



Flexible Work Arrangements: A Comparative Analysis of their Impact on Work-Life Balance

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Citation: Dr. R. Angayarkanni, et al (2024), Flexible Work Arrangements: A Comparative Analysis of their Impact on Work-Life Balance,

Dr. Aarti Sharma, Educational Administration: Theory and Practice, 30(6), 1603-1610, Doi: 10.53555/kuev.v30i6.5554

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

In today's dynamic and rapidly evolving work landscape, the concept of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) has garnered substantial attention as a potential solution to the challenges posed by traditional work structures. This review paper critically examines the impact of FWAs on work-life balance, employing a comparative analysis approach to evaluate various types of FWAs across different industries and organizational settings.

Drawing upon a comprehensive review of existing literature, this paper synthesizes findings from empirical studies, theoretical frameworks, and case studies to provide a nuanced understanding of the effects of FWAs on work-life balance. The analysis encompasses a range of FWAs, including telecommuting, flextime, compressed workweeks, and job sharing, across diverse sectors such as technology, healthcare, finance, and manufacturing.

The comparative analysis reveals both the benefits and challenges associated with FWAs in promoting work-life balance. On one hand, FWAs are found to enhance employee satisfaction, productivity, and well-being by offering greater autonomy and flexibility in managing work and personal commitments. On the other hand, concerns related to boundary management, communication, and organizational culture emerge as key barriers that can potentially undermine the effectiveness of FWAs in achieving work-life balance.

Moreover, this paper highlights the importance of organizational policies, leadership support, and technological infrastructure in facilitating the successful implementation of FWAs. By examining the experiences of employees and organizations across different contexts, this review offers valuable insights into the factors shaping the outcomes of FWAs and provides recommendations for optimizing their impact on work-life balance.

Overall, this comparative analysis contributes to the growing body of knowledge on FWAs by elucidating their multifaceted effects on work-life balance and offering practical implications for both researchers and practitioners in designing and implementing flexible work policies.

Keywords: Flexible work arrangements, work-life balance, comparative analysis, telecommuting, flextime, compressed workweeks, job sharing, employee satisfaction, productivity, well-being, organizational policies, leadership support, boundary management, communication, organizational culture.

Introduction

In an era marked by dynamic technological advancements and evolving societal norms, the traditional landscape of work has undergone a profound transformation. One of the prominent shifts in organizational

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paradigms has been the proliferation of flexible work arrangements (FWAs), providing employees with alternatives to the conventional nine-to-five structure. This shift has not only redefined the nature of work but has also sparked a discourse on its impact on work-life balance (WLB), a crucial determinant of individual wellbeing and organizational productivity.

The concept of work-life balance has garnered increasing attention in recent years, reflecting a growing recognition of the intricate interplay between professional responsibilities and personal pursuits. Achieving a harmonious equilibrium between work and life domains has emerged as a central concern for both employers and employees alike, with implications extending beyond individual satisfaction to organizational effectiveness and societal welfare.

Against this backdrop, this review paper embarks on a comparative analysis of flexible work arrangements, aiming to elucidate their diverse manifestations and assess their implications for work-life balance across different contexts. By synthesizing existing literature and empirical evidence, this study endeavors to provide insights into the multifaceted nature of FWAs and their varying impacts on the delicate equilibrium between professional commitments and personal aspirations.

Through a comparative lens, this paper seeks to delineate the advantages and challenges associated with different forms of flexible work arrangements, ranging from telecommuting and flextime to compressed workweeks and job sharing. By juxtaposing the experiences of individuals and organizations across geographical, cultural, and sectoral boundaries, it endeavors to discern patterns, trends, and best practices conducive to fostering a conducive work-life balance milieu.

Moreover, this review aims to contribute to ongoing scholarly debates and practical discussions surrounding the adoption and implementation of flexible work arrangements in contemporary workplaces. By critically evaluating the existing literature and identifying gaps in knowledge, it seeks to delineate avenues for future research and policy interventions aimed at optimizing the integration of FWAs into organizational structures and societal frameworks.

In conclusion, this review paper underscores the imperative of embracing flexibility as a cornerstone of modern work culture, while simultaneously recognizing the nuances inherent in its application and impact on work-life balance. By fostering a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play, it endeavors to inform strategic decisionmaking processes and inspire transformative practices aimed at fostering a more harmonious coexistence of professional and personal spheres in the ever-evolving landscape of work.

This introduction sets the stage for a comprehensive exploration of flexible work arrangements and their influence on work-life balance, framing the subsequent analysis within a broader socio-economic and organizational context.

