **	0.214
	(0.158)	(0.158)	(0.159)	(0.181)	(0.175)	(0.206)
Digitally absent WFH workers	-0.004	0.026	-0.019	0.065	0.218	-0.427 **
	(0.182)	(0.186)	(0.165)	(0.221)	(0.190)	(0.196)
Gender–parental status (ref. = Mothers)						
Fathers	0.105	0.070	0.031	0.247	0.324 +	-0.269
	(0.162)	(0.164)	(0.153)	(0.200)	(0.184)	(0.192)
Childless women	0.436 *	0.398 **	0.273	0.333	0.479 **	-0.287
	(0.168)	(0.165)	(0.173)	(0.211)	(0.187)	(0.215)
Childless men	0.121	0.072	-0.008	0.224	0.256	-0.166
	(0.184)	(0.178)	(0.173)	(0.211)	(0.202)	(0.215)
Digital presenteeism–Work location × Gender–parental status						
Digitally present office workers × Fathers	-0.199	0.191	-0.224	-0.470 **	-0.779 ***	-0.045
	(0.202)	(0.202)	(0.196)	(0.236)	(0.242)	(0.267)
Digitally present office workers × Childless women	-0.561 ***	-0.374 +	-0.466 **	-0.519 **	-0.570 **	0.093
	(0.205)	(0.203)	(0.221)	(0.255)	(0.250)	(0.286)
Digitally present office workers × Childless men	-0.259	-0.045	-0.082	-0.479 +	-0.453 +	0.176
	(0.218)	(0.211)	(0.210)	(0.251)	(0.251)	(0.285)
Digitally present WFH workers × Fathers	-0.184	-0.125	0.025	-0.477 +	-0.472 +	0.313
	(0.215)	(0.209)	(0.221)	(0.246)	(0.242)	(0.273)
Digitally present WFH workers × Childless women	-0.563	-0.449 **	-0.263	-0.525 **	-0.826 ***	0.006
	(0.226)	(0.212)	(0.230)	(0.261)	(0.249)	(0.290)
Digitally present WFH workers × Childless men	-0.028	-0.128	0.081	-0.392	-0.496 **	-0.011
	(0.224)	(0.227)	(0.228)	(0.260)	(0.253)	(0.293)
Digitally absent WFH workers × Fathers	-0.079	-0.133	-0.115	-0.170	-0.311	0.427

	(0.236)	(0.239)	(0.223)	(0.277)	(0.247)	(0.262)
Digitally absent WFH workers × Childless women	-0.370	-0.373	-0.495 **	-0.412	-0.555 **	0.581 **
	(0.236)	(0.237)	(0.243)	(0.289)	(0.257)	(0.278)
Digitally absent WFH workers × Childless men	-0.216	-0.327	-0.192	-0.291	-0.438	0.566 **
	(0.259)	(0.261)	(0.237)	(0.293)	(0.275)	(0.279)
Ethnicity (ref. = White)						
Black	0.019	-0.019	0.013	-0.006	0.044	-0.035
	(0.053)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.063)	(0.061)	(0.068)
Constant	3.701 ***	3.835 ***	3.646 ***	3.466 ***	3.719 ***	3.103 ***
	(0.126)	(0.130)	(0.117)	(0.160)	(0.142)	(0.151)
R-squared	0.147	0.085	0.091	0.119	0.024	0.038
N of observations	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Table A8. Predictive margins for expectations of long-hours work by digital presenteeism, work location and gender–parental status

	Predictive margin	Standard error
DP office # Mothers	3.34	0.12
DP office # Fathers	3.03	0.14
DP office # Childless women	3.16	0.14
DP office # Childless men	3.36	0.14
DP WFH # Mothers	3.30	0.14
DP WFH # Fathers	3.35	0.13
DP WFH # Childless women	3.02	0.13
DP WFH # Childless men	3.13	0.14
DA office # Mothers	3.08	0.15
DA office # Fathers	2.81	0.12
DA office # Childless women	2.80	0.16
DA office # Childless men	2.92	0.16
DA WFH # Mothers	2.65	0.13
DA WFH # Fathers	2.82	0.12
DA WFH # Childless women	2.96	0.12
DA WFH # Childless men	3.06	0.12

Note: Predictive margins are estimated separately within each profile, controlling for ethnicity. DP = digitally present; DA = digitally absent; WFH = working from home.

