

## Sustainability | Poster

### **PP - (21377) - INTERPERSONAL DISTANCING PREFERENCES IN CORPORATE OFFICE ENVIRONMENTS: INVESTIGATING THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONALITY AND GENDER ON SELF-REPORTED DISTANCING PREFERENCES BETWEEN COLLEAGUES BEFORE AND AFTER THE ONSET OF THE COVID19 PANDEMIC.**

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#### **Research or practical problem and objectives**

As large organisations continue to adopt activity-based working arrangements for their office environments, characterised by flexible arrangements in the form of varied work settings for different activities, the impact of this approach on employee wellbeing in relation to the Covid19 pandemic remains largely unexplored. This study attempts to synthesise older and contemporary research on proxemic behaviour, personal space, and individual differences to illuminate the effects of personality and gender on the expression of interpersonal distancing preferences in offices.

#### **Methods and process (for empirical research)**

The study follows a quantitative correlational design to analyse the relationships between Individual Differences (IVs) and Comfortable Interpersonal Distance (DVs) in a multivariate context, through Canonical Correlation Analysis. It utilises the IPIP 10-item scale and the Interpersonal Visual Analogue Scale to measure Extroversion, Neuroticism and Comfortable Interpersonal Distance (CID) respectively. A total of 100 professionals (51 female, 49 male) based in corporate offices across the UK were asked to complete the personality questionnaire followed by a set of six distancing scenarios (Sitting, Standing and Mixed arrangements), administered online, involving virtual co-workers of the same and opposite Gender, under Normal and Social-Distancing conditions.

#### **Main results preview and importance (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)**

Results indicate that Introversion and opposite-gender interactions are associated with larger CIDs. Extroversion was inversely correlated with CID in Facing and Mixed arrangements in Normal conditions, and all desk-based arrangements in Social-Distancing conditions, with Introversion being a predictor of CID. Female-to-Male pairs also reported larger CIDs than Male-to-Female pairs, with the former exhibiting the largest distancing overall. Gender was the primary CID predictor in Normal conditions. Results on the effects of Neuroticism were inconclusive.

This study sheds light on the impact of various working arrangements on employee comfort based on individual characteristics. The findings can therefore be utilised to create more appropriate post-pandemic environments for employees. Further investigation is required to better understand the effects of these factors post-pandemic

**Palavras-chave : Personal space, Extroversion, Neuroticism, Gender, Personality, Workplace, Proxemics, Covid19**