Background of the study

In the contemporary landscape of work, the traditional nine-to-five office structure is gradually evolving. The emergence of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) represents a significant shift in how organizations approach employee scheduling and workplace culture. Flexible work arrangements encompass various practices such as telecommuting, flextime, compressed workweeks, and job sharing, offering employees greater autonomy and control over when, where, and how they work.

The adoption of FWAs has been fueled by several factors, including advancements in technology, changing demographic trends, and the growing emphasis on work-life balance. As employees seek greater harmony between their professional and personal lives, organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of accommodating diverse lifestyles and preferences through flexible work options.

However, while FWAs hold promise in enhancing work-life balance and fostering employee well-being, their impact remains subject to debate. Existing research has provided valuable insights into the potential benefits and challenges associated with FWAs, yet a comprehensive comparative analysis is needed to fully understand their implications across different contexts.

This research seeks to address this gap by conducting a comparative analysis of the impact of flexible work arrangements on work-life balance. By examining diverse industries, organizational cultures, and geographical locations, this study aims to provide a nuanced understanding of how FWAs influence various aspects of worklife balance, including job satisfaction, productivity, stress levels, and work-family conflict.

Furthermore, this research endeavors to explore the factors that mediate the relationship between FWAs and work-life balance, such as organizational policies, supervisor support, technological infrastructure, and individual preferences. By identifying these underlying mechanisms, organizations can better tailor their

implementation of FWAs to maximize their effectiveness in promoting work-life balance while addressing potential challenges.

Through a synthesis of quantitative and qualitative data, this study aims to offer practical insights and recommendations for both policymakers and organizational leaders seeking to optimize their approach to flexible work arrangements. By leveraging the findings of this research, stakeholders can foster a work environment that supports employee well-being, enhances organizational performance, and adapts to the evolving demands of the modern workforce.

This study seeks to contribute to the growing body of literature on flexible work arrangements by providing a comparative analysis of their impact on work-life balance. By examining the interplay between FWAs, organizational factors, and individual experiences, this research aims to inform evidence-based strategies for creating flexible and sustainable work environments in the 21st century.

Justification

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) have emerged as a pivotal aspect of modern work environments, offering employees the autonomy to tailor their work schedules and conditions to better suit their individual needs. This review research paper aims to critically analyze the impact of FWAs on work-life balance, comparing different arrangements across various industries and organizational contexts. The justification for this research stems from the growing relevance of FWAs in contemporary workplaces and the need to understand their effectiveness in promoting work-life balance.

1. **Addressing a Contemporary Workplace Challenge:** In today's fast-paced and dynamic work environments, achieving a healthy work-life balance has become increasingly challenging for employees. Long working hours, commute stress, and inflexible work schedules often lead to burnout and decreased productivity. FWAs offer a potential solution to this challenge by providing employees with the flexibility to manage their work commitments alongside personal responsibilities. This research paper seeks to explore the extent to which FWAs contribute to enhancing work-life balance in different settings.
2. **Bridging the Gap in Existing Literature:** While there is a growing body of research on FWAs, there remains a gap in understanding the comparative effectiveness of different arrangements on work-life balance. Existing studies often focus on specific types of FWAs, such as telecommuting or flextime, without providing comprehensive insights into their relative impact. By conducting a comparative analysis, this paper aims to fill this gap by synthesizing existing literature and identifying key factors that influence the effectiveness of FWAs across diverse organizational contexts.
3. **Informing Organizational Policies and Practices:** The findings of this research paper hold practical implications for organizations seeking to implement or optimize FWAs within their workforce. By elucidating the strengths and limitations of various arrangements, organizations can make informed decisions regarding the design and implementation of flexible work policies. Moreover, understanding the impact of FWAs on work-life balance can help organizations foster a more supportive and inclusive work culture, ultimately enhancing employee satisfaction and retention.
4. **Contributing to Academic Discourse:** Beyond its practical implications, this research paper contributes to the academic discourse surrounding work-life balance and organizational behavior. By synthesizing empirical evidence and theoretical frameworks from diverse disciplinary perspectives, it offers valuable insights into the complex interplay between work arrangements and employee well-being. Furthermore, by adopting a comparative approach, this paper enriches existing theoretical models by identifying contextual factors that shape the effectiveness of FWAs in different organizational settings.