Table A9. Interaction among digital presenteeism, work location, and gender-ethnicity status

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Commitment	Productivity	Collegiality	Promotion	Time management	Expectation: Long hours
Digital presenteeism–Work location (ref. = Digitally absent office workers)						
Digitally present office workers	0.467 ***	0.240 +	0.251	0.872 ***	0.018	0.438 **
	(0.144)	(0.143)	(0.153)	(0.178)	(0.188)	(0.203)
Digitally present WFH workers	0.276 +	0.290 **	0.276 +	0.737 ***	0.029	0.261
	(0.157)	(0.147)	(0.159)	(0.186)	(0.185)	(0.225)
Digitally absent WFH workers	-0.302 +	-0.244	-0.410 **	-0.307	-0.208	-0.107
	(0.160)	(0.158)	(0.170)	(0.200)	(0.182)	(0.196)
Gender–ethnicity (ref. = Black women)						
Black men	-0.226	-0.257 +	-0.352 **	0.027	-0.065	-0.003
	(0.157)	(0.154)	(0.166)	(0.187)	(0.187)	(0.204)
White women	-0.292 +	-0.159	-0.234	-0.009	-0.230	0.212
	(0.173)	(0.172)	(0.172)	(0.217)	(0.195)	(0.216)
White men	-0.220	-0.093	-0.066	0.156	0.022	0.007
	(0.179)	(0.169)	(0.162)	(0.213)	(0.201)	(0.210)
Digital presenteeism–Work location × Gender–ethnicity status						
Digitally present office workers × Black men	0.135	0.239	0.365 +	-0.240	-0.033	-0.017
	(0.199)	(0.197)	(0.214)	(0.233)	(0.245)	(0.280)
Digitally present office workers × White women	0.321	0.264	0.258	-0.153	0.382	-0.284
	(0.209)	(0.208)	(0.219)	(0.258)	(0.253)	(0.286)
Digitally present office workers × White men	0.219	0.097	-0.023	-0.405 +	-0.338	-0.176
	(0.217)	(0.210)	(0.209)	(0.261)	(0.271)	(0.286)
Digitally present WFH workers × Black men	0.317	0.203	0.355	-0.143	0.072	0.087
	(0.206)	(0.207)	(0.224)	(0.248)	(0.244)	(0.291)
Digitally present WFH workers × White women	0.307	0.068	0.053	-0.127	0.182	-0.112
	(0.227)	(0.217)	(0.228)	(0.265)	(0.255)	(0.298)
Digitally present WFH workers × White men	0.277	-0.029	-0.023	-0.416	-0.144	0.141
	(0.228)	(0.213)	(0.220)	(0.266)	(0.263)	(0.300)
Digitally absent WFH workers × Black men	0.156	0.082	0.330	0.226	0.150	0.196

	(0.224)	(0.222)	(0.228)	(0.267)	(0.246)	(0.265)
Digitally absent WFH workers × White women	0.282	0.212	0.311	0.383	0.358	-0.071
	(0.236)	(0.240)	(0.243)	(0.292)	(0.262)	(0.279)
Digitally absent WFH workers × White men	0.145	-0.015	0.117	0.053	-0.064	0.174
	(0.239)	(0.238)	(0.233)	(0.286)	(0.263)	(0.271)
Parenthood (ref. = Non-parents)						
Parents	-0.029	-0.040	0.029	0.025	0.012	-0.017
	(0.054)	(0.053)	(0.055)	(0.063)	(0.06)	(0.068)
Constant	4.064 ***	4.102 ***	3.872 ***	3.600 ***	4.058 ***	2.864 ***
	(0.121)	(0.116)	(0.125)	(0.150)	(0.144)	(0.159)
R-squared	0.141	0.081	0.091	0.121	0.015	0.027
N of observations	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Table A10. Predictive margins promotion prospects by digital presenteeism, work location and gender–ethnicity status

	Predictive margin	Standard error
DP office # Black women	4.48	0.10
DP office # Black men	4.27	0.10
DP office # White women	4.32	0.09
DP office # White men	4.24	0.11
DP WFH # Black women	4.35	0.11
DP WFH # Black men	4.23	0.12
DP WFH # White women	4.21	0.10
DP WFH # White men	4.09	0.11
DA office # Black women	3.60	0.15
DA office # Black men	3.64	0.12
DA office # White women	3.61	0.16
DA office # White men	3.78	0.16
DA WFH # Black women	3.31	0.14
DA WFH # Black men	3.56	0.14
DA WFH # White women	3.68	0.14
DA WFH # White men	3.51	0.13

Note: Predictive margins are estimated separately within each profile, controlling for parenthood. DP = digitally present; DA = digitally absent; WFH = working from home.

