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**THE STUDY OF THE WOMEN'S MOTIVATION FOR**  
**TELEWORK**

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***Abstract***

The article is devoted to the study of women's attitudes towards the telework; studied women can be attributed to the potential labor force. The aim of the author's study was to examine the question whether women are motivated to work remotely and they can improve their quality of life while teleworking. A theoretical base to the study was Job Characteristics Theory, Adaptive structuration theory and the concept of the time costs impact on labor supply in the labor market theory. The research methodology included a sociological survey by questioning women: students and the unemployed. 310 women were interviewed in total in Yekaterinburg megacity. Results were obtained on the importance of different work characteristics for women, preferences in choosing standard or teleworking. The women's opinion was studied about possible changes in their personal and family life, income level, health and opportunities to get educational while teleworking. The results can be used to adjust social and demographic policies in Russia and other European countries. The study conducted by the author revealed a discrepancy in preferences between standard and remote employment among female students of universities and the unemployed women in Yekaterinburg megacity. Also, the most important main characteristics of employment for students are those, that are peculiar to telecommuting, while for unemployed women is more important the characteristics of the standard work at the employers.

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**Keywords:** Telework, job characteristics, attitude to teleworking, women, unemployed.



## 1. Introduction

Digitalization is the main trend in the development of modern society and all its socio-economic spheres in recent years. The computer technology introduction into production leads inevitably to alterations in the labor sphere and working conditions. The main differences of employment in the digital economy from an industrial are as follows:

- mental work has replaced physical one, so almost 95% of workers were engaged in physical labor in 19th century Europe, now it is about 10-20% depending on the country;
- the studying period has become longer; we need more time to acquire knowledge enough to get started working (higher education). So, 536.6 thousand people went to study at universities in 1970, and 1157.8 thousand people – in 2016. According to the 2015 micro census, the proportion of people with higher education in Russia is 23.1%. The number of students in 2016 amounted to 3873.8 thousand people;
- Life expectancy has increased. Thus, according to the World Health Organization, life expectancy was more than 80 years in 29 countries of the world in 2017, including Japan, Switzerland, Germany, etc. Life expectancy for the same period in Russia was 70.5 years, and Federal State Statistics Service experts predict that it will exceed 72 years in 2018.

The work features in the digital economy include: the transformation of the classical labor organization (Menshikova & Fedorova, 2016) and traditional employment forms (there are more employees today, who are working in non-traditional employment forms, than in traditional) (Kamarova, 2018); changing requirements for employees and, as a result, the vocational training content, modification labor motivation mechanisms and responsibility distribution schemes (Sizova & Khusiyainov, 2017), trade unions activity transformation. One of the new, rapidly developing employment forms in connection with the digitization of the economy, is telework.

Telework (telecommuting) is a work process carrying out outside the traditional work place and involving interaction with the employer through information and communication technologies (Konobevtsev, 2011).

## 2. Problem Statement

The theoretical foundation for the telecommuting study were Job Characteristics Theory (Oldham & Hackman, 2005), as well as Adaptive Structuration theory (DeSanctis & Poole, 1994). In addition, the theoretical basis for the motivation to telecommuting study is the concept of the time costs impact on labor supply in the labor market theory.

Previous studies showed that respondents with children rated the stress reduction and family benefits of telecommuting more highly than did those with no children at home (Mokhtarian, Bagley, & Salomon, 1998). Later studies have confirmed that women who have children less than five years old have a more favorable attitude towards telecommuting (Iskan & Naktiyok, 2005). And women with children working on a remote form of employment had lower depression (Kossek, Lautsch, & Eaton, 2006).

Scientists' researches either study the phenomenon from demand for labor side (Ludanik, 2007), or study the workers' attitude to telework without highlighting gender peculiarities (Abdel-Wahab, 2007;

Iscan & Naktiyok, 2005) or these studies have been done a long time ago (Mokhtarian, et al, 1998; Khalifa & Etezadi, 1997), therefore the study conducted by the author is devoted to the women' attitude to telework studying.

### **3. Research Questions**

According to J'son & Partners Consulting experts, the number of employees working remotely in Russia in 2014 was about 2.53 million people, which is about 4% of employed in the economy sphere, but this figure will rise to 20% by 2020, according to forecasts (Yuzbekova, 2018). This proportion is much higher in some areas of the economy. Thus, according to IT-industry vacancy service "My Circle" research, about 30% of specialists in this field work remotely in Russia today.

Telework has several advantages: saving time for the way to work, flexible working hours, work in a familiar environment, the opportunity to spend more time with the family etc. (Dolzhenkova & Dolzhenkov, 2016). The latter advantage is especially important for working women with children. The author's hypothesis is that telework improves the employee's quality of life. The author is interested whether women understand the benefits of telework.

On the other hand, telework has advantages for the employer also: there is an opportunity to save money on the workplace's organization, other advantages are: the possibility of organizing round-the-clock information service to customers; labor productivity increased; increasing in staff loyalty (Sardarian & Barabanova, 2010).

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

The aim of the research was not only to study women' attitude to telework, but also to explore whether telework improves their quality of life. The author is interested in two groups of women, which can be attributed to the potential labor force: students who are still getting a university degree and unemployed women have applied to the State Employment Service.

### **5. Research Methods**

The research methodology included a sociological survey by questioning women. In total 310 women were surveyed in Yekaterinburg megacity: 207 female students over 18 years who were studied in 6 universities of the city and 103 unemployed women. This number of responded students is proportional to their share of people with higher education in the working age population of Russia (8.5% for students). The study involved students not only from public but also private universities in order to avoid sampling errors. The method of cluster sampling was chosen, since it is the best for student groups. The number of surveyed unemployed women was also proportional to their number in the economically active population (4.0%). The survey was conducted by the author herself. The sampling error at 95% confidence interval is more or less 2%. Thus, the sample can be called representative.

