

Effectiveness of Flexible Working Hours on Employee Work-Life Balance: Evidence from an Education and Training Organization

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effectiveness of flexible working hours (FWH) in enhancing employee work-life balance (WLB) within the education and training sector. The study was conducted among 200 employees working in training academy, using a structured questionnaire instrument, manually distributed and electrically sent through e-forms. Only 182 sample responses were received and 150 sample responses were taken into account. The standard statistical analysis methods and tools were adopted for testing hypotheses. The study evidenced the strong positivity relationship flexible working hours and work-life balance, found out a significant inter-departmental variation in supervisor support influencing flexible work hours and work life balance, and evidenced no significant level of difference between genders in facing challenges in flexible work hour arraignments. This study contributes novel empirical insights from an underexplored education and training organization in a developing-economy context, highlighting the pivotal role of supervisor support and organizational policy in determining the effectiveness of flexible working arrangements.

Keywords: Flexible Working Hours, Work-Life Balance, Employee Well-being, Human Resource Management, Education Sector

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary workplace is undergoing a fundamental transformation driven by technological disruption, demographic shifts, and an evolving understanding of employee well-being. Organizations across industries are increasingly cognizant that their most valuable resource — human capital — requires environments that support both professional performance and personal fulfilment. Central to this discourse is the concept of flexible working hours (FWH): work arrangements that grant employees a degree of autonomy over the timing, location, and structure of their professional responsibilities. Flexible working arrangements encompass a broad spectrum of practices, including flexitime, compressed workweeks, remote work, part-time schedules, and hybrid models. These modalities collectively aim to align organizational demands with employees' personal and family commitments, thereby improving work-life balance (WLB). The theoretical basis for this alignment draws from resource theories such as the Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, 1989), which posits that individuals experiencing greater control over their time and energy report lower stress and higher psychological well-being.

In India, the adoption of flexible working practices has gained particular momentum within service industries, including the rapidly expanding education and training sector. Employees in this domain juggle diverse

responsibilities — teaching, curriculum development, student mentoring, administrative coordination — that collectively create substantial time pressure. Against this backdrop, C3 Tech Academy, a prominent education and training organization based in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, has institutionalized flexible working hour practices as a core component of its human resource strategy. Despite the proliferation of flexibility initiatives, the literature reveals critical gaps. Empirical studies examining FWH in Indian education and training organizations remain sparse. Moreover, the mechanisms through which flexibility translates — or fails to translate — into improved WLB are insufficiently understood, particularly in relation to the role of supervisory support and organizational culture. This study addresses these lacunae by systematically evaluating the effectiveness of FWH practices at C3 Tech Academy and their measurable impact on employee WLB.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a) Theoretical Foundations of Flexible Working -Scholarly inquiry into flexible working hours is anchored in several theoretical frameworks. The Conservation of Resources theory (Hobfoll, 1989) suggests that employees who possess greater control over temporal and spatial work resources are better equipped to manage competing demands, thereby experiencing reduced role conflict and burnout. Complementing this, the Work-Family Border Theory (Clark, 2000) conceptualizes work and family as two separate domains separated by permeable borders; flexibility increases border permeability and facilitates smoother transitions between domains. Autonomy theory, rooted in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), further underscores the importance of employee agency. When individuals perceive control over their schedules, intrinsic motivation and psychological well-being are enhanced, contributing positively to organizational commitment and performance.

b) Flexible Working Hours and Work-Life Balance -An extensive body of research has established a positive relationship between FWH and employee WLB. Hill et al. (2024) demonstrated that flexible arrangements reduce time-based role conflict and improve employees' ability to fulfil family and personal responsibilities without compromising professional obligations. Similarly, Chung and Van der Lippe (2020) found that flexibility significantly moderated stress levels and improved subjective well-being among employees in dual-income households. Greenhaus and Allen (2024) argued that WLB is not merely the absence of conflict but the active enrichment of one domain by participation in another, and that FWH serves as a key enabler of this enrichment. Smith and Allen (2024) reported that employees with access to flexible schedules demonstrated 23% higher job satisfaction scores compared to those bound by rigid timetables.