[Weighted sample]

Table A11. Multivariate regression of worker evaluations and expectations

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Commitment	Productivity	Collegiality	Promotion	Time management	Expectation: Long hours
Digital presenteeism (Digitally present)	0.702 ***	0.483 ***	0.502 ***	0.698 ***	-0.069	0.322 **
	(0.070)	(0.075)	(0.080)	(0.086)	(0.093)	(0.116)
Gender (Women)	0.060	0.158 *	0.108	0.054	0.047	0.049
	(0.071)	(0.075)	(0.080)	(0.086)	(0.092)	(0.111)
Ethnicity (Black)	-0.032	-0.073	-0.033	-0.007	-0.054	-0.183
	(0.071)	(0.075)	(0.081)	(0.088)	(0.093)	(0.115)
Parenthood (Parents)	0.022	0.002	0.147 +	0.038	0.053	-0.051
	(0.072)	(0.075)	(0.082)	(0.086)	(0.091)	(0.112)
Work location (WFH)	-0.166 *	-0.122 +	-0.208 **	-0.238 **	-0.077	-0.048
	(0.071)	(0.074)	(0.079)	(0.085)	(0.090)	(0.114)
Constant	3.816 ***	3.851 ***	3.598 ***	3.571 ***	3.959 ***	2.714 ***
	(0.094)	(0.097)	(0.100)	(0.113)	(0.111)	(0.137)
R-squared	0.178	0.097	0.106	0.136	0.005	0.029
N of observations	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Table A12. Multivariate regression of worker evaluations and expectations

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Commitment	Productivity	Collegiality	Promotion	Time management	Expectation: Long hours
Digital presenteeism–Work location (ref. = Digitally absent Office workers)						
Digitally present Office workers	0.607 ***	0.335 **	0.415 ***	0.659 ***	-0.260 +	0.370 *
	(0.106)	(0.107)	(0.107)	(0.120)	(0.139)	(0.152)
Digitally present WFH workers	0.537 ***	0.361 **	0.294 **	0.461 ***	-0.145	0.274
	(0.100)	(0.105)	(0.105)	(0.126)	(0.121)	(0.169)
Digitally absent WFH workers	-0.255 *	-0.262 *	-0.290 **	-0.275 *	-0.257 *	-0.003
	(0.111)	(0.111)	(0.110)	(0.131)	(0.116)	(0.143)
Gender (Women)	0.067	0.169 *	0.114	0.056	0.061	0.046
	(0.071)	(0.076)	(0.081)	(0.087)	(0.091)	(0.111)
Ethnicity (Black)	-0.034	-0.076	-0.034	-0.008	-0.058	-0.182
	(0.072)	(0.075)	(0.081)	(0.088)	(0.093)	(0.115)
Parenthood (Parents)	0.023	0.005	0.148 +	0.039	0.055	-0.051
	(0.072)	(0.075)	(0.082)	(0.086)	(0.090)	(0.112)
Constant	3.861 ***	3.922 ***	3.639 ***	3.590 ***	4.050 ***	2.692 ***
	(0.104)	(0.106)	(0.101)	(0.120)	(0.117)	(0.140)
R-squared	0.181	0.104	0.108	0.136	0.014	0.030
N of observations	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Table A13. Effects of digital presenteeism and gender–parenthood status on worker evaluations and expectations