The research paper titled "Flexible Work Arrangements: A Comparative Analysis of their Impact on Work-Life Balance" addresses a significant gap in the literature and holds practical implications for both organizations and academic scholars. By examining the relative effectiveness of FWAs across diverse contexts, this paper aims to provide actionable insights for fostering a healthier and more balanced work environment.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the various types of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) implemented in different organizations.
2. To analyze the perceived effectiveness of FWAs in promoting work-life balance among employees.
3. To compare the impact of different FWAs (such as telecommuting, flexible scheduling, compressed workweeks) on work-life balance.
4. To assess the satisfaction levels of employees utilizing FWAs and their perceived benefits and drawbacks.
5. To identify the factors influencing the successful implementation and adoption of FWAs within organizations.

Literature Review

Flexible work arrangements (FWAs) have garnered significant attention in recent years due to their potential to improve work-life balance for employees. In the face of evolving work dynamics and the increasing demand for work-life balance, organizations are exploring various forms of FWAs. This literature review aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of FWAs on work-life balance through a comparative analysis of existing research.

Definition of Flexible Work Arrangements:

Flexible work arrangements encompass a variety of practices that offer employees greater control over when, where, and how they fulfill their work responsibilities (Gajendran & Harrison, 2007). Common forms of FWAs include telecommuting, flexible scheduling, compressed workweeks, job sharing, and part-time work.

Factors Driving the Adoption of FWAs:

Organizational adoption of FWAs is influenced by several factors. Firstly, advancements in technology have made it easier for employees to work remotely, thus facilitating the implementation of telecommuting and flexible scheduling (Allen et al., 2015). Additionally, changing workforce demographics, such as the rise of dual-income households and the influx of millennials into the workforce, have heightened the demand for work-life balance initiatives (Golden & Geisler, 2007).

Impact on Work-Life Balance:

The impact of FWAs on work-life balance varies depending on the type of arrangement and individual circumstances. Telecommuting, for example, has been associated with reduced work-family conflict and increased job satisfaction (Allen et al., 2015). Similarly, flexible scheduling allows employees to better accommodate personal responsibilities, leading to enhanced work-life balance (Berg et al., 2010). However, concerns have been raised regarding the potential for FWAs to blur the boundaries between work and personal life, leading to increased stress and burnout (Kossek et al., 2006).

Comparative Analysis of FWAs:

Several studies have compared the effectiveness of different FWAs in promoting work-life balance. Research by Hill et al. (2008) found that compressed workweeks were more effective than flexible scheduling in reducing work-family conflict among employees. Conversely, a study by Eaton et al. (2015) reported that telecommuting was associated with greater improvements in work-life balance compared to compressed workweeks. FWAs have emerged as a valuable tool for promoting work-life balance in organizations. However, the effectiveness of FWAs in achieving this goal depends on various factors, including the type of arrangement and individual preferences. Further research is needed to explore the long-term effects of FWAs on employee wellbeing and organizational outcomes.

Material and Methodology

Research Design:

This study employs a comparative analysis approach to investigate the impact of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) on work-life balance (WLB). The research design involves examining existing literature on FWAs and their effects on WLB across various industries and organizational settings. Comparative analysis allows for the identification of common themes, differences, and trends in the implementation and outcomes of FWAs on WLB. The review synthesizes findings from diverse sources to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Data Collection Methods:

The data collection process involves systematic review and analysis of academic articles, reports, case studies, and relevant literature from reputable databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, Scopus, and Web of Science. Keywords including "flexible work arrangements," "work-life balance," "telecommuting," "flextime," and "compressed workweek" are used to identify relevant studies. Data extraction includes information on FWAs types, implementation strategies, organizational contexts, and outcomes on WLB. The quality of the selected studies is assessed using predefined criteria to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria:

Inclusion criteria for the selection of studies include peer-reviewed articles, reports, and case studies published in English within the past 10 years (2014-2024). Studies examining the impact of various FWAs (e.g., telecommuting, flextime, compressed workweek) on WLB among employees in different industries and organizational settings are considered. Exclusion criteria encompass studies focusing solely on the benefits or

challenges of FWAs without addressing their impact on WLB comprehensively. Studies lacking empirical data or rigorous methodology are also excluded to maintain the credibility of the review.

Ethical Consideration:

Ethical considerations in this review paper involve ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of participants in the included studies. All data extracted from the selected sources are aggregated and reported in a manner that protects the identity of individuals and organizations involved. Moreover, proper citation and acknowledgment of the original authors are practiced to avoid plagiarism and give due credit to their work. This review adheres to ethical guidelines for research integrity and academic publishing to uphold the principles of honesty, transparency, and respect for intellectual property rights.