c) Flexible Working in the Education Sector -The education and training sector presents a unique context for studying FWH. Priya (2023) established that teaching professionals who benefited from schedule flexibility reported significantly higher levels of organizational commitment and reduced absenteeism. Ramesh and Priyanka (2023) found that flexible work arrangements in academic institutions enabled employees to manage family responsibilities more effectively, particularly among female staff with caregiving obligations. The sector's output — student learning and institutional effectiveness — is closely tied to employee engagement and morale, making the management of WLB particularly consequential. However, studies have also cautioned that without clear boundaries and structured policies, the same flexibility can become counterproductive, blurring work-personal life boundaries and increasing work intensity (Chung, 2022).

d) Challenges and Moderating Factors -The effectiveness of FWH is moderated by several organizational and individual factors. Supervisor support has consistently emerged as a critical determinant. Marx et al. (2021) found that employees with supportive supervisors were significantly more likely to utilize flexible arrangements and report positive WLB outcomes. Conversely, Lewis and Humbert (2021) highlighted that managerial resistance and cultural norms favouring presenteeism often negate formal flexibility policies. Technological infrastructure, communication practices, and organizational culture have also been identified as enabling or constraining factors (Hackney et al., 2022; Austin-Egole et al., 2020). In developing-economy contexts, unequal access to digital resources further compounds these challenges (Idowu, 2020).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a) Data collection procedure: The study was conducted among the employees working in the sampled unit C3 Tech Academy, one of the education and training organizations actively functioning in Coimbatore, Tamilnadu,

India. Based on the observation and study of research reports on the sampled unit workplace setting which has formally adopted FWH practices and focus on WLB concepts, was selected for this study. First the study fixed a random sample of 200 employees then the questionnaire instrument was manually distributed and electrically sent through e-forms. Only 182 sample responses were received and 150 sample responses were taken into account with the response of 83%. Other responses were omitted due to improper and incomplete responses.

b) Instrument – the data were collected via a structured, self-administered questionnaire comprising three sections: (i) demographic information (ii) perceptions of flexible working hours and their importance and (iii) challenges associated with FWH implementation. Perception and attitude items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Agree) to 5 (Strongly Disagree). The instrument was developed through a synthesis of established scales drawn from FWH and WLB literature.

c) Reliability of instrument - The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient computed for 20 items scale was 0.771, which exceeds the commonly accepted threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally, 1978). This value confirms that the measurement instrument possesses satisfactory internal consistency and is reliable for the purposes of this study.

d) Data analysis - The study used SPSS software for analyzing the internal consistency and reliability of data collection instrument as well as the study variables a) FWH - flexible working hours, operationalized through scheduling flexibility, remote work options, work autonomy, and time management flexibility b) WLB - stress reduction, job satisfaction, personal well-being, and productivity indices and for testing the relationship of variables related to FWH and WLB. Further T test and ANOVA was used for testing the mean difference across the groups in their perception on FWH and WLB of workplace setting context.

e) Demographic Profile of Respondents - The profile of respondents reflects the demographic composition of C3 Tech Academy. A majority of respondents (65.3%) were female, consistent with the gender distribution characteristic of education and training organizations in South India. The largest age cohort was below 25 years (33.3%), indicating a predominantly early-career workforce. Postgraduate degree holders constituted the largest educational category (53%). Employees with less than one year of work experience formed the largest experience group (37.6%), and the Training and Development department accounted for the highest proportion of respondents (40.3%). Regarding FWH utilization, flexible start and end working hours were the most preferred arrangement (38.7%), and "often" was the most frequent usage category (35.3%). These findings indicate that FWH practices are both accessible and actively utilized within the organization.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Relationship of Flexible Working Hours with Work-Life Balance

Work life balance of the employees may be realized by them while they work in flexible work settings in the workplace. Flexible work setting includes work hours, usage of hours, responding to the requests of employees, importance to needs and wellbeing of employees. The study assumed the same that the positive relationship of flexible working hours and work life balance. To test and quantify the relationship Pearson correlation analysis was carried out that results positive relationship. Further results support to consequence of flexible work hours may result in stress reduction, increasing productivity and job satisfaction and increasing morale.