The author developed an original questionnaire containing 10 evaluative questions on the merits of the studied issue (about attitude towards telecommuting, personal preferences in choosing a job, the view on the telework attractiveness for various groups of population and so on) and 5 questions about a socio-demographic nature (age, marital status, profession, etc.). In order to ensure comparability of results,

earlier studies were taken into account when formulating certain questions of the questionnaire. During the questionnaire development process, a pilot study was conducted to eliminate incomprehensible, two-fold questions and to refine the questionnaire. The results of the survey were recorded in a database and were processed using a computer program, which eliminates the possibility of arithmetic mistakes in the calculation process. As a result of the research, it was not only determined the answers distribution for each question, but it was also revealed the several indicators interrelations.

## 6. Findings

The results of the survey showed that unemployed women' telework experience was more often than students' one: 15.3% versus 13.5 for students. The reasons for students' telework were distributed almost equally among: "I like working at home" and "I combined work with study"; for unemployed women combining work with raising a child was added as a reason. Moreover, 39% of students and 35% of unemployed indicated that they were offered teleworking.

A question was asked further about the importance of different working conditions for respondents when choosing a workplace. Results about importance of each job description for women are presented in table 1, where the line number indicates the quality rank for women.

As can be seen from the data in the table, the opportunity not to waste time traveling to work is at the first place for unemployed, but despite this fact it is also very important for them that the employer organizes and maintains a workplace and a clear, stable operation mode, therefore, working close to home is more suitable for them than telework.

**Table 01.** Ranking the importance of job characteristics for women

Female students	Unemployed women
1. Career growth opportunity	1. Do not waste time traveling to work
2. Self-planning working time schedule opportunity	2. Self-planning working time schedule opportunity
3. Opportunity for combining work and household chores	3. The employer organizes and maintains the workplace.
4. Do not waste time traveling to work	4. Stable operation mode
5. Free schedule	5. Career growth opportunity
6. Opportunity for devoting more time to children, their intellectual growth	6. Standard timetable
7. Stable operation mode	7. Opportunity for devoting more time to children, their intellectual growth
8. The employer organizes and maintains the workplace.	8. Opportunity to communicate with colleagues and work in a team
9. Opportunity for working outside the home, changing atmosphere	9. Possibility not meet the dress code and other corporate rules
10. Opportunity to communicate with colleagues and work in a team	10. Opportunity for combining work and household chores

It was also studied what telework advantages women see for themselves. 23% of responded women believe that their health will improve if they work remotely, 55% think that health will not

change, the rest - that it will deteriorate. Regarding the health of children and relatives, 35% believe that their health will improve if a woman works remotely, 64% - that will nothing change.

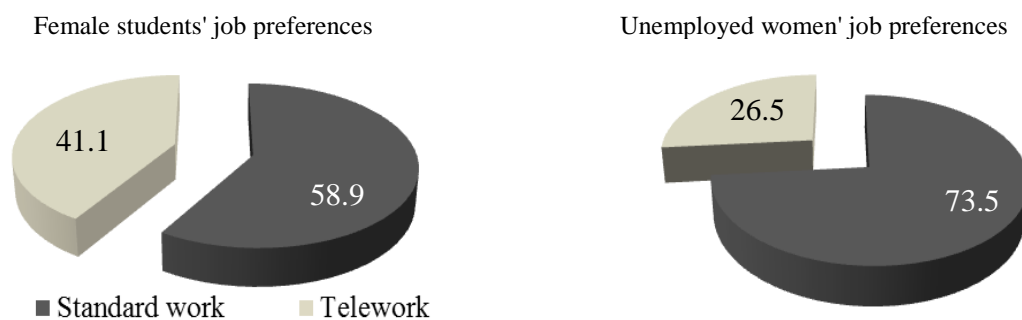
Respondents think that telework will not have a serious impact on their income. At the same time, more than 60% of women believe that teleworking will provide their higher or additional education. Besides, more than 75% of surveyed women believe that they will have more time for their personal social, cultural and spiritual life; and almost 70% think that they will have more time for themselves, for rest and socializing.

As for family life: about 30% of women feel that their relationship with their husband (partner) will improve if she works remotely; 25% of women hope that it will be possible to have one more child in such working conditions; 72% of women believe that they will have the opportunity to devote more time to their children's education and intellectual growth; 43% will more often go to the theater, to concerts, exhibitions and other cultural events with their children.

Finally, more than a half of surveyed women believe that their home will become more comfortable, cleaner if they work remotely, and 34% are willing to spend the travelling to work time to improve the family's nutrition quality.

While checking answers about the teleworking impact on certain life aspects, no serious discrepancies were found between female students and unemployed women.

Questions were also asked in the survey process about preferences in choosing a job: standard, with a job at the employer, or teleworking. This issue revealed significant discrepancies between the two groups of respondents (Figure 01).



**Figure 01.** Women's preference between standard and remote employment

The results of the study showed that female students are more likely to have a positive attitude towards telework and would prefer it in more than 1.5 times, compared with unemployed women.

## 7. Conclusion

The study conducted by the author revealed a discrepancy in preferences between standard and remote employment among female students of universities and the unemployed women in Yekaterinburg megacity. Also, the most important main characteristics of employment for students are those, that are peculiar to telecommuting, while for unemployed women is more important the characteristics of the

standard work at the employers. In general, 41% of female students and 26% of unemployed women are motivated for telework. Most women are aware of the opportunities that telecommuting gives.

The obtained results can be used in adjusting social and demographic policies aimed to increase the birth rate in Russia, as well as in further researches.

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