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Commitment	Productivity	Collegiality	Promotion	Time management	Expectation: Long hours
Digital presenteeism (ref. = Digitally absent)						
Digitally present	0.837 ***	0.585 ***	0.633 ***	1.030 ***	0.246 **	0.385 +
	(0.127)	(0.140)	(0.144)	(0.168)	(0.172)	(0.203)
Gender–parental status (ref. = Mothers)						
Fathers	0.024	-0.090	-0.063	0.210	0.154	-0.358 +
	(0.145)	(0.157)	(0.147)	(0.187)	(0.173)	(0.190)
Childless women	0.216	0.167	-0.055	0.230	0.137	-0.028
	(0.14)	(0.136)	(0.149)	(0.176)	(0.160)	(0.197)
Childless men	-0.201	-0.247	-0.335 +	0.002	-0.023	0.199
	(0.16)	(0.176)	(0.185)	(0.201)	(0.169)	(0.173)
Digital presenteeism × Gender–parental status						
Digitally present × Fathers	-0.178	-0.146	-0.253	-0.521 *	-0.524 *	0.245
	(0.18)	(0.200)	(0.204)	(0.231)	(0.241)	(0.320)
Digitally present × Childless women	-0.504 **	-0.360 +	-0.362	-0.540 *	-0.511 +	-0.244
	(0.19)	(0.203)	(0.220)	(0.232)	(0.277)	(0.298)
Digitally present × Childless men	0.230	0.167	0.175	-0.217	-0.164	-0.341
	(0.20)	(0.211)	(0.228)	(0.249)	(0.233)	(0.282)
Ethnicity (ref. = White)						
Black	-0.029	-0.071	-0.022	-0.006	-0.047	-0.201 +
	(0.07)	(0.074)	(0.079)	(0.085)	(0.093)	(0.110)
Work location (ref. = Office)						
WFH	-0.185 **	-0.136 +	-0.221 **	-0.242 **	-0.081	-0.048
	(0.07)	(0.073)	(0.077)	(0.084)	(0.089)	(0.110)
Constant	3.842 ***	3.970 ***	3.832 ***	3.503 ***	3.938 ***	2.791 ***
	(0.12)	(0.123)	(0.121)	(0.159)	(0.136)	(0.156)
R-squared	0.200	0.108	0.121	0.148	0.020	0.006
N of observations	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Table A14. Effects of digital presenteeism and gender–ethnicity status on worker evaluations and expectations

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Commitment	Productivity	Collegiality	Promotion	Time management	Expectation: Long hours
Digital presenteeism (ref. = Digitally absent)						
Digitally present	0.478 **	0.397 **	0.468 **	0.956 ***	-0.147	0.405 *
	(0.140)	(0.139)	(0.178)	(0.162)	(0.221)	(0.205)
Gender–ethnicity (ref. = Black women)						
Black men	-0.295 *	-0.301 *	-0.240	0.023	0.069	0.137
	(0.145)	(0.143)	(0.150)	(0.167)	(0.147)	(0.175)
White women	-0.152	0.050	0.024	0.172	0.067	0.518 **
	(0.141)	(0.162)	(0.152)	(0.183)	(0.164)	(0.194)
White men	-0.185	-0.101	-0.024	0.171	-0.004	0.093
	(0.158)	(0.16)	(0.157)	(0.192)	(0.182)	(0.198)
Digital presenteeism × Gender–ethnicity status						
Digitally present × Black men	0.339 +	0.262	0.220	-0.223	0.045	-0.035
	(0.193)	(0.196)	(0.231)	(0.225)	(0.261)	(0.314)
Digitally present × White women	0.230	0.016	-0.035	-0.408 +	0.266	-0.323
	(0.194)	(0.211)	(0.232)	(0.243)	(0.286)	(0.301)
Digitally present × White men	0.361 +	0.050	-0.086	-0.452 +	-0.010	0.019
	(0.207)	(0.218)	(0.248)	(0.249)	(0.298)	(0.320)
Parenthood (ref. = Non-parents)						
Parents	0.029	-0.005	0.136 +	0.024	0.050	-0.063
	(0.070)	(0.074)	(0.082)	(0.085)	(0.091)	(0.112)
Work location (ref. = Office)						
WFH	-0.173 *	-0.128 +	-0.213 **	-0.239 **	-0.066	-0.055
	(0.070)	(0.075)	(0.079)	(0.085)	(0.091)	(0.11)
Constant	3.982 ***	3.990 ***	3.709 ***	3.523 ***	3.916	2.468 ***
	(0.115)	(0.099)	(0.109)	(0.129)	(0.117)	(0.145)
R-squared	0.187	0.101	0.111	0.143	0.014	0.024
N of observations	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Table A15. Interaction among digital presenteeism, work location, and gender-parental status