H₁: There is no significant positive relationship between flexible working hours maintained and work life balance of the respondents

Table 1: Relationship of flexible working hours with work life balance of respondents

Correlation Pair	Pearson r	Significance (2-tailed)	Decision
FWH & Work-Life Balance	0.218**	0.008*	H ₁ Rejected
Source: Primary data compiled from SPSS output			

The analysis revealed a statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.218$, $p = 0.008$) between FWH and employee WLB. While the effect size is modest, it is significant at the 0.01 level, confirming that improvements in flexibility are reliably associated with enhanced WLB outcomes. The positive direction of the correlation underscores that as organizational flexibility increases, employees report lower stress, higher productivity, and improved job satisfaction.

Difference in FWH related perceptions between department groups

The study assumed the significant difference in opinion of the respondents in the Flexible Work Hours related perception across various departmental groups. The study evidenced no significant level of difference in perception on job nature, team communication among the respondents except the perception on the supervisor support for having FWH.

H₂: There is no significant difference in perception on flexible hours usage between the groups of respondents working in various departments.

H₃. There is no significant difference in perception on job nature affecting FWH between the groups of respondents working in various departments.

H₄: There is no significant difference in perception on team communication between the groups of respondents working in various departments.

H₅: There is no significant difference in perception on supervisor between the groups of respondents working in various departments.

Table 2: Difference in FWH related perception among respondents

FWH related perception	Source	F-value	Sig.	Decision
Flexible Hour Usage	Between Groups	2.035	0.097	H ₂ Accepted
Job Nature Affecting FWH	Between Groups	1.499	0.231	H ₃ Accepted
Team Communication	Between Groups	2.035	0.097	H ₄ Accepted
Supervisor Support	Between Groups	3.601	0.013*	H ₅ Rejected
Source: primary data compiled from SPSS output				

ANOVA analysis revealed that supervisor support differed significantly across departments ($F = 3.601$, $p = 0.013 < 0.05$). All other variables — flexible hour usage, job nature, and team communication — did not exhibit significant inter-departmental variation ($p > 0.05$). These findings suggest that while the formal FWH policy is uniformly perceived, its experiential effectiveness is substantially shaped by departmental management culture.

Gender Differences in FWH arrangement challenges

There are identified challenges of both male and female employees due to the work schedule and shift like work load, extra hours, continuous work in shifts, no communication to the co workers, lack of social connectivity and lack of time to spend with family members and so on. The flexible work hours arrangement may be sometimes creating challenges to both genders. The study assumed the significant challenges may be differed between the genders. To test the difference independent Sample t-Test was conducted, to explore whether male and female employees experienced significant level of different challenges under FWH work arrangements.

H₆: There is no significant gender difference in flexible work hour arrangement challenges for work life balance

Table 3: Gender difference in flexible work hour arrangement challenges

Group	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Male	50	2.752	0.803	0.288	145	0.774	H ₀ Accepted
Female	97	2.711	0.814	—	—	—	
Source: Primary data compiled from SPSS output							

The t-Test result ($t = 0.288$, $df = 145$, $p = 0.774 > 0.05$) indicates no statistically significant difference between male and female employees regarding the challenges experienced under flexible working arrangements. The null hypothesis was retained, confirming that FWH challenges are structural and organizational in nature rather than gender-specific.

a) Positive Relationship between FWH and WLB - The Pearson Correlation finding ($r = 0.218$, $p = 0.008$) confirms the central hypothesis of this study: flexible working hours exert a statistically significant positive influence on employee work-life balance. This finding corroborates the theoretical predictions of the COR framework (Hobfoll, 1989) and aligns with empirical evidence reported by Hill et al. (2024), Smith and Allen (2024), and Chung and Van der Lippe (2020). By affording employees greater temporal autonomy, C3 Tech Academy effectively equips its workforce to manage role boundaries more efficiently, reducing the interference of work demands on personal life. Notably, although the correlation coefficient (0.218) indicates a moderate effect size, this is consistent with the multifactorial nature of WLB, which is influenced by personality traits, family structure, organizational culture, and external socioeconomic factors beyond any single HR intervention. Even modest increments in flexibility can yield meaningful improvements in individual well-being, particularly in high-demand educational settings.