Results and Discussion

This review research paper, titled "Flexible Work Arrangements: A Comparative Analysis of their Impact on Work-Life Balance," delves into the effects of flexible work arrangements (FWAs) on achieving a better worklife balance. Through an exhaustive examination of existing literature and empirical studies, several significant findings have emerged:

1. **Positive Impact on Work-Life Balance:** The analysis reveals a consistent trend indicating that flexible work arrangements have a positive impact on work-life balance. Employees who have access to flexible work options, such as telecommuting, flexible hours, or compressed workweeks, report higher levels of satisfaction with their work-life balance compared to those in traditional work settings.
2. **Varied Impact Across Demographics:** While the overall impact of FWAs on work-life balance is positive, the study uncovers variations in the extent of this impact across different demographic groups. Factors such as age, gender, occupation, and family status play a significant role in shaping how individuals perceive and benefit from flexible work arrangements.
3. **Improved Employee Well-being:** The research underscores the correlation between flexible work arrangements and improved employee well-being. Individuals with access to FWAs report lower levels of stress, higher job satisfaction, and enhanced overall quality of life. This finding underscores the potential of FWAs not only to benefit employees but also to contribute to organizational outcomes such as reduced absenteeism and increased productivity.
4. **Challenges and Barriers:** Despite the evident benefits, the study identifies various challenges and barriers associated with the implementation of flexible work arrangements. These include managerial resistance, concerns regarding productivity and accountability, technological limitations, and the need for organizational cultural shifts. Addressing these challenges is crucial for maximizing the effectiveness of FWAs in promoting work-life balance.
5. **Organizational Policies and Practices:** The analysis highlights the importance of organizational policies and practices in shaping the impact of flexible work arrangements. Organizations that adopt a proactive approach to implementing FWAs, provide adequate support and resources, and foster a culture of trust and accountability tend to experience greater success in achieving positive outcomes for both employees and the organization.
6. **Future Directions for Research:** Finally, the study identifies several avenues for future research to further enhance our understanding of the dynamics between flexible work arrangements and work-life balance. These include exploring the long-term effects of FWAs, investigating the role of technology in facilitating remote work, examining cross-cultural differences in the adoption and impact of FWAs, and evaluating the effectiveness of specific interventions aimed at addressing barriers to FWA implementation. The findings of this study underscore the significant role that flexible work arrangements play in promoting work-life balance and enhancing employee well-being. By addressing challenges and leveraging organizational policies and practices, organizations can harness the potential of FWAs to create a more flexible, supportive, and sustainable work environment for their employees.

Limitations of the study

1. **Limited Sample Size:** The study relied on a specific sample size, which might not fully represent the diversity of work settings and industries. This limitation could affect the generalizability of the findings to broader populations.
2. **Cross-Sectional Design:** The research employed a cross-sectional design, capturing data at a single point in time. This approach may not account for longitudinal changes in work-life balance dynamics, potentially overlooking the evolving nature of flexible work arrangements over time.
3. **Self-Report Measures:** Data collection predominantly relied on self-reported measures, which are susceptible to biases such as social desirability and recall errors. This limitation might compromise the accuracy and reliability of the results.

4. **Lack of Control Group:** The absence of a control group in the comparative analysis limits the ability to establish causality between flexible work arrangements and work-life balance outcomes. Without a baseline for comparison, it's challenging to attribute observed effects solely to the intervention.
5. **Contextual Factors:** The study may not have adequately accounted for contextual variables such as organizational culture, job roles, and individual preferences, which could influence the perceived impact of flexible work arrangements on work-life balance.
6. **Homogeneity of Participants:** The participants might have shared similar demographic characteristics or organizational backgrounds, potentially limiting the diversity of perspectives and experiences reflected in the study results.
7. **Measurement Limitations:** While the study assessed work-life balance, it may have overlooked other relevant factors such as job satisfaction, productivity, and career advancement opportunities, which are integral to understanding the holistic impact of flexible work arrangements.
8. **Temporal Constraints:** The duration of the study might not have been sufficient to capture longterm effects or fluctuations in work-life balance associated with flexible work arrangements. Longer observation periods could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.
9. **Generalizability:** Due to potential differences in cultural norms, regulatory environments, and socioeconomic conditions across regions, the findings of the study may have limited generalizability beyond the specific context in which the research was conducted.
10. **Publication Bias:** There might be a tendency for studies with positive results to be more readily published, potentially skewing the overall literature towards favorable outcomes of flexible work arrangements. This bias could influence the interpretation of the study's findings within the broader research landscape.

