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## Factors contributing to virtual work adjustment

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### Abstract

We explore factors associated with employee adjustment to virtual work. In particular, we explore structural factors (i.e., work independence and evaluation criteria) and relational factors (i.e., trust and organizational connectedness) as predictors of adjustment to virtual work. Additionally, we explore age, virtual work experience and gender as moderators of the relationships. We find that structural and relational factors are important predictors of adjustment and that the strength of the relationship is contingent upon individual differences. We explore the implications of these findings for future research and for practice. © 2001 Elsevier Science Inc. All rights reserved.

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### 1. Introduction

Dramatic changes in the ways that we work are raising new management challenges. Since the early 1980s, when futurist Alvin Toffler's book "The Third Wave" introduced the concept of the "electronic cottage," the idea of virtual work has intrigued both management and workers as a welcome alternative to long, traffic-bound commutes, forced captivity in private cubicles, and inflexible, rigid workdays. However, for much of the 1980s and early 90s, the idea of virtual work remained just that: an idea. Many corporations experimented with the concept, allowing a few select employees to work part-time from their home offices, while academics and consultants conjectured about the potential organizational and social hazards of such work arrangements (Kraut, 1989; Olson & Primps, 1984; Shamir & Salomon, 1985). It was not until recent years, after much of the speculation died down, that actual virtual work (i.e., professionals working remotely from home, in cars, from hotels and

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