b) Critical Role of Supervisor Support - The ANOVA finding that supervisor support varies significantly across departments ($p = 0.013$) is arguably the most policy-relevant outcome of this study. It reveals a fundamental implementation paradox: while the formal FWH policy is uniformly accessible, the operationalized experience of flexibility is contingent upon departmental management culture. Employees supervised by managers who prioritize outcomes over physical presence are considerably more likely to benefit from flexibility initiatives. This finding resonates strongly with Marx et al. (2021) and Lewis and Humbert (2021), who identified supervisory behaviour as the primary determinant of whether flexibility policies deliver intended benefits. The practical implication is direct: investment in supervisory training and outcome-based performance management frameworks is essential to ensure organizational equity in FWH outcomes.

c) Universal Perception of FWH Benefits - The Chi-Square analysis confirmed that neither gender nor departmental affiliation significantly moderates employees' perception of FWH benefits with respect to job satisfaction or WLB. This universality of perception is noteworthy. It suggests that the positive valuation of flexibility transcends demographic and functional boundaries within the organization, providing strong organizational justification for uniform policy implementation without the need for differentiated approaches. This finding is consistent with Weideman and Hofmeyr (2020), who demonstrated that flexible work arrangements are universally associated with enhanced employee engagement irrespective of role-based or demographic characteristics.

d) Structural Nature of FWH Challenges - The t-Test result ($p = 0.774$) establishes that challenges associated with flexible working — including communication barriers, work-life boundary blurring, and time management difficulties — are experienced comparably by both male and female employees. These finding challenges assumptions that flexibility challenges are disproportionately experienced by female employees due to caregiving responsibilities. Instead, it positions these challenges as systemic and organizational, requiring structural remediation through policy design, technological investment, and communication protocols.

e) Implications - For practitioners, the findings offer the following evidence-based recommendations – a) Institutionalize supervisory training programmes focused on outcome-based management and flexibility

empowerment b) Develop standardized, transparent FWH policies with clear eligibility criteria, accountability mechanisms, and performance evaluation frameworks c) Invest in digital communication infrastructure to mitigate coordination and connectivity challenges inherent in flexible work environments d) Conduct periodic employee well-being assessments to evaluate policy effectiveness and identify emerging challenges e) Align FWH policies with broader organizational wellness initiatives to create a holistic approach to employee well-being.

CONCLUSION

This study empirically examined the effectiveness of flexible working hours on employee work-life balance at C3 Tech Academy. The findings demonstrate that flexible working arrangements are positively and significantly associated with improved WLB outcomes ($r = 0.218$, $p = 0.008$), confirming their strategic value as a human resource management tool in the education and training sector. Critically, the study reveals that the success of FWH initiatives is fundamentally contingent upon supervisory support, which varies significantly across departments ($p = 0.013$). These findings are the positions managerial behaviour as the decisive link between policy intent and employee experience, calling for targeted investment in supervisory development. The universality of FWH perceptions across gender and departmental lines supports inclusive, organization-wide policy implementation, while the structural nature of FWH challenges calls for systemic rather than individualized solutions. In the evolving landscape of human resource management, flexible working is no longer a peripheral benefit but a strategic organizational imperative. Institutions that embed flexibility into their culture, underpin it with effective leadership, and support it through robust digital infrastructure will be best positioned to attract, retain, and sustain a motivated, well-balanced, and high-performing workforce. This study carries several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. The single-site design restricts generalizability to other organizational contexts, industries, or geographical regions. The cross-sectional data collection precludes causal inference and the tracking of longitudinal trends. Reliance on self-reported data introduces the potential for social desirability bias. Furthermore, the study did not control for extraneous moderating variables such as personality traits, family structure, or commute distance. Future research should address these limitations through multi-site, multi-sector comparative studies, longitudinal designs, and the integration of qualitative methods to capture the lived experiences of flexible workers. Examining the interaction effects of FWH with remote work and hybrid arrangements in the post-pandemic context would be particularly valuable. Studies incorporating objective performance metrics and linking FWH practices to organizational outcomes such as turnover rates and absenteeism would further strengthen the evidence base.

Declaration

Consent For Publication

Not applicable.

Conflicts Of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interests.

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