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Commitment	Productivity	Collegiality	Promotion	Time management	Expectation: Long hours
Digital presenteeism–Work location (ref. = Digitally absent office workers)						
Digitally present office workers	0.996 ***	0.707 ***	0.738 ***	1.098 ***	0.324	0.085
	(0.182)	(0.200)	(0.180)	(0.246)	(0.254)	(0.281)
Digitally present WFH workers	0.804 ***	0.675 ***	0.675 **	1.103 ***	0.494 *	0.200
	(0.194)	(0.192)	(0.197)	(0.248)	(0.209)	(0.318)
Digitally absent WFH workers	0.118	0.186	0.110	0.088	0.272	-0.498 **
	(0.195)	(0.209)	(0.214)	(0.274)	(0.241)	(0.246)
Gender–parental status (ref. = Mothers)						
Fathers	0.299	0.196	0.128	0.428	0.541 *	-0.605 *
	(0.198)	(0.209)	(0.170)	(0.279)	(0.228)	(0.257)
Childless women	0.533 *	0.550 **	0.318 +	0.455 +	0.557 **	-0.546 *
	(0.238)	(0.193)	(0.190)	(0.259)	(0.206)	(0.257)
Childless men	0.056	0.108	0.025	0.402	0.347	-0.128
	(0.228)	(0.238)	(0.211)	(0.251)	(0.213)	(0.271)
Digital presenteeism–Work location × Gender–parental status						
Digitally present office workers × Fathers	-0.460 +	-0.491 +	-0.331	-0.582 +	-0.992 **	0.311
	(0.250)	(0.277)	(0.252)	(0.335)	(0.359)	(0.390)
Digitally present office workers × Childless women	-0.896 **	-0.748 **	-0.749 *	-0.613 +	-0.796 *	0.554
	(0.296)	(0.281)	(0.303)	(0.325)	(0.387)	(0.409)
Digitally present office workers × Childless men	-0.189	-0.246	-0.198	-0.666 *	-0.549 +	0.422
	(0.272)	(0.293)	(0.267)	(0.311)	(0.326)	(0.388)
Digitally present WFH workers × Fathers	-0.445 +	-0.382	-0.586 *	-0.941 **	-0.857 **	0.662
	(0.259)	(0.265)	(0.270)	(0.333)	(0.288)	(0.483)
Digitally present WFH workers × Childless women	-0.728 *	-0.747 *	-0.731 *	-0.969 **	-1.116 **	-0.078
	(0.288)	(0.296)	(0.283)	(0.344)	(0.358)	(0.382)
Digitally present WFH workers × Childless men	0.075	-0.188	-0.231	-0.670 *	-0.610 *	-0.333
	(0.272)	(0.283)	(0.291)	(0.324)	(0.287)	(0.421)
Digitally absent WFH workers × Fathers	-0.534 +	-0.555 +	-0.371	-0.423	-0.750 *	0.479

	(0.279)	(0.301)	(0.288)	(0.371)	(0.330)	(0.374)
Digitally absent WFH workers × Childless women	-0.566 *	-0.677 *	-0.661 *	-0.419	-0.742 *	0.920 *
	(0.288)	(0.262)	(0.288)	(0.349)	(0.306)	(0.366)
Digitally absent WFH workers × Childless men	-0.493	-0.678 *	-0.689 +	-0.766 *	-0.708 *	0.631 +
	(0.323)	(0.344)	(0.353)	(0.382)	(0.326)	(0.338)
Ethnicity (ref. = White)						
Black	-0.030	-0.076	-0.025	-0.006	-0.055	-0.205 +
	(0.067)	(0.073)	(0.078)	(0.084)	(0.092)	(0.106)
Constant	3.687 ***	3.807 ***	3.663 ***	3.333 ***	3.760 ***	3.025 ***
	(0.159)	(0.160)	(0.141)	(0.216)	(0.173)	(0.209)
R-squared	0.214	0.129	0.137	0.161	0.048	0.078
N of observations	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Table A16. Interaction among digital presenteeism, work location, and gender-ethnicity status