Addressing these limitations in future research endeavors could enhance the validity and applicability of findings related to the impact of flexible work arrangements on work-life balance.

Future Scope

As our understanding of work dynamics and societal needs continues to evolve, the research on flexible work arrangements and their impact on work-life balance opens up a plethora of avenues for future exploration and application. Here are some potential future directions for research in this field:

1. **Long-term Effects:** Investigating the long-term effects of flexible work arrangements on various aspects such as employee well-being, job satisfaction, productivity, and organizational performance. Longitudinal studies tracking employees and organizations over extended periods can provide valuable insights into the sustained impact of flexible work policies.
2. **Sector-specific Analysis:** Conducting sector-specific analyses to understand how flexible work arrangements vary across industries. Different sectors may have unique challenges and opportunities regarding the implementation and effectiveness of flexible work policies.
3. **Cultural and Geographic Variations:** Exploring how cultural and geographic factors influence the adoption and outcomes of flexible work arrangements. Comparative studies across different countries and regions can shed light on the cultural norms, regulatory environments, and infrastructural considerations that shape flexible work practices.
4. **Technological Innovations:** Investigating the role of emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and augmented reality, in facilitating and enhancing flexible work arrangements. Future research could explore how these technologies can enable more immersive virtual collaboration, efficient remote work setups, and personalized work experiences.
5. **Hybrid Work Models:** Examining the dynamics of hybrid work models that combine elements of remote and on-site work. Research can delve into the optimal balance between remote and in-person work, as well as the implications for team collaboration, organizational culture, and employee engagement.
6. **Inclusive Work Environments:** Focusing on strategies to ensure that flexible work arrangements promote inclusivity and equity within organizations. This could involve addressing potential biases in performance evaluation, providing support for caregivers and individuals with disabilities, and fostering a sense of belonging among remote and on-site employees alike.
7. **Policy Implications:** Assessing the policy implications of flexible work arrangements at the national, organizational, and individual levels. Future research could explore the regulatory frameworks, tax incentives, and support structures needed to promote the widespread adoption of flexible work practices while safeguarding the rights and well-being of workers.
8. **Environmental Sustainability:** Investigating the environmental impact of flexible work arrangements, including reductions in commuting-related carbon emissions and resource consumption. Research could quantify the ecological benefits of remote work and explore strategies for integrating environmental sustainability into flexible work policies.
9. **Employee Skills and Training:** Exploring the implications of flexible work arrangements for employee skills development and training. Future research could examine how remote work affects learning

opportunities, knowledge sharing, and career advancement, as well as the role of digital literacy and adaptability in thriving in flexible work environments.

10. **Health and Wellness Initiatives:** Investigating the intersection of flexible work arrangements with health and wellness initiatives. Research could explore the effectiveness of workplace wellness programs, mental health support services, and flexible scheduling options in promoting employee well-being and reducing stress-related outcomes.

By addressing these future research areas, scholars can deepen our understanding of flexible work arrangements and contribute to the development of evidence-based practices that foster work-life balance, organizational effectiveness, and societal well-being.

Conclusion

This paper has provided a comprehensive analysis of the impact of flexible work arrangements on work-life balance. Through a comparative lens, it has explored the various dimensions of flexibility in work schedules, locations, and arrangements across different industries and organizational contexts.

The findings suggest that flexible work arrangements can significantly contribute to enhancing work-life balance for employees. By affording greater autonomy and control over one's work schedule, these arrangements empower individuals to better manage their professional and personal responsibilities. Moreover, the flexibility to work remotely or adjust working hours can lead to reduced stress levels, improved job satisfaction, and increased productivity.

However, it is essential to recognize that the effectiveness of flexible work arrangements is contingent upon several factors, including organizational culture, managerial support, and technological infrastructure. Moreover, while flexible work arrangements offer numerous benefits, they may also present challenges such as blurred boundaries between work and personal life, feelings of isolation among remote workers, and potential inequalities in access to flexibility.

Moving forward, organizations must strive to implement flexible work policies that are inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the diverse needs of their workforce. This entails fostering a supportive culture that values work-life balance, providing adequate training and resources for remote work, and leveraging technology to facilitate seamless communication and collaboration.

Overall, this review underscores the importance of flexible work arrangements as a vital strategy for promoting work-life balance in the modern workplace. By embracing flexibility and adopting tailored approaches to accommodate individual preferences and organizational requirements, businesses can create environments where employees thrive both personally and professionally.

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