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	Commitment	Productivity	Collegiality	Promotion	Time management	Expectation: Long hours
Digital presenteeism–Work location (ref. = Digitally absent office workers)						
Digitally present office workers	0.400 +	0.206	0.218	0.777 **	-0.396	0.345
	(0.232)	(0.224)	(0.250)	(0.239)	(0.332)	(0.288)
Digitally present WFH workers	0.290	0.374 *	0.330	0.785 **	-0.188	0.411
	(0.198)	(0.175)	(0.226)	(0.232)	(0.270)	(0.297)
Digitally absent WFH workers	-0.268	-0.244	-0.419 *	0.37	-0.311	-0.070
	(0.194)	(0.171)	(0.187)	(0.229)	(0.205)	(0.227)
Gender–parental status (ref. = Mothers)						
Fathers	-0.227 +	-0.228	-0.262	0.073	0.153	0.040
	(0.208)	(0.195)	(0.178)	(0.224)	(0.189)	(0.229)
Childless women	-0.355	-0.105	-0.258	-0.189	-0.246	0.547 *
	(0.238)	(0.225)	(0.204)	(0.282)	(0.232)	(0.278)
Childless men	-0.105	0.034	-0.007	0.242	0.050	0.065
	(0.246)	(0.229)	(0.171)	(0.287)	(0.264)	(0.282)
Digital presenteeism–Work location × Gender–parental status						
Digitally present office workers × Fathers	0.252	0.240	0.437	-0.111	0.058	0.071
	(0.288)	(0.292)	(0.305)	(0.303)	(0.384)	(0.408)
Digitally present office workers × Childless women	0.437	0.349	0.398	0.125	0.763	-0.108
	(0.310)	(0.309)	(0.322)	(0.348)	(0.399)	(0.412)
Digitally present office workers × Childless men	0.223	-0.126	-0.091	-0.573	-0.376	0.052
	(0.319)	(0.314)	(0.309)	(0.360)	(0.445)	(0.409)
Digitally present WFH workers × Fathers	0.281	0.101	0.006	-0.470	-0.174	0.039
	(0.256)	(0.243)	(0.296)	(0.305)	(0.318)	(0.449)
Digitally present WFH workers × Childless women	0.430	-0.057	0.052	-0.265	0.343	-0.675
	(0.288)	(0.322)	(0.300)	(0.364)	(0.393)	(0.412)
Digitally present WFH workers × Childless men	0.305	-0.135	-0.196	-0.553	0.078	0.012
	(0.289)	(0.281)	(0.304)	(0.354)	(0.374)	(0.468)
Digitally absent WFH workers × Fathers	-0.145	-0.156	0.031	-0.113	-0.189	0.198

	(0.290)	(0.283)	(0.294)	(0.331)	(0.282)	(0.351)
Digitally absent WFH workers × Childless women	0.345	0.271	0.491 +	0.609 +	0.546 +	-0.046
	(0.288)	(0.284)	(0.292)	(0.365)	(0.318)	(0.383)
Digitally absent WFH workers × Childless men	-0.136	-0.232	-0.016	-0.118	-0.080	0.053
	(0.313)	(0.311)	(0.295)	(0.380)	(0.352)	(0.397)
Ethnicity (ref. = White)						
Black	0.035	0.001	0.141 +	0.032	0.064	-0.066
	(0.070)	(0.073)	(0.080)	(0.082)	(0.088)	(0.106)
Constant	4.028 ***	4.048 ***	3.814 ***	3.589 ***	4.037 ***	2.477 ***
	(0.172)	(0.139)	(0.14)	(0.179)	(0.153)	(0.181)
R-squared	0.196	0.118	0.125	0.158	0.047	0.046
N of observations	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036	1,036

***p<.001, **p<.01, *p<.05, +p<.10

Table A17. Distribution of original 0–10 outcome responses, n (%)

Original response value	Commitment	Productivity	Collegiality	Promotion	Time management
0	2 (0.2)	1 (0.1)	3 (0.29)	20 (1.9)	7 (0.7)
1	6 (0.6)	2 (0.2)	4 (0.38)	13 (1.3)	8 (0.8)
2	9 (0.9)	13 (1.3)	13 (1.3)	10 (1.0)	13 (1.3)
3	10 (1.0)	10 (1.0)	16 (1.5)	15 (1.4)	16 (1.5)
4	16 (1.5)	18 (1.7)	28 (2.7)	30 (2.9)	27 (2.6)
5	124 (11.9)	111 (10.7)	178 (17.1)	157 (15.1)	109 (10.5)
6	82 (7.9)	75 (7.2)	97 (9.3)	85 (8.18)	102 (9.8)
7	133 (12.8)	155 (14.9)	185 (17.8)	154 (14.8)	158 (15.2)
8	243 (23.4)	276 (26.6)	248 (23.9)	180 (17.3)	231 (22.2)
9	192 (18.5)	191 (18.4)	171 (16.5)	159 (15.3)	180 (17.3)
10	222 (21.4)	187 (18.0)	96 (9.2)	216 (20.8)	188 (18.1)
N	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039	1,039

Table A18. Balance of respondent characteristics by digital presenteeism condition

Respondent characteristic	Digitally absent vignette	Digitally present vignette	Difference	p-value
Female manager (%)	46.9	49.6	2.7	0.384
Age (mean)	37.96	37.07	0.89	0.187
Degree educated (%)	83.9	83.8	0.1	0.975
Has children (%)	87.4	86.4	1.0	0.611
Private sector (%)	81.1	78.7	2.4	0.336
Permanent contract (%)	94.9	93.9	1.0	0.457
Managers WFH (%)	12.8	16.0	3.2	0.135